

“Daniel in the Lion’s Den”
Daniel 6:5-28
(Preached at Trinity, July 6, 2014)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we’ve seen, the Babylonian Empire has come crashing down and the Medo-Persian Empire has come to power. This is perfectly consistent with the prophetic dream of Nebuchadnezzar in **Chapter 2**.
Daniel 2:32-33 NAU - "The head of that statue *was made* of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay."
Daniel 2:37-40 NAU - "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; ³⁸ and wherever the sons of men dwell, *or* the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given *them* into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. ³⁹ "After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰ "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces."
2. The kingdom of silver has arisen and replaced the Babylonian head of gold. King Darius is now sitting on the throne. Under King Darius Daniel continued to demonstrate himself as a man of honor and of great ability. Darius soon recognized Daniel’s value and quickly promoted him with plans to make him the prime minister.
Daniel 6:3 NAU - "Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom."
3. Daniel served the king faithfully. He was trustworthy and skillful in his civil leadership. But because of his excellence and because of the king’s promotion he was envied and despised by his contemporaries. They knew they had to discredit Daniel to prevent him from usurping their power, yet his public record was flawless.
Daniel 6:4 NAU - "Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or *evidence of corruption*, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was *to be found* in him."
 - A. They could find no fault in him. He was diligent in his work so they couldn’t accuse him of negligence or mismanagement in any way. He was honest and trustworthy so they could not accuse him of corruption. But they had witnessed over and over that he was a man committed in service to his God. They knew him to be uncompromising so this would be their point of attack. For the Christian this is the most common place of Satan’s attacks. He seeks to undermine our commitment to God.

- B. They came up with the perfect scheme. Knowing Daniel would not turn from praying to God they deceived King Darius into passing a decree that would assure the downfall of Daniel.
Daniel 6:7 NAU - "anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den."
4. Daniel's response was almost identical to his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in **Chapter 3**
Daniel 3:17-18 NAU - "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
¹⁸ "But *even* if *He* does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."
5. Unlike his friends, Daniel responded without saying a word but his actions spoke loud and clear:
Daniel 6:10 NAU - "Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously."
6. Just as with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego Daniel was not assured that God would deliver him from the lion's den. But what he did know was that he would not forsake his God. So bravely he chooses lions rather than forsaking God.
Daniel 6:16 NAU - "Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you."
7. There are several lessons I want to set before you as we view this account of Daniel in the lion's den.
- I. First, our entire Christian journey is a process of equipping us and increasing our faith
- A. The persistent trials in our life strengthen our faith
1 Peter 1:3-7 NAU - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"
1. Your Christian life is a journey. Your faith is continually being tested and strengthened.
 2. Sometimes our greatest trials are reserved until the end.
 - a. By this point Daniel is now 75-80 years old. This is probably the greatest of his trials. His life of unreserved commitment to God has prepared him for this moment
 - b. Our consistent life of faithfulness prepares us for the fiery trials we may face. Our successful resistance to temptation today will help strengthen us for future trials.

- B. So often Christians fail in baby steps
1. They make hundreds of concessions and compromises along the way
 2. I have seen this far too often in my 27 years of pastoring.
 - a. I have seen church members who are steadfast and unmovable. They are faithful in service, faithful in attendance, steadily progressing in the faith. The trial of our faith often comes simply in the form of small choices we make each day. We must be faithful in the small things before we can have any confidence of being steadfast when the large trials come.
 - b. I have seen others consistently compromising, constantly making concessions – and they most often rationalize their choices. Satan’s bag is filled with tricks to lead you to compromise. They usually seem so reasonable.
 - c. This is not to say that Christians never fail. Like children, failures are bound to happen. Failures also serve to strengthen us. Peter’s failure and forgiveness forever changed him.
But we must have a heart of love for Christ – love that drives us to follow Him absolutely – a life of Christian integrity.
- C. Daniel maintained a consistent life of integrity from his youth
1. We’ve seen his life since he was a teenager – always faithful.
 2. Now in his hour of great trial he was prepared to stand firm. By faith he had learned that God is worthy of our all. He joined the ranks of the thousands who have chosen to follow God no matter the cost:
Hebrews 11:33-36 NAU - "by faith conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of* righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received *back* their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; ³⁶ and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment."
 3. Our heart must be steadfast and immovable, faithful and uncompromising through every day of our life. The decisions we make in the small things are important.
 - a. Many have had their faith shipwreck on the rocks of poor decisions that violate the conscience.
1 Timothy 1:18-19 NAU - "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, *my* son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, ¹⁹ keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith."
 - b. The decision to skip Bible study or worship is not an insignificant decision. The decision to make a small concession at work or to relax our diligence with our children is not a small thing. Satan is continually tempting us. Will you be faithful in the small things so that your faith will be continually strengthened for the major trial?

4. Are you being equipped to finish well?
2 Timothy 4:7-8 NAU - "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

II. Second, we are reminded again that God is with us through every trial

- A. We can't forget the steadfast faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
Daniel 3:17-18 NAU - "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ "But *even* if *He does* not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."
 1. God did supernaturally protected them
 This doesn't mean God will always supernaturally come to our defense, but we can have confidence that He will never forsake us.
 2. The greatest comfort was the assurance of God's presence with them.
 They were resting upon God's special promise to His people in exile.
Isaiah 43:2-5 NAU - "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. ³ "For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place. ⁴ "Since you are precious in My sight, *Since* you are honored and I love you, I will give *other* men in your place and *other* peoples in exchange for your life. ⁵ "Do not fear, for I am with you. . . ."
 - 3 This presence was displayed vividly in the presence of the fourth figure.
Daniel 3:24-25 NAU - "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." ²⁵ He said, "Look! I see four men loosed *and* walking *about* in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of *the* gods!"
- B. Daniel, too held onto God's promise of His abiding presence.
 1. God sent His angel to protect Daniel
Daniel 6:22 NAU - "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime."
Daniel 6:23 NAU - "So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God."
 2. Daniel was never alone in the lion's den
Daniel 6:22 NAU - "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me"

- C. The Christian WILL go through fiery trials but he will also find the sweet comfort of the presence of Christ.
1. We are precious in His sight. We are His beloved bride.
Jesus is our constant companion – He walks with us
*“And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.”*
 2. In Christ we are never alone
Matthew 28:20 NAU - "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
Hebrews 13:5 NAS - "Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"
If we have Christ what else do we need?
- III. Third, our testimony of faithfulness will have a profound effect upon others
- A. Nebuchadnezzar learned about the God of Israel through the faithful lives of these Hebrew believers. He marveled at the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
Daniel 3:28 NAU - "Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God."
 - B. Now Daniel's faith has great impact upon King Darius
 1. He witnessed Daniel's constant devotion to God
Daniel 6:16 NAU - "The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you."
Daniel 6:20 NAU - "When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"
 2. The king was stirred by Daniel's faith and by Daniel's God
Daniel 6:25-27 NAU - "Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language who were living in all the land: "May your peace abound! ²⁶ "I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion *will be* forever. ²⁷ "He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has *also* delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."

- C. Your faith and uncompromising commitment will have a profound effect upon those who witness your life
- 1 Peter 2:12 NAU** - " Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation."
- 1 Peter 3:1-2 NAU** - " In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ² as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."

Conclusion:

1. Your faithfulness will not only prepare you for the fiery trials that are sure to come, it will have great effect upon all who witness your life.
2. Most of all, your faithful life is honoring to God whose abiding presence is always with us. May God grant you to live each moment for His glory.