

Daniel In The Lion's Den

Daniel 6

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As we look at the story of Daniel and the lion's den tonight, I want you to follow me as we look at the story. There are five movements that I want you to note. The first is in verses 1-3 where we see Daniel favored by Darius the king. Beginning in verse 1.

"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; 2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. 3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm."

You might get thrown for a curve when you start this chapter because we leave Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and we come to Darius the king who is now the king of the Medo-Persian Empire. As Daniel saw in his great image, the head of gold has been replaced by the arms of silver, which is the Medo-Persian Empire. Daniel started his time in Babylon as a young teenager. He was taken captive from Judah and carried away to Babylon. It would be a 70-year exile for the people of God. Daniel is now in his 80s (some say 85 but somewhere in his 80s); and he is still a man of God, he still trusts in God, he still is serving God, he is still being used by God, he is still a witness for God, and what an awesome thing that is!

I don't know how long the Lord will tarry and how long I'll stay alive; but if I live to see 80, I pray that God will help me to still want to honor Him, live for Him, and serve Him. I hope and pray that He gives me breath and I can still be used by Him. If I can't be used by God, I don't really want to be around anymore. You know, when the Lord's done with me I hope He'll just take me home. I believe that while we're here and have breath we should want to witness for Him, testify for Him, and glorify Him.

By the way, we come to the end tonight in this sixth chapter of the section that deals with the stories of Daniel and his three friends Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. Next week, as we go into chapter 7, you launch into the prophetic part of the book of Daniel.

We come to the king whose name was Darius. He was the king of the Medo-Persian Empire. Because he has taken over this new empire now, he wanted to divide it up. He had a hundred and twenty princes (some translations have the word "satraps." It's just an Aramaic form for governors or princes or those who rule over a designated area) over this area of the kingdom. Over the one hundred and twenty princes, he set three presidents. Daniel became the head of the three presidents. Daniel was the first (and it tells us why) because Daniel was (verse 3), "... preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." Even at his ripe old age of 80, he's still a man of integrity and influence which is amazing because he's been able to survive this time in exile with all these wicked, ungodly, secular kingdoms and in a high political office. What an

awesome thought that he could live under all of that pressure and in the public view yet be a man who was a witness and a testimony for God.

We need to pray that God raises up leaders for our nation. I believe that God does. God is never without a witness. Whether it be a nation, a community, or a political entity, God raises up His ambassadors and certainly Daniel was one of those indeed.

God's hand was on this exaltation, this favor, that was shown unto Daniel. The king recognized (maybe he heard the stories of Daniel's interpreting of dreams and the position he had under Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar) and thought, "Well, I need all the help I can get, so I'll put him in this prominent position." Here's what I see. I see the sovereign hand of God. There are no accidents in God's economy—that God knows what He is doing, that God raised Daniel up for such a time as this and placed Daniel in this key position so that he could have influence on Darius the king.

We move from Daniel favored by Darius to Daniel framed by his enemies. Notice it in verse 4. "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful," you might want to circle that little word "faithful." Daniel was a faithful man to God. "...neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. 6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. 7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together..." all of them except Daniel, obviously, "...to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9 Wherefore king Darius..." because of his foolish pride, "signed the writing and the decree."

Now I threw that in there, "his foolish pride." It's not in your verse. Some of you are wondering what translation that was. I threw that in there because that's what really they were appealing to—his pride. Whenever God exalts someone in that position, other people are going to be jealous and envious. It happens, sadly, even in the church. When God uses someone, sometimes other people become envious or jealous. "Why do they get to do that?" and "Why aren't I invited to do that?" and "Why don't they ask me to do that?" and it's sad. It's just kind of a carnal, sinful attitude rather than being thankful that God is using someone and being faithful to what God has called you to do in your sphere of influence. You get your eyes off of God and what He has called you to do and you get your eyes on other people. It's easy to become envious or jealous, even in the church of Jesus Christ, which is a sad and tragic thing.

