

“The Posture of Joy”

Summary

What does our posture -- both physical and spiritual -- say about where we stand with God and with the people around us? This message takes us deep into the story of Daniel in the lion's den, where we discover that Daniel's faithfulness was so consistent and so visible that even the king of an entire kingdom could recognize it. Daniel's posture of humility and boldness -- kneeling before God with his windows wide open -- was not a private, hidden practice. It was a way of life that transformed an entire kingdom. We are challenged to consider how our own inner posture shapes the way we move through the world, and how a heart of humility can disarm conflict, open us to receive from God, and ultimately draw others toward something greater than themselves. The takeaway is both practical and profound: when we intentionally align our outward posture with a surrendered heart, something shifts -- in us, and in the rooms we walk into.

Small Group Study Guide – The Posture of Joy

Overview

This sermon explored how our physical and heart posture reflect and shape our walk with God. Drawing from Daniel 6, Pastor Eric Snow examined how Daniel's consistent posture of humility and boldness before God ultimately transformed an entire kingdom. The sermon also invited honest reflection on where we find our joy in the faith and how that joy is meant to overflow into every relationship and environment we enter.

Key Takeaways

- **Joy in the faith is communal.** When we share our victories and speak into one another's lives, we strengthen the whole body.
- **Posture matters in both directions.** Sometimes our outward posture shapes our inward condition. Sometimes our inward condition shapes our outward posture. Both are worth paying attention to.
- **Humility is not weakness.** Daniel knelt in prayer with an open window. His humility was visible, bold, and unashamed.
- **Faithfulness is observed.** Daniel's consistent devotion was noticed by the highest authority in the land. Our posture before God is seen by the people around us.
- **The overflow changes atmospheres.** When we carry joy, peace, and humility out of the church and into our daily lives, the people around us experience something different.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. At the beginning of the sermon, the congregation was asked: where do you find your joy in the faith? Take a moment to answer that question now. What is genuinely giving you joy in your walk with God right now?
2. Pastor Eric observed that people in the faith do not always wear faces that match what God has done inside them. Have you ever noticed that in yourself? What tends to drain the visible joy from your life?

Digging into the Text

3. Read Daniel 6:3. Daniel was distinguished among his peers because of the excellent spirit within him. What does it look like practically to carry that kind of spirit into your workplace, your home, or your neighborhood?
4. In Daniel 6:10, Daniel prayed openly by a window even after the decree was signed against him. His humility was paired with boldness. How do you personally hold those two things together? Is one easier for you than the other?
5. The king said twice that Daniel served God "continually" (Daniel 6:16 and 6:20). What does continuity in your faith look like during seasons when it is difficult to maintain? What has helped you stay consistent?
6. By the end of Daniel 6, a pagan king issued a decree calling an entire kingdom to honor the God of Daniel. What does it say about the power of one person's faithful posture over time?

Personal Reflection

7. Pastor Eric described how a simple posture shift, such as holding his hands open when being prayed over, changed his mindset and helped him receive from God more intentionally. Have you ever experienced something similar? What physical or intentional act has helped shift your heart posture?
 8. He also shared that kneeling is uncomfortable, and that the heart posture of humility is equally uncomfortable. Where in your life is God asking you to take a posture that feels uncomfortable right now?
 9. Pastor Eric said that when his wife responded with a sincere apology in the middle of a disagreement, it immediately diffused the situation. Think about a current relationship where a posture of humility could change the atmosphere. What would that look like?
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Community and Outreach

10. The sermon placed a strong emphasis on the power of community, specifically on believers encouraging one another, praying for one another, and speaking truth into each other's lives. Who in your life is currently playing that role for you? Who are you playing that role for?
11. Pastor Eric described moments in stores or everyday settings where the Holy Spirit prompted someone to reach out to a stranger. Has that happened to you? What made you respond, or what held you back?
12. He said: "We don't get the luxury of being like everybody else." What does that mean to you personally in how you carry yourself this week?

Practical Applications

This week, choose one or more of the following:

- **Adjust your posture in prayer.** Try praying on your knees, with open hands, or face down. Notice whether the change in physical posture affects your mindset and openness to God.
- **Write down a recent victory.** Pastor Eric emphasized the importance of recording and revisiting what God has done. Write down one specific thing God has done in your life recently and share it with someone in your group.
- **Send an intentional word.** Think of someone the Holy Spirit has placed on your heart. Reach out this week with a word of encouragement, a prayer, or simply to check in.
- **Carry your posture outside these walls.** Before you enter your workplace, your home, or a social setting this week, pause and ask God to help your face and your demeanor reflect what he has done inside you.
- **Read Daniel 6 in full.** Read the entire chapter and note every place where Daniel's character or posture is described. Consider what a modern version of that faithfulness looks like in your own life.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together over these areas:

