

## Daniel 1:9-21

### “The Reward of the Faithful”

1. Faithfulness is more important to God than good works or simply following rules.
  - Because while good works show kindness, faithfulness and obedience show the heart.
2. Samuel said to Saul in **1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 15:22**, “Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And to heed than the fat of rams.*”
3. Yet it so hard for God to find the truly faithful.
  - **But** Daniel was one of them, and God wants us to be one as well.
4. We left off last week in verse 8. Daniel had purposed in his heart to not defile himself with the world—the King’s delicacies—while in Babylon. He drew his line in the sand.
  - Daniel was willing to keep quiet about many issues that were non-essential to staying pure with God, but when it came to faithfulness and purity, he wouldn’t budge.

5. Daniel chose his battles and his stands.

- **That is**, he didn't walk around the palace pointing out everyone's sin and how they were not in line with the Bible.
- **He** simply lived the Bible in front of them and then shared what the Bible said when he had a line he wouldn't cross.

6. And what an important principle for us to learn as well.

- We should never try to "force" those around us to obey the Bible or accept all of our viewpoints on the Bible.
- **We** are simply to live it out and speak out on issues only when we must make a stand.

7. How many times have we seen people try to force obedience to the Bible on unbelievers around them.

- **This** never works and typically only drives people away.
- **What** is effective is when people see us simply living it out ourselves and not compromising or giving in on the things that are essential to faithfulness and obedience to God.

8. Daniel could have no doubt made noise in the palace on multiple issues.
- **But** he chose his battles and stands to reflect that which was essential.
  - **And** it was that example that got the King's attention as well as others in the palace.

**v.9** 1. It is important to note that it says it was **God** that brought Daniel into favor in the eyes of this chief of the Eunuchs, not himself.

- **Why** do I point this out?
2. Because we need to understand that God will do the same for us today if we are faithful to Him like Daniel.
- The Bible says that if we please God, He will make even our enemies to be at peace with us.
  - **This** doesn't mean that they will suddenly like us, it simply means that they will be at peace with us.
3. Now there are a couple of words here that need to be looked at a little closer to get further insight.
- **"Favor"** and "good will."
4. Favor is the word "Hesed," which means "a loving kindness and mercy done by the

**giver with no obligation and is due to a caring relationship.”**

- **It** is also used of a free act of deliverance due to being **FAITHFUL**.

5. Daniel staid faithful after all he had been through so God caused him to have favor and a caring relationship with his overseer.

- **And** the same will be true for us.

6. What does the word faithful mean?

- **It means** “adhering strictly to the person, cause, or idea to which one is bound.”

7. In this case, faithfulness to the Lord and His Word as well as his overseer.

- **And** the fruit is evident.

8. The next word to look at here is the word “goodwill” or “racham” which means, “a deep love, usually from one in a superior position, spurred on by the helpless condition of the one being loved.”

- **What** a description of Ashpenaz’s position over Daniel.

9. Ashpenaz saw how helpless Daniel was in his situation; he had lost his parents either to death or slavery, had been taken captive from his home in Israel, had been horribly mutilated as a eunuch against his will, then

made a lifelong slave or servant of a foreign King.

- **If** anyone needed God to move in the hearts of those around him for this kind of care, it was Daniel.
- **And** this word describes how God moved on Ashpenaz's heart to show kindness and favor to Daniel.

10. It is the same type of love demonstrated toward a baby who is helpless to care for themselves.

- **And** since the Bible says God has this love for us, He often moves in those around us to show it.

11. Do you feel "helpless" and need this kind of loving kindness and mercy today from God in your situation?

- **Then** purpose in your heart to be faithful like Daniel, and God will extend it to you.

12. The bottom line is we see that God moved in the heart of the people and authorities in Daniel's life to give him kind, caring, and loving people in his life during this horribly difficult time.

- **And** God did the same for me, and He will do the same for you.

13. And notice Daniel was loyal and faithful to the Lord even in the face of these extreme difficulties and circumstances.

- **Even** denying himself certain freedoms that God had given him in order to be above reproach or accusation before the world.
- **And** because of this, God was faithful to him.

**v.10** 1. First, notice there will be those in the world who will try and convince you that your viewpoints are incorrect when they see your commitment to the Lord.

- **And** they will try to convince you that you need to fit in and simply do what everyone else is doing.
- **But** Daniel knew he wasn't to be like everyone else; he was to follow God, so he held his ground.

2. Second, notice that Daniel now sees that his personal stand could put Ashpenaz in a tough spot before the King; we will see his heart is sensitive to that.

