

11/21/21 Message

Part of Prayers for Victory
November 20, 2021

Message: Survive the Lion's Den

Series: Winning with Thanks

Recap: This is our sixth message in the series Prayers for Victory. In this series you'll be challenged to be equipped and ready for the battles you'll face in life. More than that, you'll be encouraged to shape your prayers knowing the battle is approaching... even before the battle rages!

Mark Batterson wrote a book called 'Circle Maker' and the whole premise of the book is drawing circles around your prayers. Literally drawing a circle, stepping into the circle, and not coming out until your prayer has been answered.

- God honors BOLD prayers because BOLD prayers honor God!

"Circle makers claim God given promises... they pursue God sized dreams... and they seize God ordained opportunities! I want you to become a circle maker that draws circles around your biggest dreams and your biggest fears. I want you to draw circles around your family... your job... your problems... your goals."

Introduction

For background, we pull from Daniel 1. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon seized Jerusalem (he took over). Nebuchadnezzar had a different God than the God of Israel. He took items from the Temple and he took Israelites as his captives. He hand-picked some of Israel's young men that were strong, healthy, good-looking, gifted with knowledge and good judgment.

King Nebuchadnezzar wanted the best of Israel's young men (vv3-4).

Daniel was one of the four selected. The King wanted the young men to eat what he ate.

- Daniel wanted to keep himself →→PURE (v8)

His eating habits became known as the “Daniel Fast” – he only consumed water, juice, fruits, and vegetables (no meat, sweets, or bread). He was committed to honoring God with his body.

New King in Town

Darius the Mede was now king (no longer Nebuchadnezzar).

Daniel 6:1-3 (NLT)

1 Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each province.

2 The king also chose Daniel and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king’s interests.

3 Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel’s great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire.

Daniel was hand-picked to administer the entire empire!

- Daniel went from CAPTIVE to ruler

Daniel 6:4-9 (NLT)

4 Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn’t find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy.

5 So they concluded, “Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion.”

6 So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, “Long live King Darius!

7 We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions.

8 And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.”

9 So King Darius signed the law.

The 122 who worked for Daniel plotted against him.

- They looked for FAULT in Daniel (v4)
- They tricked the king, but their TARGET was Daniel

Daniel 6:10-11 (NLT)

10 But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.

11 Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help.

Cf. Ephesians 6 tells us we are not fighting against flesh and blood, our enemies aren't each other, our enemies are evil spirits in the dark world.

Daniel Responds to the Attack

- Daniel was found PRAYING
- He gave THANKS
- He asked for God's HELP

Daniel 6:12-16 (NLT)

12 So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?" "Yes," the king replied, "that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked."

13 Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day."

14 Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.

15 In the evening the men went together to the king and said, "Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed."

16 So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you

serve so faithfully, rescue you.”

- The King didn't believe in GOD
- The King sentenced Daniel to DEATH

Why a den of lions? Because this was a spiritual battle!

1 Peter 5:8

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Daniel 6:17, 19-23 (NLT)

17 A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel.

19 Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den.

20 When he got there, he called out in anguish, “Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?”

21 Daniel answered, “Long live the king!

22 My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.”

23 The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.

- Daniel CIRCLED the enemy

More Important than Daniel Surviving the Lion's Den

- Daniel's circle was based on TRUST

Hebrews 11:33

By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions...

Hebrews 11:34

(by faith) Their weakness was turned to strength...

- Daniel's circle was based on FAITH

Daniel 6:24-27 (NLT)

24 Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den.

25 Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: "Peace and prosperity to you!

26 "I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God, and he will endure forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his rule will never end.

27 He rescues and saves his people; he performs miraculous signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

Daniel was saved BEFORE he went into the lion's den - he would have been a winner either way!

The king started out saying in v16, "may your God" rescue you, and in v20, "was your God" able to rescue you. Then his tone changed in vv26-27, "For He is the living God, and He will endure forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed, and His rule will never end. He rescues and saves His people; He performs miraculous signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth."

- Because of Daniel, the king was SAVED

God Appears to Daniel

Daniel 10:5-17 (NLT)

5 I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen clothing, with a belt of pure gold around his waist.

6 His body looked like a precious gem. His face flashed like lightning, and his eyes flamed like torches. His arms and feet shone like polished bronze, and his voice roared like a vast multitude of people.

7 Only I, Daniel, saw this vision. The men with me saw nothing, but they were suddenly terrified and ran away to hide.

8 So I was left there all alone to see this amazing vision. My strength

left me, my face grew deathly pale, and I felt very weak.

9 Then I heard the man speak, and when I heard the sound of his voice, I fainted and lay there with my face to the ground.

10 Just then a hand touched me and lifted me, still trembling, to my hands and knees.

11 And the man said to me, "Daniel, you are very precious to God, so listen carefully to what I have to say to you. Stand up, for I have been sent to you." When he said this to me, I stood up, still trembling.

12 Then he said, "Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer.

Daniel is told

- You are precious to God (v11)
- Don't fear, don't be afraid (v12)
- God knows
- You have prayed for understanding
- You have humbled yourself before Him

Because of this...

- Daniel's prayers were HEARD and ANSWERED

Daniel prayed for 21 days without an answer. Daniel was praying but no answer was coming. His strength was gone - he could hardly breathe! He was being defeated, but he did not give up!

Daniel drew a circle and prayed for 21 days, and his prayers were answered!

When you're head to head with the lion:

- Do not be AFRAID, have no fear
- Know that God LOVES you, you are precious to Him
- Embrace PEACE that can only come from Him
- Be ENCOURAGED, trust Him
- Be STRONG in your faith

That's how you survive the lion's den!

What's your lion's den?