

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

Daniel 1:8

As we return to our study on Compromising and Conforming or Conviction, this morning we continue with our introduction. We have used the last two week's to introduce us to our sermon regarding the unshakable conviction of young Daniel. We will see, that Daniel will not compromise or conform, but will demonstrate such a confident faith, saturated with a holy conviction. This should remind us our own professed faith, loyalty and commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ. The words of Christ Himself are very challenging to all those who proclaim to be believers in Him, Matthew 16:24, *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will **come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.**”* He reminds us that anyone who calls themselves a Christian; this is the nature and meaning of their profession, that is, to come after Him, deny yourself, take up HIS cross and follow Him. We are reminded again that this is not the aspect of lip service, but of a commitment grounded upon a HOLY CONVICTION. This is the essence of a sanctified heart seasoned with grace, so when trials, tribulations, circumstances or situations come upon us, we will steadfastly continue to FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST WITH OUR WHOLE HEART!

We did not finish our 2nd introduction last week and so Lord willing we shall finish it this morning to get to our message. I would like to pick up where we were last week. In Romans 12:1 & 2, it says again, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* The point we were emphasizing and stressing last week were to those who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ, those who are believers of Jesus Christ. You cannot be a true believer in Jesus Christ, without being a follower of Jesus Christ. To believe in Jesus is to follow in His footsteps, to subject ourselves to His teachings, to trust Him in our everyday life. Again, not lip service; that is, saying I believe in Jesus Christ and live and do whatever you want. Sad, but there are some who say that they believe in Jesus Christ and yet live like the devil, Paul is saying so clearly that we are not to be conformed to this world, but conformed to the image of Christ! Paul says with such firmness, that we are not to be not conformed to this world, that is, we are not to be conformed to this age, or we are not to behave like the world, do not mold your life to the pattern of this world, do not conformed yourself to the standards and patterns of this present world or age. We are constantly bombarded on a daily basis by advertising commercials on the TV on the radio on bill boards to conform and pattern our lives after this world; they are directed both to our flesh and minds, that is, body and soul. We saw last week that the Greek word for conformed is a compound word with the preposition, **‘syn/sun,’** which means together with and the root word that means external form or appearance and

when combined it means to fashion alike to someone else's pattern. We also saw that the only other place where this same Greek word is used is in 1 Peter 1:13, but I would like to read the text from verse 13 – 16 in 1 Peter 1, "*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 As obedient children, **not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:** 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*" The phrase, "...**fashioning yourselves according to**..." in verse 14 is the same Greek word. Notice again the phrase in verse 14, "...not fashioning yourselves according to the **former lust** in your **ignorance**." There was a time that we walked in accordance to the lusts of the world, but it was in ignorance, we were lost, we were not saved, we were not Christians, we were in darkness and blind to the things of God, we walked according to the lusts of our flesh, but now, if God has saved us He has implanted within us a new heart and has imputed to us the righteousness of Christ, He has made us new creatures, new men and women called to follow Him in holiness. This is why Christ says that those who follow Him must be salt and light to this darkened and fallen world. We are told in 1 Peter 2:11, "*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, **abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.***" When God saves us He implants within us a new principle of grace, our spirit which was dead in now made alive as we are birth into His kingdom. This is why both Paul and Peter tell us, don't fashioned yourself, don't patterned, don't mold yourself, yea DON'T CONFORMED yourself to your former lusts, but be holy in all manner of conversation, no so only your speech, but your whole conduct in life. Thus, we are in a battle with the flesh, the devil and the world. And if we are losing the battle as we saw last week it is because we don't guard our hearts and don't guard our eyes. It is usually the eye gate that gets us in trouble as we saw last week with David and Samson, along with the fall of Adam and Eve, in Gen.3:6, "**And when the woman saw** that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." When the woman SAW that the tree was..., it was their downfall.

