



Silverdale Baptist

STAND. A STUDY IN DANIEL • STAND IN PRAYER • DANIEL 6:1-24; LUKE 18:1-8 •
7/4-5/2020

MAIN POINT

God calls us to persist in prayer in the midst of difficulty.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the most powerful answer to prayer you have ever experienced?

If you were engaged in a conversation with a non-Christian who asked, “Why do you pray?” how would you respond?

Prayer is both commanded and practiced throughout the Bible. In the Old and New Testaments, we constantly see the people of God assuming a posture of prayer. For us, prayer remains the God-given means of an ongoing relationship with Him. In Daniel 6, we have in the prayer life of the prophet a powerful example of what it looks like to persist in prayer in the midst of difficulty.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 6:1-9.

We learned last week in Daniel 5 that the kingdom of Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians the same night that God wrote on the wall. The Babylonian king, Belshazzar, was killed that night. Darius the Mede became the new king. Darius certainly would have heard the story of the handwriting on the wall the night before, and of Daniel who interpreted the writing.

In these verses what do you learn about Daniel?

What is Darius' plan for Daniel?

Why do you believe the other government officials investigated Daniel?

What was their conclusion?

Why does the new decree threaten Daniel?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 6:10-13

Describe Daniel's prayer life.

Darius listened to the advice of the “wise men” of Babylon, just like the kings that came before him. He decreed that any person who worshiped anyone other than him would be thrown into a den of lions. But Daniel continued in his habit of prayer as if nothing else mattered. Daniel's faith fueled his commitment to persist in praying solely to the Lord.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 6:14-24

What do you learn about Darius in these verses?

When the king realized he had no power to rescue Daniel, who did he say would deliver Daniel? (verse 16)

What happened to Daniel's accusers?

How does Darius describe God at the end of this chapter?

Do you notice anything new after reading and hearing this story this week? If so, what?

The king threw Daniel in the lion's den for praying to God. However, God sent angels to protect him. When the king found Daniel alive the next morning, he worshiped God and cast the “wise men” into the lion's den. God's glory was seen because Daniel was not afraid of the king's decree and was faithful in prayer.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How is Daniel's prayer life similar to yours? How is it different?

What would it look like for you to have a faithful prayer life like Daniel?

Daniel's faith was validated by the intervention of God. How has God proven Himself faithful in your life recently?

What does persecution over prayer and faith look like today? How can our group help each other stay faithful?

Tony pointed out three keys to a dynamic prayer life:

Find a Specific Place.

For Daniel, it was upstairs, in a room on his rooftop, with his windows open to Jerusalem (Daniel 6:10).

Set a Specific Time

The Bible says that he prayed 3 times a day, just as he had done previously. (Daniel 6:10)

Pray Out Loud

"I pray out loud because it keeps me focused when I'm praying. Satan will do everything possible to distract our minds. Praying out loud helps you keep focused on God. Samuel Chadwick wrote, "The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray." - Tony Walliser.

PRAYER

Close in a brief time of prayer, thanking God that He's concerned about the condition of our hearts and our motives for seeking Him. Pray for the members of your group as they surrender to the Holy Spirit's conviction in their lives throughout the upcoming week. Pray that we would be persistent in our prayers while trusting in God with both faith and humility.

COMMENTARY

| DANIEL 6:1-24

6:1. In one of the best-known stories in the book, Daniel was cast into the lions' den for his faith. Since Daniel was about 15 years old in 605 b.c. when the Babylonians brought him as a captive to Babylon, and since the events in Daniel 6 most likely took place in the second or third year

after the Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 b.c., Daniel would have been approximately 82 years old when he was thrown to the lions, not a teenager as is often pictured in Bible storybooks.

6:2. The king appointed three administrators over the 120 satraps to assure that taxes would be properly collected without any embezzlement or corruption by the 120 government officials. For these positions, the king needed men with trustworthy reputations. So he chose Daniel as one of these officials. He must have heard of Daniel's reputation; perhaps he was even aware of Daniel's interpretation of the writing that had appeared on the wall the night Babylon fell.

6:3. Daniel proved to be a superlative administrator because of his extraordinary spirit, a phrase used previously to describe his character (5:12). Therefore, the king planned to set him over the whole realm as prime minister.

6:4-5. The king's choice of Daniel created jealousy among the other court officials, and they wished to denounce Daniel. Since Daniel was both diligent and honest in his work, they could find no corruption in him. Therefore, they sought to trap him by creating a law to ban Daniel from worshiping his God.

6:6-7. When these corrupt officials approached the king, they falsely claimed that all government officials supported the proposal that for 30 days, anyone who petitioned any god or man except the king would be thrown into the lions' den. By agreeing to this law, Darius probably had not claimed deity but rather adopted the role of a priestly mediator. His goal was to unite the Babylonian realm under the authority of the new Persian Empire.

6:8. The irrevocability of a law of the Medes and Persians is confirmed elsewhere in Scripture (Esth. 1:19; 8:8) and secular literature (Diodorus of Sicily, XVII:30).

6:10. Even though the law prohibiting prayer had gone into effect, Daniel still prayed with his windows opened toward Jerusalem. Jewish people in exile always pray toward Jerusalem—even today—just as Solomon had instructed in his prayer of dedication for the temple (1 Kings 8:44-49). Daniel prayed not out of rebellion toward the king but out of obedience to the greater command of God. As the apostles would later say, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). So great was Daniel's reputation for spiritual commitment that even his enemies knew he would obey God rather than bow to the king's edict.

6:14. The king was very displeased not because Daniel had defied him but because he came to understand that the true purpose of the law was to trap Daniel, whom he respected.

6:16. The Persians used mutilation by lions as one of several brutal forms of execution. It was Daniel's continual service to God that caused him to be cast into the lions' den; now the king hoped that this devotion would cause God to deliver Daniel. The word for den can also be translated as "pit."

6:17-18. Daniel was cast into a pit over which a stone was placed and sealed with the signet rings of the king and his nobles. King Darius then spent the night fasting and presumably praying for Daniel.

6:22-23. God uses angels to accomplish His purposes, including protection of His people (Ps. 34:7; 91:11; Heb. 1:14). He had done so for Daniel's three friends in the furnace many years earlier (Dan. 3:25). As on that occasion, this may have been an angel or even the angel of the Lord (i.e., a preincarnate appearance of the Messiah). Daniel was not claiming perfection in declaring that he was found innocent before God. Rather, Daniel claimed that his allegiance to God made him guiltless in this matter. It was Daniel's faith in God, not his works, that brought him deliverance from the lions.

6:24. Although executing family members is exceptionally cruel, this was a common Persian practice according to Herodotus (Histories, 3.119).