

Living a Courageous Faith

September 3, 2023

Daniel 6

BI: We will face opposition, but we need to live our faith courageously

Intro – Mission Trip challenges (power outage and hot weather – Latvia fish)

<slide#2 – Puerto Rico Pictures>

It's easy to live your faith for a week, especially when you might not ever see that group of people again on this side of heaven, but we're not called to live it for just a week. We are called to live it always until we meet Jesus.

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That's why the author of Hebrews tells us to run the race that was set before us (Heb 12:1), and Paul, near the end of his life, can confidently proclaim that his time on earth is almost done, he had run the race set before him and was going to take hold of the prize, the crown laid up for him. (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

Today, we'll look at a man who could live his faith consistently over a lifetime in a culture that tolerated his faith and, at worst, would kill him for it.

<slide#4 title and verse>

Be Faithful to Follow God – (Introduce Daniel's Example of Faith) | Daniel 6:1-3

Darius decided to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, stationed throughout the realm, ² and over them three administrators, including Daniel. These satraps would be accountable to them so that the king would not be defrauded. ³ Daniel distinguished himself above the administrators and satraps because he had an extraordinary spirit, so the king planned to set him over the whole realm.

This chapter finds us at an interesting point in the overall narrative of the account of Daniel. The original Kingdom that had conquered Judah, Babylon, led by Nebuchadnezzar, is gone. The Medes and the Persians have destroyed it. These first few verses tell us what King Darius does to set up the administration for the kingdom that he finds himself in charge of. He divides the kingdom into 120 different regions that 120 satraps or governors oversee. These satraps had positions of power. They were charged with administering the civil and military matters of the region they were in charge of, along with being responsible for collecting the taxes in their area. These governors were often drawn from the nobility or even the royal family.

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Above these 120 were three appointed as administrators. These three would oversee the 120 and report directly to the king. Of the three appointed, 1 was the Jewish exile, Daniel. Verse **three** tells us that Daniel has distinguished himself.

If you're stepping into this narrative and wondering who Daniel is, he is an extraordinary figure from the Exile period of Jewish history. The Book of Daniel gives an account of the life of Daniel, but it doesn't always move around in chronological order. One of the major themes we can draw from the narrative is the faithfulness to God that Daniel displays throughout.

We first meet Daniel in Chapter 1, and he's probably in his late teens when the narrative account picks up. He is being deported from his homeland of Judah to Babylon. The Babylonians came and sacked the city of Jerusalem in 605 BC and took many essential and leading officials hostage, bringing them back to Babylon. As part of pacifying and assimilating the newly conquered people, they were taught the Babylonian culture and given roles in the government. Daniel and his group of friends are part of this group. They are to be put into the service of the king. Part of being put to the benefit of the king

(Nebuchadnezzar) meant being offered the best food available to the king. Daniel and his friends were to be given food from the king's table, including meat offered to the Babylonian pantheon of gods. Eating the meat was synonymous with idol worship with the Babylonians. Daniel recognized this and asked to eat veggies instead of meats. He convinced the Babylonian official to try this out as a test for ten days, and if they showed they were healthy on this diet, they would be permitted to continue eating this way.

As a young adult, Daniel had decided that it was more important to follow God, to obey His commandments above anything else. He was going to remain faithful to God! This took great courage! He newly arrived in Babylon, a foreign place with customs and culture that ran counterculture to the Jewish traditions he had been brought up with. It would have been easy to rationalize eating the meat. He could have easily said I'll still follow God in most areas, but I will give in this one. I saw what the Babylonian army did to Jerusalem. I know what these people can do and want to keep living.

Throughout his life, he conducted himself with this pattern while living in Babylon and serving the king. Nebuchadnezzar called on him later in his life in chapter 4 to interpret a dream, and at this point, Daniel was the chief of all the Wisemen, and he did. But I must think about how he described, "a spirit of the holy gods is in him" (Daniel 4:8). The Babylonians didn't recognize the God of Israel. Still, they could tell there was something different about the way Daniel lived (and his God-given abilities of wisdom and ability to interpret dreams). He lived a life of faithfulness and integrity. That's why he has mentioned several times he has an excellent spirit (5:12). He is a man of character. In Chapter 5, we find many years have passed, and now there is a new king, but this was the king (Belshazzar), two kings after Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel had only served Neb, but the king after him, and now Belshazzar was calling on him. The king of Babylon falls in this chapter, which sets the background to the context in chapter 6.