Here these wicked and ungodly men are obviously jealous of Daniel and his position over them. One of the things that fostered that was he was a foreigner. He was one of the children of captivity. He was from Judah. He was a Jew, and they despised the idea that they would

have to answer to him and he would be over them. They conspired to find something that they could accuse Daniel of. This is an important part of the story (verse 4), "...they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful neither was there any error or fault found in him." They first examine his professional life. They spied on him. They were hiding in the bushes with their binoculars, and they bugged his house. They were watching everybody he met with, and they were taking pictures of him everywhere he went. They were examining and scrutinizing his life. They said, "This guy is as clean as a whistle. This guy is spotless. He's done nothing wrong."

The cool thing here is that Daniel lived a life of what we would call "above reproach." I used that term because it is actually one of the qualifications for a spiritual leader in the church. "If anyone aspires to the office of overseer...must be above reproach." If you have a pastor you ought to be able to watch his life and say, "He doesn't lie. He doesn't steal. He doesn't cheat. He's faithful. He's honest. He's a man of integrity." You can come to my house and go through my drawers and look at what I watch on tv or check my computer—do whatever you want. I'm not inviting you to do that tonight, by the way. You say, "Okay, okay. I'm coming over, John," basically, that you live above reproach.

The Bible says that he also has to be a man that is blameless. It doesn't mean that he is perfect (praise God for that!), but it does mean that you live a life that if anyone does accuse you, it doesn't stick. That's what that word "blameless" actually means. Someone may accuse you of something but you're living in such a way that it just doesn't stick to you because you are living a life of integrity, above board, and you're living your life above reproach. As Christians, the same qualifications are for you. It's not okay to be a bad witness. It's not okay to be a bad testimony. It's not okay for people to say, "Well, you know, they're Christians. They invite me to Easter at Revival Christian Fellowship but I know they lie, steal, or cut their hours short. They lie on their timecard, or they do this or that, or they cheat on their taxes, or rip people off." That's not a good witness. It doesn't honor and glorify God. I believe that every one of us that names the name of Christ should be living lives above reproach. If someone were to spy on and follow you or if we were to bug your bulletins and you take them home and listen in on your conversations...(which we don't, by the way. Some of you are throwing your bulletins down, "I'm not going to take them home.") We ought to be able to say, "You know what? My life is an open book."

Someone asked Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great British Baptist preacher, "Can I write your biography?" He said, "You can write it in the sky. I have nothing to hide. Write whatever you want. I'm not going to worry about that." We all need to be able to live lives that are blameless and above reproach so that the enemy, the adversary of the Lord, does not have anything to come against us.

They also examined Daniel's personal life. They found no fault in him. "Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." In other words, in his professional and personal life there is nothing that we can get to come against this guy. We know how devoted he is to God, we know how much he loves

God, we know how much he prays to God, so that's the area where we're going to have to try to trap him. They come up with this concoction that when they go to the king we ask the king to sign a decree that for thirty days no one can pray or petition any other god except for the king. Now, that made the king think, "Wow. I'm pretty awesome! No one can pray except to me, no one can petition anyone but to me for thirty days, that's pretty good." Later we find out, when Daniel is brought in before the king as breaking this command, the king realizes, "You tricked me!" He realizes that, "I played the fool and my pride led me to do that which is a sad thing." Darius signed the writing and the decree.

The third movement in the story is Daniel is faithful, and this is an awesome, awesome truth. Daniel was faithful to his God. "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went to his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. 11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God." Notice that Daniel knew the writing had been signed. It wasn't as though Daniel was ignorant of what happened. Daniel very easily could've said, "Oh well, I guess I could just wait for thirty days, the Lord knows my heart. I could just pray in my heart, and God sees my heart. I'll just kind of let it slide that way I'm not going to be eaten by the lions. I'll just kind of let it pass," or "Maybe I'll shut the windows or close the drapes, and I'll do it in secret. I won't do my normal habit," or "Maybe I won't go home and pray like I've been." Daniel probably could've been tempted (as you and I would've been tempted) at first to respond by trying to compromise. Not so. We see the courage of Daniel here. Daniel said, "I don't care what the king decrees, and I don't care what the king has signed. I know I'm supposed to obey the law of the land, but we must obey God more than we must obey man." Right?

If they pass a new law in the United States of America that says we can't pray, what are we going to do? Pray. If they pass a new law that says you can't preach...we're going to keep preaching. You can't read your Bible...we're going to read our Bibles. We have to obey God rather than man, so I love the courage of Daniel here. This courage was born out of his commitment to God. He purposed in his heart that he wouldn't sin against the Lord, and he was a man of prayer. He had purpose, and he spent time on his knees.