- That God would help each person identify and cultivate a genuine heart posture of humility and boldness
- That the joy of the Lord would be visible in each member's daily life and relationships
- That the group would grow in its commitment to encourage and speak truth into one another
- That each person would be sensitive and obedient when the Holy Spirit prompts them to reach out to someone in need

Main Points – The Posture of Joy

Sermon Summary:

Drawing from the account of Daniel in the lions' den, Pastor Eric explores how both our physical and heart posture shape the way we walk out our faith. Humility is not weakness but a bold, intentional stance before God and others -- one that invites the Holy Spirit to move and transforms the atmosphere around us. Just as Daniel's consistent, faithful posture before God ultimately led an entire kingdom to recognize the living God, believers today are called to carry that same humble boldness into every relationship and environment they enter. The sermon emphasizes the power of Christian community, the importance of celebrating and remembering God's victories, and the call to let our outward lives reflect the joy and peace that God has placed within us.

Key Points:

- Joy in the faith is found in many forms -- confidence in God, knowing His love, witnessing His faithfulness, and seeing Him show up when we are obedient
- Community and group participation in worship are closer to what heaven will look like than solitary, passive church attendance
- Writing down and revisiting victories is essential because we constantly need to be reminded of what God has done
- Our physical posture and our heart posture are deeply connected -- one often influences the other
- Humility is not weakness; Daniel's kneeling with an open window was both humble and bold
- A posture of receiving, such as open hands during prayer, shifts our mindset and allows us to receive more fully from God
- When believers walk in humility and joy, they change the atmosphere around them -- in their homes, workplaces, and everyday encounters
- The intended outcome of a right heart posture is not just personal transformation but the transformation of those around us, just as Daniel's faithfulness transformed an entire kingdom
- Believers do not have the luxury of blending in -- our faces and demeanor should reflect what God has done inside us
- The Christian community at its best challenges, encourages, and lifts one another up in obedience to the Holy Spirit

Scripture Reference:

- Daniel 6:3 -- describes how Daniel was distinguished above all others because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom
- Daniel 6:10 -- describes Daniel kneeling three times a day with his window open toward Jerusalem, praying and giving thanks as was his consistent practice
- Daniel 6:14-15 -- the king, distressed upon learning of Daniel's situation, labored until sundown trying to find a way to rescue him

- Daniel 6:16 -- the king declares to Daniel his hope that Daniel's God, whom Daniel serves continually, would deliver him
- Daniel 6:20-22 -- the king calls out to Daniel in anguish, again referencing the God Daniel serves continually; Daniel responds with humility, crediting God's angel for shutting the lions' mouths
- Daniel 6:25-27 -- King Darius issues a decree to all nations calling people to fear the God of Daniel, declaring him the living God whose kingdom will never be destroyed, who delivers and rescues and works signs and wonders
- Psalm 95:6 -- an invitation to bow down in worship and kneel before the Lord our maker, cited in connection with the book "Lead with Prayer"

Discussion Questions – The Posture of Joy

Pastor Eric asked the congregation where they find their joy in the faith — how would you answer that question, and has your source of joy shifted over time in your walk with God?

Daniel maintained a posture of excellence and faithfulness so consistent that his enemies could find no fault in him — what would it look like practically for your life at work, at home, or in your community to reflect that same standard?

The sermon draws a connection between outward physical posture and inward heart posture — in what ways have you experienced a physical act of worship, such as kneeling or lifting your hands, actually shifting your spiritual receptivity?

Daniel prayed with his window open toward Jerusalem even after the decree was signed, combining humility with boldness — where in your life might God be calling you to a similar kind of bold, visible faithfulness despite real consequences?

Pastor Eric observed that believers do not always wear faces that reflect what God has done inside them — what do you think are the most common reasons Christians struggle to let their outward demeanor match their inner faith?

The king twice described Daniel as someone who served God 'continually,' suggesting that Daniel's consistency was what made him recognizable — how does consistency in your own spiritual life shape how others perceive and are drawn to God through you?

The sermon highlights how Daniel's faithfulness ultimately led an entire kingdom to fear and honor God — how does this challenge the way you think about the ripple effect of your personal obedience on the people around you?

The congregation was encouraged to write down and revisit their victories so they can be reminded of God's faithfulness during difficult days — what practices or habits help you hold onto evidence of God's work when circumstances feel discouraging?

Pastor Eric described the overflow of a worshiping, humble, joy-filled community as something that changes the atmosphere in restaurants, workplaces, and everyday encounters — what specific area of your regular life do you sense God calling you to carry that overflow into more intentionally?

Scriptures – The Posture of Joy

Directly Cited

Daniel 6:3 - Daniel was distinguished above other officials because of his excellent spirit, and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

Daniel 6:4-5 - Officials sought to find fault in Daniel but could find no grounds for complaint because he was faithful and blameless.

