

## Walking by Sight and Feelings Brings Hopelessness

Daniel 6:11-17; Psalm 121:2

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There are times when it would appear from all that we can see that the wicked conspiracies of the mighty have succeeded in destroying those who uphold the truth of Jesus Christ. If we only consider what we can see, our fears will run wild and carry us into a panic mode.

Our sovereign God puts us into seemingly hopeless situations before powerful enemies not to cast us into despair or panic, but that we might look away from our own human resources to cast ourselves upon His infinite power and help (Psalm 121:2).

Daniel's situation looked hopeless from all that one could observe. Those envied him and sought his destruction were mightier and more numerous than Daniel. They had conspired, and it appeared they had a fool-proof plan to destroy Daniel. However, mere appearances are deceiving and misleading. That is why we must not walk by sight or by feelings, but by faith in God's power, wisdom, and promises. Whatever you face by way of a conspiracy of the wicked or by way of some great trial of your faith, it is not hopeless—God is ever faithful (1 Corinthians 10:13). The main points are: (1) The Conspirators Bring Evidence against Daniel (Daniel 6:11-13); (2) The King Seeks to Deliver Daniel (Daniel 6:14-15); (3) The Deliverance of Daniel Seems Hopeless (Daniel 6:16-17).

### I. The Conspirators Bring Evidence against Daniel (Daniel 6:11-13).

#### A. Review

1. A wicked conspiracy was formed by those who hated and envied Daniel because the king had purposed to elevate Daniel over them due to Daniel's faithfulness (Daniel 6:3). They searched and searched to find something they might use against Daniel in the administration of his government duties, but could find nothing (Daniel 6:4). Finally, they concluded they must frame a law that would force Daniel to disobey the king's law in order to obey God's law (Daniel 6:5-7). The king was flattered by this law and signed it, making it irrevocable according to the law of the Medes/Persians—not even he could alter it (Daniel 6:9).

2. Upon hearing the decree, Daniel altered not his regular private worship—he defied the king's law (Daniel 6:10). The trap was set by these wicked conspirators; and in our text today, we see them catch Daniel in the trap, and watch them seek to destroy him in what appears to be the end of Daniel.

B. As our text continues today, a group of the wicked conspirators have assembled outside Daniel's residence to catch him in the act of his regular private worship at home—which he altered not (Daniel 6:11,13). They set a trap for Daniel, and he willingly walked into it. He could have easily avoided the trap by praying elsewhere. Why didn't he? To leave for us a testimony that we need not fear what man can do unto us when we honor the Lord above all and obey His commandments supremely. Let us fear taking the easy path rather than taking the faithful path. The easy path in following our feelings always has worse consequences—consequences we did not anticipate (whether now or later).

1. The mere laws of man must never be viewed as unalterable. Only God's Moral Law is unalterable and unchangeable.

2. Should we ever disobey the Lord in order to obey an unlawful command of those who are over us? Daniel clearly answers that question for us. No! Not even the threat of painful consequences should keep us from our supreme loyalty and obedience to Jesus. It's not easy, but God here shows us what is right, and He will empower us (Acts 5:29).

C. Having the evidence they sought, they immediately seek an audience with the king to gloat

among themselves in having finally ensnared Daniel in their trap (Daniel 6:12-13).

1. The conspirators have not only entrapped Daniel, but have likewise ensnared the king in their trap (Daniel 6:12). Whereas Daniel knowingly walked into the trap, the king has unknowingly done so. His pride was flattered by the law, and he was blindly led into the trap. This is where flattery leads us—it ensnares us (Proverbs 29:5).

a. Let us be careful to avoid using flattery to ensnare others by our boasting about them so that later they will help us in some way. What we say to others must be sincere and meant to encourage them, not expecting anything in return to ourselves. Flattery is both deception (it's insincere and usually exaggeration), and manipulation (it's using others for our own selfish ends). Flattery expects to be repaid in some way. As we see from these conspirators in Daniel 6, they flattered the king in order to get the approval of the king in passing their wicked law. How many sinful compromises have come from flattery in building up someone's ego (immoral relationships, "grooming", gossip, lying, cheating, and stealing at work)? Dear ones, pray for me and encourage me to be faithful, but do not flatter me. I have enough of a problem with pride as it is. My pride doesn't need any help by way of flattery.

b. Let us, also, be careful that we be not entrapped by the flattery that comes from others. Let us be wise, thinking to ourselves, "What does he/she want from me? What loyalty from me does this flattery expect to buy from me?" When we yield to flattery, we do so because our pride is stroked (just as the pride of Darius was stroked by these conspirators). Remember, when our pride yields to flattery, there will be a pay day demanded by the flatterer (as was true here when the conspirators assembled before the king with their demand that the law be executed against Daniel).