- Rather than simply blazing forward in his stand with no care for those around

him, he thinks it through and comes up with a plan that will benefit them both.

3. Which brings up another great life lesson.

- **While** it is important to make a stand for God in our faith, we can't simply ignore what that stand does to those around us.
- **In** this case, it could mean Ashpenaz's life.

**v.14** 1. Notice Daniel comes up with a plan that will keep him from defiling himself while at the same time protecting Ashpenaz.

- **10 days** was long enough to see if it would harm anything diet-wise, and short enough to change it if necessary so Ashpenaz didn't get into trouble with the King.

2. And herein lies a practical wisdom as to how **WE** are to conduct ourselves in such situations.

- **If** we find ourselves in a situation where we can't go along with a work or life situation without being defiled, we shouldn't simply refuse with no regard to anyone else (unless that is our only option).

- **Instead**, we should have a plan where we can do it and make all involved satisfied.
3. So, what are some practical steps that Daniel did that we could learn from to help US do that?
- **First**, we need to pray for God to soften all hearts involved.
4. Second, we need to make an “appeal.”
- **That is**, we make a request for our situation to change.
5. Third, that appeal needs to be done with courtesy and politeness.
- **If** we get obnoxious and rude in our stand or appeal, it will not only pour cold water on our appeal, but it will also ruin our testimony.
6. And lastly, we need to be ready to offer an “alternative plan” that works for all parties involved.
- **There** is nothing worse for a leader than to have someone come and complain without offering a solution.
  - **And** if the solution is acceptable, you will often see your boss or authority figure willing to go along.



7. In Daniel's case, it was "let us eat grains and vegetables instead."

- **If** it works, you will still fulfill your obligation to the King, and we will fulfill our obligation to God.

8. The word "vegetables" here could also be translated "pulse" which is a type of grain.

- **It** would have basically been breakfast cereal.

9. But it appears they would have had grains AND vegetables to eat.

- **It** is important to note that it wasn't so much what the diet was but that they remained undefiled and faithful to God.

9. And why would they be defiled?

- **Firstly**, under the Law they couldn't eat unclean animals which were most definitely a part of this.
- **Secondly**, even the clean animals would not have been Levitically bled out as required by the Law.
- **And** lastly, these animals had no doubt been offered to idols.

**v.16** Notice God was faithful to them in their stand.

- **And** while they were probably worried about the consequences their stand could bring, we see that they were not persecuted and were instead blessed!
- **So** often we are afraid if we make a stand for God things will get worse, but that is seldom the case.

**v.17** 1. Notice how God rewarded them for their faithfulness.

- **They** excelled above all the others in all knowledge and wisdom.
- **And** to Daniel, God gave a special gift of interpreting visions and dreams which he will use his entire life.

2. And while this may not be the same way God rewards you for your faithfulness, I can assure you He will reward you in some way.

3. It's important to point out that the decisions and stands we make for God **NOW**, whether big or small, can affect our entire life.

- **Note that!**

4. Because of this **ONE** decision and stand, God blessed Daniel for the rest of his life!

- **This** lifelong blessing could have been missed through compromise.

5. Did you ever think that making just one small stand could be so important to God and have such a lifelong impact?

- **This** one did, and it changed their lives forever.
- **And** each decision you and I make for God will do the same.

6. Luke 16:10 says,

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much."

**v.21** 1. Notice that it says they were 10 times better than the others.

- **And** while Satan will tell you that you'll miss out if you don't go along with the rest of the world, this verse exposes that lie.
- **As** a matter of fact, they were 10 times better than everyone else in their same situation because they DIDN'T go along!

2. And notice lastly it says that Daniel "continued" until the first year of Cyrus.

- **Why** is this significant?

- **Because** Cyrus was the last king alive when Daniel dies some 70 to 80 years later.
2. What's the point?
    - **Because** Daniel was faithful to God, God was faithful to Daniel his entire life.
    - **And** it all began with not compromising as a teenager.
  3. Multiple Kings came and went throughout the life of Daniel in Babylon, yet Daniel alone remained in the palace until the end due to his faithfulness.
    - **I** think of Billy Graham.
  4. Regardless of what people thought about him, during his life we saw many presidents come and go.
    - **Yet** with the change of each new President, Billy Graham was still in the White House giving counsel to the most powerful leaders in the world.
  5. And God will always use the faithful to be an influence in the world.
    - **The** question is will that be you and me?
  6. We may never be before world leaders or in the White House, but if we are faithful, God

will use us where we are to change the world, just like He did with Daniel.

7. So our challenge today is: are we faithful to God like Daniel?

- **If so, don't stop.**
- **If not, you can change that right now.**