

PERSEVERING UNDER PRESSURE

Poised Under Pressure Series – Part 4

By Brian Flewelling 7.22.18

Intro:

We are in week four of a five-week Bible Study on the book of Daniel. I'm always amazed at how a 2,500-year-old piece of literature, like Daniel, can be so exciting, and have so many important things to say to us today.

In chapter one we discovered how the habits you practice today prepare you for the pressure to come. In chapters 2-3 we noticed, because of their preparedness they remained pure under pressure, faithful to God and planted in his ways. In chapters 4-5 Pastor Brian showed us how pride causes us to act like be block-heads. God is the one in control. When we get to thinking that we are in control, we can do some pretty ridiculous things.

This week we are reading Daniel chapter 6. Daniel in the Lion's Den.

Background:

- We've just watched the Babylonian empire crumble. 70 years as Superbowl champions.
- In Daniel 5:30 we see the shift from reigning superbowl champions hundreds of miles east to the Persian empire.
- **Slide: map**
- After 70 years of oppression, Babylon, forever more, became a symbol to Jews and Christians afterward: of worldliness, control, antagonism to God, empire and oppression

Daniel 5:30-31

- In your Bible this is where you can start to pick up the story of Ezra, Nehemiah
- The book of Ezra opens up with ["In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia..."](#)
- **Slide: Cyrus the Great (2 pics)**
5:31 We don't know if Darius the Mede was the name of a local magistrate under Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, or if Darius was the local name given to Cyrus King of Persia.

Daniel 6:1-2

- The depiction the Bible gives of the Persian empire perfectly matches the historical record.
- The Persians allowed people a lot more freedom to govern themselves in their local territories.
- The Persians distributed power instead of consolidating it, like the Babylonians.
- Darius is crowd sourcing his administration.

Daniel 6:3 – "distinguished himself"; "exceptional qualities"

- Daniel is somewhere between the ages of 70 & 90 years old. He's no spring chick.

- In a competitive market, he's still distinguishing himself as superior to everyone around him. He's still hustling.
- I want to pause to make a sideways observation.
- The Bible consistently gives honor to those people who work diligently and excellently in their careers and commit their labor to the glory of God.
- God doesn't just live under steeples. He wears work boots and hard hats and aprons and garden gloves.
- So whether you are cleaning the grease off of the floor at McDonalds, or running budget meetings for a \$10mil company. Or you're a full time Mom helping your seven-year-old with their homework... Do it with excellence, not out of exhaustion. Do it with joy and not out of obligation. That brings honor to the Lord.
- One of the worst eras of my life was a 3-year period when I hated my job. I promise that it was before I became a pastor here at Petra.

Colossians 3:17

"And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Daniel 6:4 Plot thickens. The conspiracy begins. Insecurity & Greed

- Daniel is facing new evils. No longer under a dictatorship. Like Tehran's radical Islamism. Kim Jong's Communism, Russian state.
- Now in a freer market economy where power is more evenly distributed, now he's facing the evils of jealousy and conspiracy and competition. Evils that lurk within the bent hearts of our society.
- Beware when insecurity and greed in your own heart makes you compare yourself to others. It leads to great grief and calamity.
- **Beware of insecurity and greed in your own heart.**
- God loves every bird in the bush. Not every bird is as beautiful as the cardinal. Not every bird can soar like an eagle. Not every bird can sing like a canary. God made you exactly the way you are. He made the quite ordinary and lovable thrush's and warbles, and barn swallows. Don't let the evils of comparison and jealousy poison your heart and relationships.

Daniel 6:4-5; 22 Innocent and Excellent

- **Qualities of Daniel to emulate: innocence & excellence.**
- Every employer in this county is looking for people with excellence and innocence. (Competence and Character) If you develop those two attributes in your life, you are sure to win favor with people.
- Daniel's reputation spread so far and wide that in another part of the kingdom, people knew him by his exceptional qualities.
- [Ezekiel 14:14](#)

The word of the LORD came to me: ¹³ “Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its people and their animals, ¹⁴ even if these three men— Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD.

- Daniel was exceptional in his generation.

Verses 6-9 – After conspiring, they set the trap.

- Their excuse: they are providing Darius a policy that will unify the kingdom under his new leadership.
- Sometimes as a boss, employer, pastor, civic leader, parent – you don’t know who’s playing you. You don’t know the politics that are going on behind your back. The cattiness. The spider webs, and the wickedness in people’s hearts.
- This story serves as a reminder to slow down and take caution and sniff the air. Not everything is as it seems. Sometimes some of the most smiling and beautiful people on the outside, are some of the most ugly and destructive people on the inside.
- Kind of like dogs and cats. Some of the scariest dogs will love you. Cutest cats will slice you open for no reason at all.
- Use discernment in making decisions. No need to be hasty. Pray about things. Consult the Lord. Sleep on them. Listen to counselors.

Verse 10 Daniel continued in his faithfulness to God vs 10; vs 13; vs 16; vs 20

Proverbs 20:6

Many claim to have unfailing love, but a faithful person who can find?