Daniel went to his house, which is the place he normally prayed, and his purpose was that he would pray toward Jerusalem, notice that in verse 10. Why? Because in the book of 1 Kings 8 when Solomon dedicated the temple, he said that if your people are ever carried away to a strange land that they should pray toward this temple. That was the direction in a foreign land that they should pray toward. He was keeping the promises of God from 1 Kings 8:44-48, praying toward Jerusalem. He also prayed kneeling down. He prayed three times a day, as was required of the Jews, and he also did it often. It says, "as he did aforetime," so it was a habit that Daniel had.

Why is it that Daniel is such a powerful witness for God? Why was Daniel so courageous, so strong, and such an awesome witness? It's because of this very secret in Daniel's life—every day, three times a day, Daniel got on his knees and prayed to God. Do you know the Bible says

you have not because you ask not? Maybe your marriage isn't what it should be because you haven't been spending more time on your knees. Maybe your lack of joy and peace isn't what it should be because you haven't spent time praying, waiting on God, and spending time alone with God. What a little prayer will do—it'll transform your life! Just taking that, what we often call as Christians, "quiet time" or "devotional time," and if it has to be done in the car, in the shower, literally in the closet, or wherever you might find a place to just be alone—just find a quiet place. During your lunch break, instead of going with the crowd find a quiet place to get alone with God, open your Bible, and talk to God. When you have a little lunch break just take your Bible and say, "Thanks very much but I'm going to go spend some time alone," and find a quiet place. Lock yourself in a quiet place. Hide yourself with God and you'll find strength, peace, power, and new vitality come into your life to be able to stand against the opposition of those who would slander, attack, and come against you. You'll become a transformer rather than a conformer in the culture and in the area you find yourself in.

Daniel prayed knowing the king's decree and the consequences of it. Daniel was found praying and making supplications before his God. "Then they came near (verse 12), and spake before the king...", that is, these princes "...concerning the king's decree," and said, "Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah," see that was one of the things that really irritated them that this Jew from the captivity of Judah was over them, "regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou has signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. 14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself," that's King Jimmy for he was really bummed at himself. He actually asked a few people in the palace to kick him is what he did because of the stupid thing that he had done. "... and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him." He called his best lawyers and got them in there and says, "Is there anything in the books, any loopholes? Can you look at this contract? Can you check it out?"

Which is interesting, by the way, the difference between the Medo-Persian Empire and the Babylonian Empire. In the Babylonian Empire, kings were the absolute authority. Whatever they said would go. They could make a law, break a law. They could take a life. They could do anything, but the Medo-Persian Empire was a little weaker than the Babylonian Empire. They had laws. Once that law was enacted, even the king could not reverse the law. That's why you think, "Well, he's the king! Just say, 'I changed my mind. I'm not going to throw Daniel in the lions' den,'" but they had this law that could not be changed. He racked himself trying to figure out, "How am I going to save Daniel?" He set himself to save Daniel. He didn't want to throw him in the lions' den. "Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed." They're telling the king, "Sorry. You can't do it. This is the law. It cannot be changed."

Then we move (verses 16-22) to Daniel being fed to the lions. Can you imagine being lion

food? I mean, anytime I've been to the zoo and got up close to lions, those things are scary! They are radical, insanely scary! Years ago we were at the Portland Zoo, and they have an amazing lion exhibit. We were across the zoo and a bunch of the lions roared. Have you ever heard a lion full-on...not just go "Meow," but I mean full-on "ROOOOOAAAAR!" Just let it rip! It's earthshaking! It's unbelievable! Everyone went running to the lion exhibit to see what was going on. These beasts are frightening!

"Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." That's easy for you to say, king, you're standing on the sidelines. "Hey, we're going to throw you in with these lions, but don't worry, Daniel, your God will take care of you." "And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. 18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick..." he didn't turn his stereo on all night "...brought before him: and his sleep went from him."