Therefore, if we are true followers of followers of Jesus Christ, we battle against the flesh, the world and the Devil. Therefore, we must not allow ourselves to be conformed to this world; if we do we are losing the battle. We saw some of this also last week in Gal.5:15-25. So, we are distinctly instructed and admonished not to conformed ourselves to the pattern of this world, not to fashioned ourselves to our former lusts. Peter tells again, "*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.*" I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, this brings us back to Hebrews 11:13, "*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that **they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.***" Peter says, I beseech you or urge as what? As strangers and pilgrims! This is why they were able to be persuaded to embraced the promises of God, because they confessed their lifestyles by not fashioning themselves, not patterning themselves, not conforming themselves to this world, but confessing that they were STANGERS AND PILGRIMS on the earth! This is why they were able to persevere amidst the battles with the flesh, the world and the devil; because by faith

they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims. I want to re-emphasize from last week in Hebrews 11 in 13 – 16, (Read). 1 John 5:4, “*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*” And of course 1 John 4:4, “*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*” Yes, these in Hebrews 11, were tried, tempted, enticed, appealed to, put on trial, but, they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on this earth and therefore did not conformed or fashioned themselves to the standard and patterned of the world, but by faith overcame the world, the flesh and the devil and thus, died **IN FAITH!** We ask again this morning, how will you die, with regrets, with doubts, with failure, with spiritual bankruptcy, with compromising and conforming to this world or dying the death of the righteous in FAITH? Read carefully verse 13 again, I want you to read with me aloud the first five words, “**These all died in faith**, *not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*”

Christianity is following the Lord Jesus Christ amidst all the problems and tribulations in our lives, thus persevering to the end, because of what has been wrought in the heart by God at salvation. So then, it is more than making some profession, it is possessing Jesus Christ in the heart. This is why both Paul and Peter warn us, not to be conformed to this world, because it will lead you away from the things of God. Therefore, we are not to be conformed to this world, but we are to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Romans 8:29 - 31, “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*” The word conform in this text is different that the one in Romans 12:2, it is the Greek word, “***summorphos.***” (Sun/syn=together with and morphe = form) This word means to have the same form so that there will be a similarity. Of course that is speaking of Christ, that we who follow Him would have some sort of similarity to Christ. The word means to be conformed to be fashion alike unto Christ. One writer says, “*The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity, but to make you **conform** to Christ’s image. Not to make you a smarter sinner, but to make you like the Saviour. Not to fill your head with a collection of biblical facts, but to transform your life.*” This Greek word is also used only twice in the whole NT, the other is Phil.3:21, “*Who shall change our vile body, that it may be **fashioned like unto** his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*” The phrase fashion like unto is the same Greek word, thus, we are not to be conformed to this world, but conformed into the image of Christ, that is, our lives should be fashioned like unto Christ’s life! Look at the fearful admonition of the whole text in verses 17 – 21. If you recall we started the year by admonishing you and encouraging you, yea challenging you in verses 12 -15 on Pressing for the Mark in 2010, the importance of pressing for the mark and high calling of our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 17 Paul tells the recipient of his letter to emulate him and in verse 18 he says that many walk as the enemies of the cross of Christ. I’m amazed in the Scriptures when it speaks of false teaching and false professors it is numerous times qualified with the word MANY and when speaking of the true

Christian it is qualified by the word FEW. Sobering in you ask me. Let us consider one of the most fearful texts in the entire Bible is in Matthew 7:21-23, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 **Many will say to me in that day,** Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” Again Paul says in verse 18 of Phil.3, “**For many walk**, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.” The NLT version says, “*For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ.*”

In verse 19 Paul tells us about the end result of those that walk in that way and the reason that they walk in such a manner, “*Whose end is destruction, **whose God is their belly**, and whose glory is in their shame, **who mind earthly things.***” The end result of their way is awful destruction, their future is eternal destruction, and the reason they walk is such a way is because their god is their flesh, their fleshly appetite; all they think about is earthly things. This is their whole mindset; it is centered on the things of this world. Sad, because then they glory in this, they brag about these shameful things and their mind is only about life here on earth. We are also admonished by Paul in Colossians 3:1 & 2, “*If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 **Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.***” Paul then concludes in Phil.3 and verses 20 and 21 with the contrast of those who hearts and minds are centered on the things of God.

Now, everything I have shared with you this morning and the past two weeks, you basically already know, it’s not something profound or deep that leave us, wow, no, this is just a rehearsing in your ears, your responsibility in calling yourself a Christian. Again, the words of Christ Himself to all those who proclaim to be believers in Him, Matthew 16:24, “*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will **come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.***” He laid the groundwork, yea the foundation regarding the genuine truth, that if anyone calls themselves a Christian, this is the essence their profession. Come after Him, deny yourself, take up HIS cross and follow Him. This is not the aspect of lip service, but of a commitment found upon a HOLY CONVICTION.

Now, I’ve shared all to say that Daniel had this holy conviction. It was not just a profession with Daniel, but a true bona fide possession of the Living and True God in his heart. This is what made him stand out in world of darkness and deception. May our God help us to emulate such a godly man who lived his life in following the God of his salvation!