Daniel 6:10 - Daniel, knowing the decree had been signed, went to his house and knelt three times a day to pray and give thanks, as was his custom.

Daniel 6:14-15 - The king was distressed upon hearing of Daniel's situation and labored until sundown trying to find a way to rescue him.

Daniel 6:16 - The king commanded Daniel to be cast into the den of lions, expressing hope that Daniel's God would deliver him.

Daniel 6:20-22 - The king called out to Daniel in anguish; Daniel replied that God had sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths because he was found blameless.

Daniel 6:25-27 - King Darius issued a decree to all nations declaring reverence for the living God of Daniel, who delivers, rescues, and works signs and wonders.

Psalms 95:6 - An invitation to bow down in worship and kneel before the Lord our maker.

Alluded To or Implied

Zephaniah 3:17 - The reference to God as "a father who dances over us," pointing to the image of God rejoicing over his people with singing.

Psalms 16:11 - The congregant's statement "in his presence is fullness of joy" reflects the language of this psalm.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - The sermon's emphasis on believers encouraging one another and not neglecting community aligns with this passage about spurring one another toward love and good deeds.

James 4:10 - The theme of humbling oneself before the Lord, who will lift you up.

Philippians 4:4 - The overarching call to rejoice and carry joy outside the walls of the church into everyday life.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 - The call to encourage one another and build each other up within the community of believers.

Ephesians 5:19-20 - The idea of singing songs even when you do not feel like it as an act of worship and a means of shifting the heart.

Devotional – The Posture of Joy

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on Themes from the Sermon by Pastor Eric Snow

Theme Overview

This reading plan draws from the core themes of Pastor Eric's message: the posture of the heart before God, the power of community, joy in faith, humility in action, and the boldness of a life lived faithfully before others. Each day invites you to slow down, reflect, and allow the Word to shape both your inward posture and your outward witness.

Day 1: The Posture of a Faithful Heart

Reading: Daniel 6:1-10

In Daniel 6:10, we find Daniel kneeling three times a day before God, his window open toward Jerusalem, even after a decree was signed that made doing so a punishable offense. This passage describes a man whose prayer life was not a reaction to crisis but a deeply rooted daily rhythm. His window was open. His knees were bent. His heart was oriented toward God before the lions were ever a threat.

Devotional:

Faithfulness is rarely dramatic at first. It is quiet. It is daily. It is a window opened toward God before anyone is watching and before any decree demands otherwise. Pastor Eric drew attention to Daniel's consistency, noting that the king himself recognized Daniel as one who served God "continually." That word is significant. Not occasionally. Not when it was convenient. Continually. Ask yourself today: what does your daily posture before God actually look like? Is prayer something you return to rhythmically, or only when pressure forces you to your knees? Daniel's open window was an act of both humility and boldness. There was no hiding his devotion. His inner life and his outward life were aligned. That alignment is what made him recognizable as a servant of the living God, even to a pagan king.

Reflection Questions:

- What does your daily rhythm of prayer reveal about the true posture of your heart?
- Is there an area of your life where you are serving God privately but hiding it publicly out of fear?

- What would it look like to open your window today?

Practical Application:

Set aside a specific time today to pray in a posture you do not normally use, whether kneeling, hands open and extended, or face down. Notice how the physical act of positioning your body affects your willingness to receive and your sense of humility before God.

Day 2: Joy as a Witness

Reading: Nehemiah 8:10; Philippians 4:4-7; Psalm 16:11

Nehemiah 8:10 reminds us that the joy of the Lord is our strength. Philippians 4:4-7 calls us to rejoice in the Lord always, and promises a peace that surpasses human understanding when we bring our anxieties to God in prayer with thanksgiving. Psalm 16:11 speaks of fullness of joy found in God's presence.

Devotional:

Pastor Eric opened his message with a simple but penetrating question: where is your joy? He observed that people in the faith do not always wear faces that reflect what they carry inside. Joy is not the absence of difficulty. It is the presence of God in the middle of it. The congregation's answers were telling: confidence in him, knowing he loves me, seeing doors open, witnessing his faithfulness. These are not abstract theological concepts. They are lived experiences of a God who shows up. Joy, in the biblical sense, is not a mood. It is a declaration. It is the outward evidence of an inward reality. When you carry genuine joy, it becomes a witness before the world without you ever having to say a word.

Reflection Questions:

- When someone who does not know you observes your life this week, what will they conclude about the God you serve?
- What specific victories or moments of God's faithfulness can you recall today that deserve to be spoken aloud or written down?
- Is there a difference between your inward experience of God's goodness and the face you present to the world?

Practical Application:

Write down three specific moments from the past month where God showed up in your life. Keep this list somewhere visible. Return to it on days when joy feels distant. As Pastor Eric noted, there is great importance in revisiting the victories.