I've always thought that it's interesting, the king had a sleepless night. I theorize (and the Bible doesn't actually say but I'm convinced) that Daniel had a wonderful night of sleep. He had his lion EZ chair, you know, one lion here one lion here. He put his head back on another lion and brought the fur around him with just the right body warmth. You can just picture Daniel. If I were an artist I'd picture this really cool picture of Daniel in his lion La-Z-Boy. I think Daniel actually slept all night and had a good night's sleep, but the king is just wringing his hands and pacing the floor saying, "I don't want to hear any music. I can't eat any food." He's just freaking out saying, "Oh, no!" It's indicating that the king did really love and respect Daniel, and he was brokenhearted that he had to throw Daniel into the lions' den. It's interesting that Daniel is thrown into this den of lions and the focus, at this point in the story, is not on Daniel—it's on the king! It doesn't really go into any detail about it, it just says that he was thrown into the den of lions. It was sealed, and the king spent this night without any sleep.

"Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" He just said that he would, now he says (in a feeble voice), "Did he do it?" I love that "lamentable voice," "O Daniel!" The king has his fingers crossed, you know, "Ohhhhhh, you okay down there, Buddy?" Then I love the next verse. "Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever." You know, he bends into this big den. These lions are down there, "Daniel! Was thy God whom thou servest able to deliver you?" Then, "O king live forever!" It's obvious that God did deliver him, and he says, "My God (verse 22) hath sent his angel..." I love that "and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

Daniel says, "My God sent His angel." Back up just a little bit. First of all, it says that the king says, "Was thy God able?" We know that God is able! Right? Is it a question of God's ability?

Answer: No. Can't God do anything? Is anything too hard for God? No. It is a question of will God deliver Daniel. There is no guarantee. We face the same situation. When we face a problem, we need to remember—God is able to deliver, to save, and to help, to provide and to protect. That's never a question. Maybe tonight if you're wondering, "Could God heal me? Could God save my marriage? Could God save my kids? Could God save my husband? Could God save my wife? Could God save my boss? Can God really help me in this situation? Not a problem. God is able, but we don't always know God's will. This is where faith comes in. Faith is not to presume that God will deliver us. Faith is to trust that God will do what He knows is best and whatever He does is best. We rest in that. I don't know what your circumstances are tonight. I can't promise you that God is going to get you that job or that He is going to heal you or that He is going to raise up that person that you love is sick and keep them from dying, or "Why didn't God answer my prayers?" I know God is able, but whether God will do it, I don't know.

This is why, when I pray, I say, "Father, not my will but Thine be done." "Lord, we ask you to heal but, Lord, Your will be done." Some people think that's a copout. I think it's a proper attitude of faith. I think it's more faith to just say, "Lord, I trust You with whatever You choose to do, and I'm not going to complain or freak out." "Lord, I'd really like to have this job, but if I don't get this job I know that You've got something better for me. If that's not Your will, I'm going to trust You." "Lord, I'd really like to marry this person. They're really handsome, they're really cute. This guy's got a lot of money, Lord, I'd like to marry them (I'm kidding)." Maybe you're single and checking someone out, "That one's got a big Bible, Lord, I'd like to marry that one. That guy looks pretty spiritual. He holds his hands straight up when he worships. He seems pretty spiritual, Lord, I'll take that one." Maybe the Lord says, "No," and you throw a temper tantrum and get all pushed out of shape because God doesn't answer your prayers. God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him. Don't press it too much.

The children of Israel, in the Old Testament, prayed for meat. They prayed for meat and prayed for meat and prayed for meat. God gave them meat until it was running out their nose and their ears and they got sick of it. It says that God sent leanness to their souls. Sometimes God will actually, I believe, allow us to have what we ask for out of His will so that we see how wrong we were and learn to trust Him and say, "Well, I'm sorry, Lord, next time You make the decision," you know. We learn to rest in Him. You can learn to actually be thankful for an unanswered prayer and for your disappointments. There may be some real heart-rending disappointment that you're facing here tonight, and I know it's hard. I've been there. I struggle just like you do with these things. I've been through these things, but I have learned and I'm coming to learn that God's ways are best! His will is perfect. His timing is amazing! We just need to be patient, trust Him, wait on Him, and look to Him. We know that God is able but we don't know if God will.