I want to remind you again with that which we concluded last Sunday. Turn again to Revelation 21 and let us consider the first 8 verses. In verse 7 we have those who have overcome and persevered to the end. They have gone through many trials and tribulations, but they continued to the end by wholly following the Lord, regardless of

the circumstances, they have finished their course and now are blessed with God in heaven for all eternity. Rev.21:7, “*He that overcometh shall inherit all things...*” The word ‘overcometh,’ is the Greek word, “***nikao***,” Which basically means victorious, to conquer. We get our English word Nike from this. What person is associated with the Nike commercials? Michael Jordan, why? Because he was victorious 6 times, he conquered his foes in the basketball world. But there is one greater than Michael Jordan, its KING no not king James, but KING Jesus, He who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! He has conquered sin for us, He has conquered death for us, yea, He has conquered Satan, and He has prevailed! Please turn to Rev.5:1 - 5, “*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: **behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book,** and to loose the seven seals thereof.” The word ‘prevailed,’ is the same Greek word “***nikao***.” Christ conquered and prevailed for us so that we also can conquer and prevailed by His grace. Those in Rev.21:7, conquered, prevailed and were victorious over all their foes. These followers of Christ held fast their faith even unto death and in spite of all the temptations and persecutions they were OVERCOMERS! We didn’t have time last week to read these verses, but we will this morning:*

Revelation 2:7, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh** (he who prevails, he who conquers) **will I give to eat of the tree of life,** which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”*

Revelation 2:11, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.**”*

Revelation 2:17, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written,** which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”*

Revelation 2:26, “**And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end,** to him will I give power over the nations:”

Revelation 3:5, “**He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment;** and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

Revelation 3:12, “**Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God,** and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”

Revelation 3:21, “**To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne,** even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

The importance of being overcomers in this life, turn again to Rev.21:7, “**He that overcometh shall inherit all things;** and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” We can tie this in with Hebrews 11:13, “*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were*

*strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” All these that have died in the faith, prevailed, conquered and were victorious over all their foes, they held fast their faith even unto death and over their temptations and persecutions because they were **OVERCOMERS!** In other words, all these, died faith and were able to be victorious and conquerors because they were persuaded of the promises of God, they embraced them and yea, without shame boldly confessed them!*

How then do we overcome? By faith, by faith in His blood! Rev.12:11, “**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb**, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

Rev.17:11, “*These shall make war with the Lamb, and **the Lamb shall overcome them**: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”*

But in verse 8 we have the opposite; those who have lived their lives apart from God and have met their miserable end. But it is that first word I want to quickly consider again, the fearful, that is, the cowardly. In other words those who have given up and apostatized, which were but mere professors of Christianity and through cowardice give way under trials and persecution to apostasy. Quickly I'm sure the question comes to mind, is cowardice a sin that sends people to hell? Let me explain, John is not speaking of a natural fear or a natural cowardice, like the cowardly lion on the Wizard of Oz or of being timid or shy, no he is speaking of those who willfully gave up following Christ, because of fear of the world mocking them or persecuting them because they call themselves Christians, not that they really are. They choose self and safety over Christ. Turn quickly to Mark 4:1-20. Christ makes it very clear regarding those who persevere!

So in Rev.21:8, we have those sobering words, “*But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*” Not only the apostates, that is, the cowards, but all God rejecting people, all who reject the gospel, all who reject the Word of God, all who refuse to believe and bow the knee to Christ and own Him as LORD of their lives will find themselves in that lake of fire. But those who overcome shall be with God for all eternity in heaven. How will you die, as overcomers or as cowards? Will you die the death of the righteous or will you die the death of the unbelieving? Will you die as conquerors or will you die as cowards? Will you die in faith or die in unbelief?

Now, Daniel and his friends will be tested to see if they will be overcomers or fearful unbelieving cowards. They will either be conquerors or cowards! What about you, when you die, will you die in faith believing and trusting God and die the death of the righteous or die as an unbelieving coward? When you die, will you die as a conqueror or as a coward? I share all this so you might understand that the issue that confronted

Daniel and his friends was not something light or simple, their decision can cause them their lives, so were Daniel and his friends conquerors or cowards

Turn with me to Daniel chapter 1 and let us read the first 10 verses. Our main emphasis is in verse 8, "**But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.**"

There are four things we have set before you:

- I. Daniel's Character Considered.**
- II. Daniel's Conviction Challenged.**
- III. Daniel's Commitment Contagious.**
- IV. Daniel's Continual Countenance.**

