

## SPECIAL SERMON: "In the Lions' Den"

### INTRODUCTION

- Daniel models for us an *uncompromising life* in a *compromising culture*.
- The reality is that Christians all around the world have encountered **the lion's den** on many fronts.

2 Timothy 4:17 – So I was rescued from **the lion's mouth**.

- Context: Daniel is 80 years old. He has experienced the transition from the Babylonian Empire to the rule of Darius the Mede.

### DANIEL'S DISTINCTION (6:1-3)

- Daniel was one of the **three governors** placed over the 120 satraps who oversaw the kingdom.
- **6:3** – "Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps."

"The miracle of the squeaky clean politician" (Dale Ralph Davis)

### DANIEL'S DETRACTORS (6:4-9)

- In a wicked world, godliness is not always appreciated.
- Daniel's **distinction** made him **distinctly annoying** to the other governors.

#### Notes:

1. **The Animosity**: The light of Daniel's life exposes their corruption. They could have been possibly motivated by jealousy, religious bias, or raw, ugly racism.
2. **The Admission**: Verse 5 says that they found no blame in Daniel so they decided to trap him. They don't want Daniel to do something wrong; they want Daniel to stop doing something right.
3. **The Appeal**: In verses 6-7 the appeal is to the king's ego. *Daniel was so predictable in his spiritual disciplines that they knew exactly what he was going to do: pray three times a day.*

### DANIEL'S DEFIANCE (6:10)

- Daniel is *unfazed*: "He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously." (6:10)
- **Daniel would rather die than not pray!** (**Acts 3:1** – "the hour of prayer")

**Personal Application**: Observe that Daniel had structure to his prayer life. His prayer life had a predictability to it. Daniel was not crisis-centered: he did not pray only when there was an emergency. His prayer life ran "like the trains in Japan": *he was always on time*.

### DANIEL'S DETENTION (6:16)

- **6:16** – Daniel was cast into the **den of lions**: a pit with lions into which the victim was lowered.

### DANIEL'S DELIVERANCE (6:22)

- This is a **real miracle of deliverance!** Yet note that the passage is *descriptive*, not *prescriptive* in nature. (Encouragement: Don't miss God's **power at work** in the ordinary moments of life.)

# Sermon Application Questions

January 12, 2020

## PERSONAL RESPONSES

1

One of the encouraging elements of Daniel's life was the predictability and the structure of his spiritual disciplines. Even his enemies knew that Daniel "*got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God*" (Daniel 6:10).

Pastor Philip challenged us to be "**predictable Christians**". He said, "I want my daughters to know, I want my neighbors to know, I want my friends to know they can predict given a scenario. Here is what Philip De Courcy will do."

How did this exhortation encourage you? What are some elements in your spiritual life that need more structure, predictability, and consistency in the New Year?

2

Another challenging observation from Daniel's life was the **excellence in which he conducted himself in a secular environment**. As Dale Ralph Davis observes, "*Daniel 6 begins with a miracle: a squeaky clean politician!*" It is amazing to note that Daniel made the transition from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar to the reign of Darius the Mede.

Daniel 6:3 says that an "excellent spirit" was in Daniel and verse 4 says that "no error or fault was found in him." What are some ways that we can pursue excellence in our ordinary spheres of influence?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1

Take some time and reflect on some of the key passages related to this week's sermon. Ask the Lord for help in making application of these truths to your life.

### **Proverbs 20:6**

Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?

### **Luke 11:1-4**

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." And he said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.

### **John 15:19**

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

### **Acts 3:1**

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

### **Colossians 3:22-24**

Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for me, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

### **2 Timothy 4:17**

So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

**Read Daniel 6:10-16 with a particular focus on Daniel's commitment to prayer.**

2

What are some of your observations regarding Daniel's prayer life from this text? How does Daniel's prayer life encourage us to be more faithful and fervent in prayer?

Note: For more insight into Daniel's prayer life, you can read **Daniel 9:1-19** for an example of how he prayed to the Lord.

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

Pastor Philip taught us that there are two categories of sin:

1. **Sins of commission:** actively doing something forbidden.
2. **Sins of omission:** neglecting to do what you should have done.

1

James 4:17 says, "So whoever knows the right things to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."

Biblical counselor Mark Shaw has observed that "*sins of omission, or failing to do the right thing that God requires, usually have far-reaching consequences that can be greater than sins of commission.*"

**Brainstorm: What would be 1-3 examples of "sins of omission"? What are some of the "far-reaching consequences" of neglecting to obey God in these areas?**

Pastor Philip noted that even when we do not experience a "miraculous" deliverance, we should not miss God's **power at work** in the ordinary moments of life.

2

*"We may not escape trouble, but we can never escape the presence of God in trouble."*

What are some ways that God has worked in your life during times of trouble? Perhaps write out a short prayer of thanksgiving for God's constant faithfulness during our times of difficulty.

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