In this story, God did perform a miracle. God sent His angel (verse 22), which by the way, take note of that. Here again is an angelic being that came to deliver Daniel. I picture the angels having the lions in a headlock. Again, if I were painting the picture, I'd have these angels holding onto these lions. They came and are God's messengers. They are spirit beings, and they come to help, save, and deliver God's people.

The first reason that Daniel gives is because I was living a life of innocence. I was innocent. I was found guiltless, and I was living in integrity before God. I was right before God. We move (verses 23-28) to the closing—Daniel being freed. “Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him,” and here’s the second reason that God sent His angel and saved him, “because he believed in his God.” That is actually one of the keys to the whole story of Daniel—he believed in God. He trusted in God. It’s actually in Hebrews 11:33 where we have the famous “hall of faith” of men and women of faith who trusted in God. It actually says there in Hebrews 11:33, “...stopped the mouths of lions.” The power of faith in God stopped the mouths of lions. How amazing is that!

“And the king commanded (verse 24), and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.” There are critics that actually say, “Daniel was put in the lions’ den, but the lions weren’t hungry.” How do they know that? “Well, we just know these weren’t hungry lions.” Dodo birds! I know this seems pretty radical, but this is the way things were under King Darius and the Medes and the Persians. He takes all these guys that accuse Daniel, not the whole 120 of them but these guys that were leaders of the pack, and throws them, their wives, and all of their families in the lions’ den. Now, don’t blame God for this either. This is just recording history, okay?

You know a lot of people do. They read stuff in the Bible of the Old Testament and say, “Wow! God is just really a bad guy.” This is factual history. This was the king’s decision, it wasn’t God’s decision. That’s why God sometimes doesn’t start wars—sinful men start wars. We expect God to go around stopping everything that we do bad and intervening in every situation. He throws all of them in the lions’ den and before they can hit the bottom of the den they are consumed. They are ripped apart by these lions. They were indeed, definitely hungry lions.

This is what we call a miracle. God performed a miracle. When you read the story of Daniel in the lions’ den, you are reading about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of Genesis, the God of creation, the God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere present. That this great mighty God actually performed this miracle is an amazing thought!

The king threw them into the pit and (verse 25), “Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,” so Daniel’s faithful witness brought glory to God just as our faithful witness will bring glory to God. Why? Because this God of Daniel “...is the living God,” I love that! The gods of the heathen are vain. They’re dead. “...and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. 27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.” He actually goes from the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, and all

the way to King Cyrus. He outlived about six or seven kings. God always used and raised him up into this prominent position because Daniel was a man who had faith in God.

Let's make some closing application from this story of Daniel and the lions' den. First of all, you might look at it as a picture or a type of the children of Israel during the time of the tribulation. I just mention this because I know there are a lot of prophecy buffs out there that like to find things that are kind of secluded or hidden in the Bible. I just mention that I am aware of this fact. You could actually say Daniel prefigures or is a picture of the nation of Israel and during the seven years tribulation will go through this time of trouble and wrath, but God will preserve, spare, and keep them. There will be 144,000 Jews that will be sealed during this time of the tribulation, and God will preserve them. Some see this prefigured in picture or type as Daniel is preserved even in the lions' den and as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were preserved through the fiery furnace. God knows how to deliver His people. He knows how to preserve and keep them from the day of judgment.

Most of all, I think we should focus on Daniel's character. What is it that Daniel had that helped him to be such a strong witness in this pagan culture? First, he had integrity and consistency in his life (verses 4-5). Pray that God would make us men and women of integrity and consistency. By the way, the opposite of the word "integrity" is "duplicity." Another word for "duplicity" is "hypocrisy." What it means is to be divided, so you're two people. You're not the same person. Have you ever known anyone...we use the phrase "two-faced?" When a person is "two-faced" he talks one way to one person and one way to another. You schmooze this person and talk behind their back. You're a hypocrite. You're "two-faced." Not Daniel.

Christians are not supposed to be living lives of duplicity. They are supposed to be men and women of integrity. The word "integrity," the opposite of duplicity, means oneness. It means you're one person. What you see is what you get. There is no phoniness, there's integrity. They're genuine. You are the same person in church that you are at home. The same person you are at home you are at work. The same person you are at church as you are Friday night when you're out with your friends.