Coming in, the Persians keep Daniel, and not only do they keep him, but the Persian king Darius promotes him to the position of Administrator.

Daniel conducted himself in such a way while working in this role as one of the three co-administrators. The king was willing to raise him even further and make him over the other administrators, moving him into a position such as Prime Minister. These set off waves of jealousy, prompting his enemies to move against him by their only means, attacking his faith.

<slide#6-title and verse>

(we need to) Expect Opposition to Our Faith (demonic, world systems and people) | Daniel 6:4-9 (John 15:18-19, Eph 6:12)

⁴ The administrators and satraps, therefore, kept trying to find a charge against Daniel regarding the kingdom. But they could find no charge or corruption, for he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him. ⁵ Then these men said, "We will never find any charge against this Daniel unless we find something against him concerning the law of his God."

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How Daniel conducted himself made enemies among other administrators and satraps. It doesn't specify if it was all 122 or just a subset of this group. Either way, this group of conspirators is jealous and hates Daniel, and that is what they are launching. They want him gone. Daniel was a person of integrity. Verse 4 tells us that this group was looking for anything they could come up with to bring criminal charges against him. He was trustworthy, there was no negligence in his job, and he wasn't corrupt, which is ironic. The people trying to get rid of him must have been filled with corruption. They understand Daniel's character of Daniel well.

In verse 5, we see the conspiracy reaches for the one thing they know can use against him: his faith. This group of conspirators knows of Daniel's devotion to following God, which becomes "his weak" point. Warren Wiersbe put it this way about Daniel...

Wiersbe - *It's certainly a commendable thing when people possess character so impeccable that they can't be accused of doing wrong except in matters relating to their faith.*¹

This group knew Daniel was a faithful man and served God. He didn't hide his faith but lived it out in the open. It guided all points of his life, his actions, and his character.

<slide#8-verse>

⁶ So the administrators and satraps went together to the king and said to him, "May King Darius live forever. ⁷ All the administrators of the kingdom—the prefects, satraps, advisers, and governors—have agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an edict that, for thirty days, anyone who petitions any god or man except you, the king, will be thrown into the lions' den. ⁸ Therefore, Your Majesty, establish the edict and sign the document so that, as a law of the Medes and Persians, it is irrevocable and cannot be changed." ⁹ So King Darius signed the written edict.

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This group of conspirators understands that to get rid of Daniel, they will have to go after his faith, but they will also have to manipulate the King into doing it. The king is on Daniel's side. They accomplish this by appealing to the king's pride and vanity.

Culturally, the King was not believed to be divine in the Persian Kingdom. They didn't see the king as a god. This was in contrast to places like Egypt, who saw the Pharaoh as a deity, not a representative of a deity but as the divine incarnate. Even later in the Roman Empire, the Emperors were revered and worshiped.

The conspirators come in and present a petition to Darius (Cyrus?) with three components. It had a mandate, a punishment, and it was irrevocable if enacted into law. This group claimed to be acting on the unified wishes of all the governmental officials in the kingdom. They wanted to establish a mandate that for 30 days, all people in the kingdom would be required to pray only to the King. No other gods, people, etc should be the subject of prayers. The king alone would be the person who would be the subject of prayers.

The group claimed to represent the whole government administration, so Darius would be inclined to listen. After hearing the request, his ego and pride were stopped!

I wonder if Darius was thinking something like this: The kingdom loves me so much that they want to forsake all other gods and only view me as divine. Wahoo, I've arrived! Take that, Babylonian kings! I'm more significant than you!

There was also a deadly penalty built into this edict. Those found to not comply with the mandate were to be sentenced to death. A terrible, painful death by being chucked into a den of ravenous lions that would eat them for lunch.