Day 3: Humility That Changes the Room

Reading: Philippians 2:3-11; Psalm 95:6; James 4:10

Philippians 2:3-11 presents Christ himself as the ultimate model of humility, describing how he set aside the privileges of divinity to take on human form and serve. Psalm 95:6 calls believers to bow down and kneel before the Lord their maker. James 4:10 promises that those who humble themselves before the Lord will be lifted up.

Devotional:

Pastor Eric made a distinction that is easy to miss: humility is not weakness. Daniel knelt before God, but his window was open. His posture was low before the Lord and visible before the world. There was no contradiction in that. True humility does not shrink from boldness. It simply ensures that the boldness is rooted in God rather than in self. Pastor Eric also shared how a simple change in physical posture, hands open during prayer, shifted his entire mindset toward receiving rather than resisting. He described how Nanette's sincere apology in the middle of a disagreement diffused the entire situation not because she was wrong, but because humility disarms pride. Humility changes the atmosphere of a room, a marriage, a workplace, and a congregation.

Reflection Questions:

- Is there a relationship in your life right now where a humble posture, not a defensive one, could change the dynamic?
- How do you typically position yourself when receiving prayer or correction? Are you open, or are you guarded?
- Where in your life is pride masquerading as strength?

Practical Application:

Identify one relationship this week where you have been holding a defensive posture. Choose one specific act of humility, whether an apology, a genuine question, or simply listening without preparing your rebuttal, and practice it intentionally.

Day 4: The Boldness of a Life Observed

Reading: Daniel 6:19-27; Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:12

Daniel 6:19-27 records the moment King Darius rushed to the lion's den and cried out to Daniel, acknowledging the God whom Daniel served continually. Matthew 5:14-16 calls believers to let their light shine before others so that those who observe them will glorify God. First Peter 2:12 urges believers to live honorably among those who do not yet believe, so that their good conduct might lead others toward God.

Devotional:

The most stunning moment in Daniel 6 is not the closed mouths of the lions. It is the open mouth of a pagan king proclaiming the greatness of the living God to every nation and language in his dominion. Daniel did not write that decree. Darius did. Daniel's faithfulness produced a witness he never could have manufactured on his own. This is the intended end of a life lived with integrity and humility: not that we are praised, but that God is. Pastor Eric pointed to this directly, noting that Daniel's posture was observed by the highest person in the land. Your faithfulness is being observed too, by your coworkers, your neighbors, your children, and your community. The question is not whether you are being watched. The question is what your life is declaring about the God you serve.

Reflection Questions:

- If the people closest to you were asked to describe the God you serve based only on what they observe in your life, what would they say?
- Are there areas of your life where your private conduct and your public faith are misaligned?
- What would it look like for your faithfulness to produce a witness you could not manufacture yourself?

Practical Application:

Choose one person in your life who does not yet follow Jesus and pray specifically for them every day this week. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you one practical way your life can serve as a visible testimony to them, not through words alone, but through the quality of your presence and character.

Day 5: Community, Encouragement, and the Overflow

Reading: Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Hebrews 10:24-25 urges believers not to neglect gathering together, but to stir one another up toward love and good works. First Thessalonians 5:11 calls the community to encourage one another and build each other up. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 speaks to the strength that comes from partnership, noting that a cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Devotional:

Pastor Eric spoke with deep affection about the community at Living Waters. He spoke of being prayed over five times before preaching. He described the way the worship team battled through something heavy before the Spirit broke free, because they were obedient. None of these things happened in isolation. Community is not a bonus feature of the Christian life. It is part of its essential structure. Pastor Eric noted that he is convinced of the importance of writing down

victories and hearing about other people's victories. When we share what God has done, we remind one another of who he is. The overflow of a healthy, honest, praying community does not stay within four walls. It spills into restaurants, workplaces, gas stations, and neighborhoods. You are not meant to carry this alone. And you are not meant to keep it to yourself.

Reflection Questions:

- Who in your life is faithfully encouraging you, and have you told them what their presence means to you?
- Is there someone the Holy Spirit has placed on your heart recently whom you have not yet reached out to?
- How is the health of your community life affecting your individual walk with God?

Practical Application:

Reach out to one person in your faith community today, not because there is a crisis, but simply to encourage them. Share a specific thing you appreciate about them or a moment when their faithfulness impacted you. Then ask them how you can pray for them this week. Let the overflow begin.

Closing Reflection for the Week

Pastor Eric closed his message with a prayer that captured the heart of everything he shared. He thanked God for helping believers humble themselves, for unlocking something in the Spirit when hands are lifted and mouths are opened even when it does not feel natural, and for the reality that walking out of a gathered community with a changed heart means other people's lives will be changed too. That is the arc of this reading plan. A heart postured before God, filled with joy, shaped by humility, made bold by faithfulness, and poured out into community. May your week reflect all of it.