

The Sent Ones PT. V | Daniel

Mark Allen | 10.18.26

Small Group Guide

Overview

The book of Daniel offers a sweeping portrait of faithful living in a foreign land, prophetic vision spanning centuries, and the unwavering faithfulness of God to his people. This guide will help your group dig deeper into the themes from this sermon and apply them to everyday life.

Key Takeaways

1. Faithfulness in a Foreign Culture Daniel and his friends refused to compromise their identity and devotion to God even when surrounded by a culture that pressured them to conform. Their faithfulness resulted in God granting them wisdom, favor, and influence far beyond what the world could offer.

2. God Works Through the Impossible Again and again in Daniel, the impossible becomes possible when God is involved. No dream is too mysterious, no furnace too hot, no lion too fierce. God consistently demonstrated his power through the faithfulness of his servants.

3. Humility Before God is Not Optional The contrast between Nebuchadnezzar, who eventually humbled himself and was restored, and Belshazzar, who never did and was destroyed, is a sobering reminder that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

4. Prophecy Confirms the Trustworthiness of Scripture Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy, given centuries before Christ, points with remarkable precision to the arrival of the Messiah. This is not coincidence -- it is confirmation that Scripture can be trusted completely.

5. We Are Chosen, Purified, and Valued Daniel 12 describes those at the end of time as chosen, made white, and refined like gold. These are not qualities we earn. They are gifts given to those who place their faith in Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Think about a time when you felt pressure to compromise your values or beliefs in order to fit in. How did you respond, and what did you learn from that experience?

Section 1: Roots and Identity (Daniel 1)

- Daniel and his friends maintained their identity as followers of God even after being given new Babylonian names and being immersed in a foreign culture. What are some ways our culture today pressures believers to adopt a new identity that conflicts with who God says we are?

- Daniel asked for permission to eat differently rather than rebelling outright. What does his approach teach us about how to stand firm in our convictions while still engaging respectfully with those in authority over us?

- Pastor Mark pointed out that God gave Daniel and his friends knowledge and wisdom ten times greater than those around them because they stayed faithful. Have you ever experienced God's blessing or provision as a direct result of choosing obedience over compromise? Share that experience with the group.

Section 2: Faith Under Fire (Daniel 3)

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego told the king that their God was able to save them, but that even if he did not, they would still not bow. What does that kind of faith look like practically in your own life right now?

- Pastor Mark suggested that the fourth figure seen in the furnace was Jesus himself. What does it mean to you personally that Jesus does not simply watch from a distance when you go through trials, but enters into them with you?

- What is your "furnace" right now -- a situation where you are being pressured or tested? How does this passage encourage you in that situation?

Section 3: The Danger of Pride (Daniel 4-5)

- Nebuchadnezzar eventually humbled himself and was restored. Belshazzar never did and was destroyed. What is the difference between a person who is humbled by God and one who is hardened by the same circumstances?

- Pastor Mark referenced the principle from 2 Chronicles 7:14 about humbling ourselves and seeking God's face. As a group, where do you think pride most commonly creeps into the life of a believer? Into the life of a church?

- Is there an area of your life right now where God may be calling you to humble yourself? You do not have to share details, but take a moment to reflect silently and then pray together about it.

Section 4: The Faithfulness of God's Word (Daniel 9)

- The 70-weeks prophecy in Daniel 9 pointed with incredible precision to the arrival of Jesus. How does fulfilled prophecy strengthen your confidence in Scripture and in God's promises for the future?

- Pastor Mark described how Daniel prayed a prayer of repentance on behalf of people who did not even know to pray for themselves. Who in your life needs someone to stand in the gap for them in prayer right now?

- The sermon noted that when God declares something, he does not go back on it -- drawing a parallel to how God has declared believers righteous through faith in Jesus. How does the permanence of God's declaration over your life change the way you see yourself?

Section 5: Living in Light of the End (Daniel 12)

- Daniel 12 describes a time when many will be chosen, purified, and refined, while at the same time the wicked will act more wickedly. Do you see evidence of both of these things happening simultaneously in the world today? How does that shape your sense of urgency as a believer?

- Pastor Mark noted that Daniel 12 points to increased travel and increased knowledge as signs of the end times. How should an awareness that we may be living near the end of history affect the way we spend our time, money, and energy?

- The pastor closed by saying, "What we're going to do for the Lord, we better do it now and not wait." What is one thing you have been putting off in your walk with God or in your service to others that you need to act on now?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One of the Following:

1. **Draw a line.** Identify one area of your life where you have been compromising your faith to fit in with the culture around you. Make a specific, concrete decision about how you will stand firm this week, and share that decision with an accountability partner in your group.

2. **Pray on behalf of someone else.** Following Daniel's example of interceding for others, spend time this week praying a prayer of repentance and restoration on behalf of someone in your life who does not know Jesus or who has walked away from him.

3. **Reflect on your declaration.** Spend time this week meditating on what it means to be declared righteous by God -- not because of your performance, but because of your faith in Christ. Write down three ways this truth should change how you see yourself and how you live.

4. **Act now.** Take one concrete step this week toward something you have been putting off in your faith -- a conversation you need to have, a commitment you need to make, a person you need to reach out to, or a sin you need to confess.

Closing Prayer Points

Pray together as a group over the following:

- Courage to maintain your identity in Christ when the culture pressures you to conform
- Humility before God in every area of life
- Gratitude for the fulfilled promises of Scripture and the trustworthiness of God's Word
- Urgency and boldness in sharing the gospel with those who do not yet know Jesus
- Confidence in the truth that those who are in Christ are chosen, purified, and valued

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Memory Verse for the Week

Daniel 12:10 -- Many will be purged, purified, and refined. Reflect this week on what it means that God has chosen you, made you clean, and declared that you have value through Jesus Christ.