- I want to encourage us this morning.
- Faithfulness takes perseverance.
- When being a good friend to someone– the road is long. Filled with heavy burdens, and mud and monotony.
- It’s not enough to love your husband in your youth and then let the embers of passion grow grey and distant.
- God’s looking for a Bride who will keep chasing Him all the days of our lives. Like a great marathoner who gets faster with every mile.
- *“The road is long. The mountain steep. The wind is bitter and the winter weeps. But still the light of friendship sweeps away the sour years.”*
- Daniel loved God in the blessed times. Daniel loved God in the hardest times.
- How unflinching he is. How we draw strength from his perseverance.
- Undeterred by their little spider webs they’re weaving.

Daniel 6:11

There he is in his posture of dependence. He finds himself in God.

Daniel 6:12-14

In a game of chess, they have set their trap, and the king is about ready to lose his queen.

Daniel 6:15-23

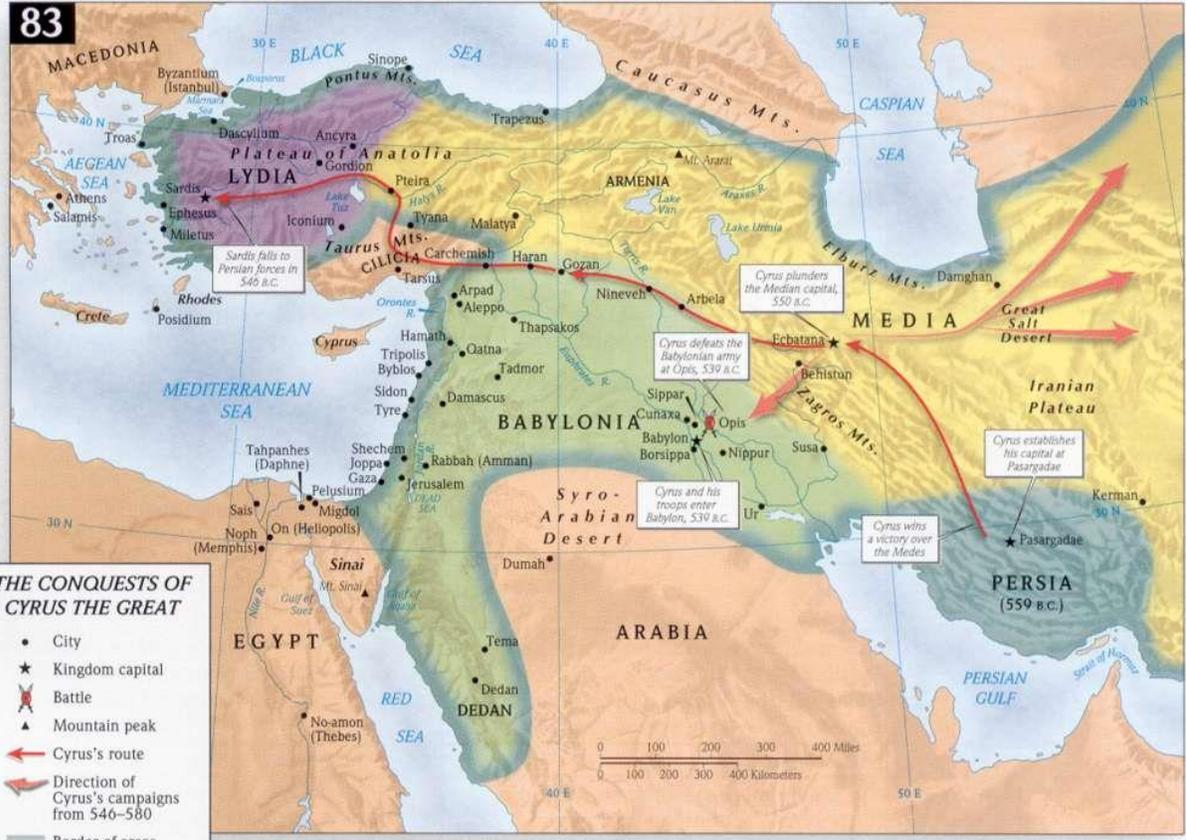
Slide: Daniel in the Lion's Den

God delivers us from the Lion's Den.

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Daniel's life was a picture of what Messiah was going to look like. – Daniel was the warmup to Jesus

- He was a Son from the royal line of David in the tribe of Judah (Daniel 1:3)
- A wise man and a revealer of mysteries in whom the spirit of God lived (Daniel 5:11)
- A man of prominence among the people, a man of excellence (Daniel 6:2-3)
- A man of innocence in all his ways. No fault could be found in him. (Daniel 6:4-5)
- He was a man of prayer. (Daniel 6:10)
- A man faithful even when it cost him greatly. (Daniel 6:10)
- He was betrayed by his associates in their game of politics (Daniel 6:4, 12-13)
- He was lowered down into the jaws of death. (Daniel 6:16)
- God delivered him from the hungry grave. (Daniel 6:22-23)
- He was raised out of the tomb. (Daniel 6:23)
- And brought glory to the Yahweh to the nations and people of every language (Daniel 6:26)



THE CONQUESTS OF CYRUS THE GREAT

- City
- ★ Kingdom capital
- ⚔ Battle
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Cyrus's route
- Direction of Cyrus's campaigns from 546-580
- ▬ Border of areas conquered by Cyrus
- ▬ Kingdom of Anshan