I noticed before I became a Christian, I was raised in a Christian home, but one of the things that convicted me was that I noticed my duplicity as a teenager. Around my parents my language cleaned up. I didn't tell them what I was really doing on Friday night with my friends, where I was really going. I was like, "Yeah, Mom, yeah, Dad," I was one person; and when I was out with the boys I was a different person. When I was in school, I was another person; and I'm another person here. If I went to church, I was another person, you know? It got to where you don't even know who you are anymore! You play the role in so many different positions, and it's such a wonderful thing when you come to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. He frees you from all that duplicity and makes you a person of integrity. You have nothing to hide. You have nothing to fear. You're the same before God and before men, and your life does become an open book.

Daniel was a man of consistent integrity, and he was also a man of courage. He prayed (verse

10) even though he knew the king's decree had been signed. What would you have done? Go into panic mode and not pray for thirty days? "SHHH! Don't tell anybody I'm praying, but nobody knows. I just kind of do it in secret." "Nobody knows I'm a Christian. I'll just keep it a secret." You don't let your light shine, you hide it under a bushel. He was a man of courage. He wasn't afraid.

Don't be afraid of what people think about you. People ask, "What'd you do over the weekend?" You spent the weekend with a church, and you say, "Oh, nothing." You don't want them to know you went to church because they might think you're weird. Maybe you went on a Christian retreat for the weekend, and they ask, "Hey! What'd you do this weekend?" "Oh, nothing." Then you say, "Wow, Lord, I'm sorry. I should've testified for You. I should've opened my mouth for You. I should've shared." You have devotions in the morning and God blesses you. You're filled with joy. Someone says, "Why are you so happy?" You say, "Oh, it's just a nice day." You're afraid to tell people about Jesus or take a stand because you don't want to be thrown into the lions' den. You don't want to be ostracized or thought weird or persecuted or put down. You want to be accepted, so you lack courage and don't really take a stand.

Thirdly, Daniel was a man of faith (verse 23). "...he believed in his God." In other words, he trusted in God. He put his faith in God. He put his confidence in God. I'd like to think of Daniel in three ways: He purposed in his heart that he would not be defiled by the king's food, he prayed to his God three times a day, and he presented his body to God in faith as a living sacrifice. You know, that's simple but it's simply profound! You do that and you will be a transformer rather than being conformed to the world. You will affect other people around you. God will bless you, exalt you, use you, and it will be amazing what God will do with your life if you purpose in your heart that you're not going to be defiled with the world's ideas, philosophies, and sin; then you spend time praying to God, "Lord, give me the strength, the courage, and the boldness to be the person You want me to be. I am weak, but You are strong!" You don't have to be a strong person. You don't have to be a "together" person. God's strength is made perfect in your weakness. God isn't looking for weak people, He's looking for consecrated people, surrendered people. So, you commit to God, pray to God, and then present your body in faith. "Lord, whatever You want for me, wherever You want me to go, whatever You want me to do, whatever You want me to say. You've put me in this hostile environment, Lord," you're a missionary in your job. Every day in the office you're surrounded by lions who devour and come against you, but you trust in God and faithfully look to God.

We do face our own lions. Every Christian faces a lions' den. It might be a lions' den of illness or disappointment, bereavement or grief, loss or sickness. I got a phone call today about a dear pastor friend of mine that is sick and in the hospital. It's a real concern that he could be very, very sick. I've known him for over 40 years. He loves and serves the Lord. He pastors an awesome church. He called me for prayer. I mean, living a life of integrity doesn't immune you from difficulty. You're going to face lions. You're going to face difficulties. Maybe slander. Maybe people on the job...you get a promotion and they start lying about you trying to make you look bad or get you fired. How do you handle that? You don't turn and run. You turn to God and get on your knees. You trust in God and realize that God is faithful, and God is able!

This is the thing that was going over in my mind just today as I was anticipating this study tonight—the same God that delivered Daniel from the lions’ den is Your heavenly Father! Amen? The very same God, the living God, the all-powerful God, who is able to deliver—He’s your Father in heaven and you can trust Him! We used to sing a song, “What He’s done for others He’ll do for you.” If God did it for Daniel, God can do it for you. If God can deliver Daniel, God can deliver you! Will He? Trust Him. His ways are perfect. He knows what He’s doing. Let’s pray.