

Daniel 6: The Lions Den

Faith in the one true God Endures through all Adversity

Transition:

Not only has Sally put together one of the most amazing children's Bible's of all time, but she also has an amazing accent.

And now you are stuck with me, I've written a few blog posts and I've been told I sound like the guy from the stand home depot commercial.

Introduction

I've been reflecting on the story that Sally just read to us; it is one of the most famous stories in the Bible. If you own any children's Bible, it is in there. If you grew up in church and went to Sunday school, you heard this story every year.

The teaching on this passage typically ends like this, "Dare to be a Daniel." Be like this guy. Make the same types of choices he made. If you are like Daniel, when you get thrown into the lion's den, God will save you.

I don't want to throw the baby out with the bath water here, bc/the truth is I do want to be like Daniel, I want to be a man of great faith, and I want to know and believe that God still works in great ways for his people.

BUT...

This book is not trying to tell us how great Daniel is. It is pointing to how great his God is.

We are able to see this bc/ of the circumstance that Daniel lives in. He lives almost his whole life surrounded by and confronted by adversity. He is as an exile Babylon; he has lived almost his entire life separated from his home.

Everything that would have made up his Jewish identity, he was separated from. He lives surrounded by foreign gods, surrounded by people living lives he doesn't agree with; he works for kings that are temperamental and kill employees that don't do what they say, he works with people who are prejudiced against him and consistently try to discredit him.

At first glance it may seem like we don't have much in common with Daniel and his circumstances, but I think we actually do, bc/this life is full of adversity. We are all going to have times when it seems like we are being thrown to the lions; when things are so bad that we look around and say, "God, are you there? I don't know how to reconcile what the Bible says about you and what I see in my life." Some of you have been through this, you know exactly what I am talking about. Some of you are in the midst of it right

now, and if you haven't faced real adversity yet, it is only a matter of time.

There is some really good news in this story: **Faith in the one true God endures through all adversity.** So this story should give us hope and comfort that no matter what you are going through or what you will go through, faith in the one true God endures and even triumphs through all adversity.

So I just want to look at one thing in Daniel's life, yes, this is a one point sermon, never had that at the Summit, have you?

I want to pull out one aspect of Daniel's life, one thing that was true about him, that points to why his faith endured through adversity and, and if it is also true about you, how your faith can endure through adversity, and thrive, and triumph through all adversity.

1. Daniel lived as if he was on his way home

Why does this matter so much? Let me read one verse in this chapter and I think it is going to shed some light on this: verse 10:

"When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously."

Daniel never forgot his true home. (did he?) Where did he pray towards? His home, Jerusalem.

- Example: Going home for Thanksgiving or Christmas. We know that feeling, and there is something about it that just feels right for most of us. My dad, the weirdo's, "dad, you are one of the weirdo's."
- Home is that place where we belong, they know you are weirdo and your loved anyway, where everything is just right...
- The same is true with Daniel. He knew he belonged somewhere else. That is why he faced Jerusalem.
- He does this a lot. He had a lifestyle of this, a habit that prayed 3x a day facing his home. 3x a day Daniel intentionally spent time remembering who he was, where he was from, so that he would remember who his God was, where his heart longed to be.
- Jerusalem was where the temple was, but even more important, the temple was where God's presence was. Daniel wanted to be in the presence of God.
- By making this habit, Daniel was saying to God, "I want to be with you."
- But we know by reading this book that:
- **Daniel didn't need to be in Jerusalem to be with God, bc/God was already with Daniel in Babylon.**
- Daniel's faith endured bc/God was with him in Babylon. If your faith is in God, he is with you right now no matter what you are going through and he is never going to abandon you.

Daniel lived as if he was on his way home also means this:

He didn't make a new home in Babylon:

- He never let his heart grow roots in Babylon. He never held too tightly to anything in Babylon. He never put his faith in anything that Babylon had to offer.
- When this edict came down, Daniel had a choice, continue to follow God or save his own life and Daniel chose God.
- **His faith was in God (his hope was in God), not in preserving his life. He had more faith in God than he did in his own life.** He concluded that the best thing was not to live longer but to continue to honor and seek God. This is really weird and strange until you think about it this way:
 - What could you put your hope in that you are not going to ultimately lose anyway? What happiness do you have right now that if the wrong thing happened, if the worst circumstance occurred you couldn't lose?
 - Your money? Your health? Your reputation? Your family? Your friends? Your success? You name it, you can lose it today. You are only one sentence away from losing everything you have put your faith in.
 - And where will you be if that happens? Where will you go?

- The book of Daniel tells us something very specifically about this:
- Verse 20: *The king cried out in tone of anguish...to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"* ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, *"O king, live forever!* ²² *My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."*
- And after seeing God's work to save Daniel, Darius says,
 - *"I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end."* Verse 26 (this is the theme of the whole book)
- Nothing will ever overcome God's kingdom, so why would you put your faith anywhere else?

The book of Daniel is not about one man's awesome life. It is not about his faith, but the object of his faith.

At the end of the JSB's Daniel, it says, "_____"
Daniel is not just a man of faith, not just a man that God used to do some incredible things, but symbolizes the man that God would send to save the whole world.

“Like Daniel, Jesus was falsely accused by his enemies and brought before a ruler, Pontius Pilate, who sought unsuccessfully to deliver him from his fate, before handing him over to a violent death. Like Daniel, Jesus was condemned to die. And his body was placed into a sealed pit so that his situation could not be changed by human intervention. Jesus trial went even deeper than Daniel’s however: he did not merely suffer the threat of death, he went down into death itself. Although Jesus was innocent, he suffered the fate of the guilty ones. There was no angel to comfort him with the presence God in his pit; on the contrary, he was left in the blackness utterly alone and abandoned by God, suffering the fate that we, the guilty ones, deserved. His body was left entombed in the icy grip of death for three days before the angel finally came to roll away his stone...When Daniel came forth from the lion’s den, he came out alone. No one else was saved by God’s deliverance of him. But when Jesus came forth from the tomb, he came out as the head of a mighty company of people who have been redeemed from the pit through his death...Because of the work of Christ on behalf of his people, the divine judge says: ‘Not guilty! You may go free!’”

¹

If you want faith that endures through adversity, put your faith in the only thing, the only PERSON that has overcome the greatest adversity. Jesus is why Daniel was able to endure, and Jesus is why we are able to endure.

Is your faith in Christ or is it in this world?

Believers, how have you made your home in this world? Examine yourself. What else has a grip on your heart? What are you not willing to lose?

How often do you go to him just to be in his presence, to remember who he is, who you are, and where your true home is?

He is the one true God, the living God, he endures forever, and his kingdom will never end.

If you know him, you are child of the king, more loved than you know, a co-heir with Christ and a new creation.

Your home is with him,

If you believe this, then your faith can endure and triumph over any adversity bc/he has triumphed over the greatest adversity for you.

let’s pray.

¹ Duguid, Ian. *Daniel*, 103-104.