

SEQUOIA NOTES

Today's Sequoia Message...

Devoted to the God of Miracles

With Shawn Woods

February 15, 2026



Thomas à Kempis once said, “It is good for us to have trials and troubles at times, for they often remind us that we are on probation and ought not to hope in any worldly thing. It is good for us sometimes to suffer contradiction, to be misguided by men even though we do well and mean well. These things help us to be humble and shield us from vainglory” - Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*.

What can we learn from Daniel about responding to despots and dysfunction, especially when we suffer for our faithfulness?

Daniel 6:10-23 (NLT): 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.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.”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.¹⁸ Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night.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.

- **Jesus continues to show up for me, not because of my innocence, but because of his.**

Big Idea: Build for the Kingdom & pray for the world to have an encounter with the living God.

- **Will you build for good?**
- **Will you build for the Kingdom & pray for the world to have an encounter with the Living God?**



Sequoia Impact Communities are where we
live out our identity as a
Family of Servants on Mission.

To get plugged in email:

impactcommunities@sequoiachurch.org

Devoted to the God of Miracles
#6 of 7 - February 15, 2026

Context

- 1) Daniel lives under a foreign empire with a ruler who both values him and ultimately fails to protect him. How does this historical context help us understand the tension between faithfulness to God and loyalty to the state in Daniel 6? Where do you see similar tensions today?
- 2) The sermon suggests that despots and dysfunctional systems are inevitable in a fallen world. How does this reality shape the way we read Daniel's story—not as an exception, but as a pattern God's people often experience?

Observation

- 3) When Daniel learns the law has been signed, he continues praying "just as he had always done." What stands out to you about Daniel's posture, location, and consistency in prayer (v.10)? What does this reveal about his priorities?
- 4) Consider the actions and motivations of Daniel, the conspirators, and King Darius. What differences do you observe in how each responds to power, fear, and responsibility?

Meaning

- 5) Daniel entrusts himself to God, who may or may not deliver him. What does this story teach us about faithfulness that is not dependent on outcomes? How does this challenge a "results-based" faith?
- 6) God does not prevent Daniel from entering the lions' den but meets him there. What does this suggest about how God works amid suffering and injustice—especially when deliverance is delayed or uncertain? How does the Gospel of Jesus inform this reality?

Application

- 7) The sermon asks, "Who is your despot?"—a bully, manager, system, or leader. Where are you currently experiencing pressure for your faithfulness to God, and what might it look like to respond with Daniel's posture of prayer, trust, and respect?
- 8) Daniel prayed faithfully **and** worked competently within a broken system. What is one specific way God may be inviting you to build for the Kingdom—in your work, family, neighborhood, or civic life—while praying for the world to encounter the living God?



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