I. Daniel's Character Considered.

The first thing we want to look at is 'Daniel's Character Considered.' The year is 605 B.C.; Daniel and his 3 friends were taken captives to Babylon. God after much ample warning and admonition by His prophets; finally brought forth judgment upon Judah, the southern kingdom which was under the reign of Jehoiakim. God raised Nebuchadnezzar to take Judah into captivity. Judah's captivity was in 3 stages:

1. Daniel and his 3 friends were among the first group taken into captivity to Babylon in 605 B.C. Daniel 1:1-6.
2. In 597 B.C. a second remnant is taken to Babylon, Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) follows the reign of his father Jehoiakim. 2 Kings 24:8-16
3. Finally in 586 B.C. Jerusalem falls and the temple is destroyed. Zedekiah was installed as king in Jerusalem; 2 Kings 24:17-25:21

Notice the description of those who were taken captive and specifically chosen by King Nebuchadnezzar, verse 3 & 4. So in 605 B.C. Daniel is taken into captivity to a new land that he has never been before. Daniel was about 14 years of age when this happen, some believe he could have been as old as 19, but nonetheless, he was very young when he went to Babylon. This is what makes this story so pronounce because Daniel is not a seasoned Christian, he is a young Christian and his world has been totally been turn upside down. His God will be challenge, his faith will be challenge and his life will be change forever. Many of us who are older than Daniel might not have done as well as Daniel. This story of Daniel is one of the best stories in the Bible that has strengthened many Christian's since it was written, but please bear this in mind, if Daniel had compromised, we would never have had this story, or maybe even the book of Daniel. Behind the scene we give all the credit and glory to God and if Daniel was

here this morning he would say amen to that. But we want to focus on the faith of Daniel that sustained him in this first crisis. Right off the bat his character is going to be challenged. Daniel's name is God is my judge, He knew that God would be watching and judging his every move. Nothing is known of his personal life, but apparently he descended from one of Judah's prominent families or from royal blood, verse 3. Daniel and his 3 friends came to a time of decision in their lives. They would compromise and be conformed to the Babylonian mindset and go with the flow, or they would have a holy conviction and take a stand for the God of their salvation. This particular circumstance would set the course for the rest of their lives. As you and I go through life there will be times we are going to have to make decisions of either following the Lord wholly or compromising by conforming to this world. Daniel and his friends were put in this situation, either compromise and conform or take a stand with holy conviction. This test had the potential to derail their faith and lead them to spiritual digression and complacency. Dear brethren the issues and problems they face are no different from those we face on a daily scale in our present world.

These boys were brought up in or around Jerusalem. They were reminded of their God by the preaching of the prophets. The scribes were teaching in the Temple and the priests were ministering with the sacrifices and offerings. They were reminded of Jehovah God constantly, but now, things have changed and they have been taken captive and hauled off to Babylon. Instead of participating in true worship they are now surrounded by heathen worship, heathen images, and various idols, worldly and heathen philosophies, sounds like ABC on TV, always bashing Christians. It would be easier for them to conform and fit in their new environment, than to take a stand. How did they react or better yet, how do we react when we are surrounded by ungodly influences? It's easy to be spiritual at church when surrounded by the brethren, but when we are in an ungodly environment, do we stand for Christ or do we cave in and compromise. Daniel and his friends were in a very hard situation, they were in an ungodly wicked environment and their faith would be put to the test. These boys were going to be taught a new language, a new religion, a new philosophy and would be given new names. These young men were going to be exposed to things that they have never seen or heard before that was diametrically against their faith. It was a dangerous time for them; they would be forced to conform to the new system around them. There's more here but we need to bring it to a close and pick up here next week. But we finally broke into the text.

Again, Daniel and his friends will be tested to see if they will be overcomers or fearful and unbelieving. They will either be conquerors or cowards! What about you, when you die, will you die in faith believing and trusting God and die the death of the righteous or die as an unbelieving coward? When you die, will you die as a conqueror or as a coward?

May God be pleased to speak to your hearts this morning and draw you to Him! If you are outside Christ come to Him in faith this morning, come in repentance towards God

and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. Will you not cast your lot with the people of God?

If you name the name of Christ this morning, May our great God be pleased to strengthen and sustain you with His grace! May God help you to take a stand for Him, that you would be light and darkness to this dark and dying world! Numbers 6:24-26

“The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: 25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

Get your clear song supplement and turn to page 8, The Master Hath Come.

“We turn from the world, with its smiles and its scorning,
To cast in our lot with the people of God:”