

Sermon Title: The Hard Road to Sanity

by: Pastor Rock Dillaman

Scripture: Daniel 4:36a, 37 - "At that time my reason returned to me ... Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

1. God's heart is revealed as much in the story behind a conversion as in the conversion itself!
2. Unbelief is the ultimate insanity! (Psalm 53:1)
3. Unbelief doesn't persist because God is silent. It persists because the unbelieving are arrogant. (Romans 1:21; Ephesians 4:18)
4. We can be restored to spiritual sanity.
5. God's gracious promptings are often hard. But where they're hard they're hard out of necessity.
6. God's hardness is an expression of His patience. It signals He hasn't given up on us; He's just changed His tactics.
7. When God's pursuing our heart, a hard time may be the gracious prelude to our recovery.
8. The God who invites us to taste and see that He is good may require us to taste and see that unbelief is not good!
9. Sanity always returns when we focus on God's heart!
10. When human intellect defies God, God allows it to be darkened. (Romans 1)
11. The rejection of God destroys human reason. (Proverbs 15:33; Isaiah 44:20; Romans 1)
12. Believers must not attempt to shield the unbelieving from God's hard-edged grace!
13. It's impossible to be more compassionate than God! His hard-edged grace is more loving than our soft-edged love.
14. You can doubt God's grace *because* of a hard place or find His grace *in* it.

Growth Group Questions

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WARM-UPS

1. What's your favorite beverage?
2. Do you like doing yard work / gardening? Why or why not?

DISCUSSION

1. What did you find most challenging, helpful, or troubling in the sermon today and why?
2. Share the "story" behind your conversion.
3. Has God ever sent you "soft" promptings you ignored, causing Him to follow up with "harder" warnings? Explain.
4. Have you ever "praised" God for humbling you? Explain.
5. Due to cultural influences, do you ever find yourself attempting to be more compassionate than God toward others by softening the rough edges of the gospel? Explain.

IN THE WORD

Read some of the passages below and discuss any insights into today's message.

- Psalm 14:1
- Ephesians 4:17-18
- Revelation 3:19

PRACTICE

- Are there some areas of your life where you're wrestling with "unbelief" or questioning God's goodness? If so what are those areas, and describe the internal conflict?
- Who are the "grass-eating" Nebuchadnezzar's God has placed in your life? Can you name them, love them, and pray for them?