2. Finally, the conspirators reveal who it is that they have found disobeying the law of the king—Daniel, whom they describe as a despicable captive from Judah who had proven himself to be disloyal to the king (Daniel 6:13). The king honored him, and this is the contempt he shows to the king. The way they describe Daniel reveals to the king who this law was intended to entrap—Daniel. But the king himself had to be entrapped to sign the law before Daniel could be entrapped.

## **II. The King Seeks to Deliver Daniel (Daniel 6:14-15).**

A. The king was very displeased. No doubt, he was very displeased over the envious plot to destroy Daniel, and he was very displeased with himself that he had (in effect) unwittingly signed Daniel's death warrant by way of this wicked law.

1. Darius' pay day for having been seduced by the flattery of others has now come. Receiving flattery strengthened the pride of Darius (rather than subduing it). It made him more vulnerable to the deception of others, not more vigilant. He is now paying the debt owed to flattery.

2. It is hard for all of us, but by the power of the Holy Spirit let us learn not to crave to be flattered by others (whether it be our appearance, intelligence, success, possessions, knowledge of the truth, growth in holiness, raising of children, or gifts/abilities). It's a trap. Receive sincere encouragement with humility, and give glory from the heart to the Lord. Beware of giving preferential treatment to anyone based upon what they say about you. Seek to treat everyone justly, and always endeavor to speak the truth in love without partiality.

B. Darius sought out all the legal means available to him to deliver Daniel from the lions' den.

1. The fact that Darius was entrapped by these conspirators could not even be used to overturn the law and to deliver Daniel.

2. He feverishly worked up until the final hour to overcome the finality and unchangeability of the law he had signed, but to no avail.

3. No doubt, the conspirators had heard of all the effort Darius was exerting to deliver Daniel, so they assembled before the king to pour water on any of his efforts to deliver Daniel, reminding him

that the law of the Medes/Persians could not be altered in the least (Daniel 6:15). Though he may be absolute in certain ways, he could not change the law he had signed.

### III. The Deliverance of Daniel Seems Hopeless (Daniel 6:16-17).

A. With all legal means and human hope exhausted, the king resigned himself to carry out this wicked law against a just man in order to maintain his royal power. Rather than suffering with one who was righteous, Darius clings to his power and authority at all costs. Rather than defending to death that which was right, we see how far his justice was willing to go—to Daniel’s death, but not to his own suffering/death. Are we like Darius and only willing to stand for what is right to a certain point of sacrifice, or are we willing to sacrifice all for Jesus and his truth?

B. Darius appears to care for Daniel to a certain point. As Daniel is being cast into the lions’ den, Darius probably expresses here not a prediction that Daniel’s God WILL deliver him, but rather a wish that Daniel’s God MIGHT deliver him (Daniel 6:16).

C. Finally, the stone is placed over the lions’ den and sealed with the king’s royal seal and that of the lords to ensure that anyone seeking to remove the stone would suffer the loss of his life.

1. It appears from all that can be observed that Daniel is hopeless and has fallen into the conspiracy of the wicked with no hope of escape. That is what walking by sight, hearing, and feelings would tell us. Would it not? Dear ones, we cannot walk by sight or feelings and walk by faith at the same time. They are mutually exclusive. Walking by sight and feelings leads to worry/panic/despair. Walking by faith in who God is and what He has promised leads to rest, peace, and hope.

2. Let me tell you about another seemingly hopeless case to the sight of man.

a. Jesus Christ willingly suffered crucifixion and death upon a cross out of love for His people to set them free from the guilt and condemnation of their sin. He was buried in a tomb in which His enemies/conspirators had a stone rolled over his tomb, and they sealed it so that none would try to remove Him from that tomb on pain of death. Guards were even set about the tomb to prevent his body from being taken from the tomb. From appearances, it seemed hopeless. That’s what walking by sight would tell us. Even His disciples were doing so.

b. But walking by faith tells us that it was impossible for death, the tomb, the large stone rolled over the mouth of the tomb, the seal, and the soldiers to keep Jesus in that tomb. He gloriously arose from the dead and revealed Himself to many witnesses for 50 days until His ascension into heaven in order to demonstrate that He was the Son of God (God in the flesh) and in order to demonstrate that His atonement for all of the sins of His people was received by the Father as a full payment. The seeming hopelessness of Daniel, of Jesus, or that situation you are in right now is completely vanquished because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Walk not by sight or feelings, but walk by faith in the power, wisdom, mercy, and promises of Christ.

3. Listen not to the enemy who would whisper to you that what you are experiencing right now is hopeless. God’s deliverance to you may not come in the way that you want it to come or have prayed for it to come, but God’s deliverance through Jesus Christ is promised to all who look in faith to the crucified and resurrected Christ—a deliverance from bondage to sin, fear, worry, despair, and loneliness, and rather a deliverance into the liberty of forgiveness, courage, peace, hope, and communion with Christ. “Hopeless” and “impossible” are not in God’s vocabulary. He is sovereign and can do whatever He in His wisdom and righteousness wills to do. That is the God of hope that we serve, even in the face of all manner of conspiracies of the wicked. God be praised!

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