There was a final part of this edict, and it was based upon the law of the Persians. If the king enacted this law, it was irrevocable. It would bring a law into existence that could not be undone. Even the king was bound to uphold this law. The law of the state was designed to be proof against evasion or subversion by the king's subordinates. If the king were bound to it, all under him would also be found to it.

Verse 9 tells us that Darius signed the edict. It doesn't say if he put much thought into what he was doing or if he liked that he is ego was flattered and had other things to move onto as he governed the kingdom. Later, we see his concern for Daniel when he is put into the Lion's den.

¹ [Daniel 6 Commentary | Precept Austin](#)

This sets up the confrontation – would Daniel stick to executing his religious convictions and remain faithful to God, or would he give into the new law of the land that called for all prayers/worship to be directed towards the king? *Direct Conflict. When the direct conflict comes, we will see who is committed to remaining faithful and following God and is prepared to compromise and rollover. And this challenge still remains today for us!*²

The same attitude infected the religious leadership in Jesus' time. It was expressed differently, the Jewish leadership thought they were working to keep their "religion" pure and put down the threat that Jesus represented to their power. They went as far as to frame Him and brought trumped-up charges against Him as they presented Him to Pilate. Ultimately, the religious leadership won out, and Pilate sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion. He died that Friday afternoon and was raised on Easter Sunday morning, conquering death and the grave and proving He paid the price for our sins through His sacrifice on the cross.

The night before he was arrested and charged, He had a final meal with His disciples in the upper room. In the Upper Room discourse in the Gospel of John, Jesus clarifies that the world will stand against His followers because they represent Him.

<slide#10- verse>

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. John 15:18-19

Here, the word world (kosmos) refers to the evil, fallen world system comprised of people who have not put their faith in Jesus and are controlled by Satan. (John 12:31;14:30;16:11; 1 John 5:19, Eph 2:1-3).

Jesus clearly states the world hated Him and executed Him in less than a day. Don't be surprised that He tells the disciples that it will also hate you. If this group were part of the world system, it would love them, but it doesn't because Jesus had chosen and called them out of that system.

<slide#11-verse>

Paul also clarifies that believers will face struggles from spiritual forces aligned with Satan. ***For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens – Eph 6:12***

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Church tradition tells us that all the Apostles were martyred. Even John was sent into exile at Patmos. In the first centuries following the establishment of the church at Pentecost, there were many state-sponsored persecutions of believers. The emperor Nero is famous for his persecution of Christians in the Coliseum. Before the conversion of Constantine in ending state-sponsored persecution in 313ad, Emperor Diocletian launched a massive persecution of believers in 303ad that included burning churches, all copies of the Bible being burned, and Christians being told to offer sacrifices to the Roman deities on pain of death.

Research has been done that estimates there have been at least 70,000,000 who have been martyred for the faith since the founding of the Church at Pentecost, and at least half of those happened in the 20th century.³

² [Trusting God in the Lions' Den - Archive - Truth For Life](#)

³ [Gordon Conwell](#)

This brings us to an important question that we must answer now. We, as believers, will face opposition to our faith. Jesus makes that quite clear. The question is, will we faithfully hold firm to our convictions, or will we compromise?

Daniel shows how to live courageously, knowing the price he must pay when he makes that choice.

<slide#13 – Title and verse>

It Takes Courage to be Faithful – (Don't Compromise Your Faith / Persevere In your Faith) | Daniel 6:10-12

¹⁰ When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house. The windows in its upstairs room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

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Daniel had a choice: he could choose to continue living his faith as he had done for the last 70 years in Babylon, or he could shut the window. Daniel demonstrates courage in living his faith in this verse.

Courage living can be defined as living your life not deterred by pain or danger. It takes bravery.

First, he did not act in Ignorance but instead worked in full knowledge of the law and the consequences that would result from it. He learned the documents were signed, the verse tells us, and the first thing he went and did was return home to pray. He could have easily rationalized his position. He was on the verge of being promoted. He would have the ability to influence the kingdom in ways that weren't available to him before. It was only 30 days. But to rationalize it away and not pray to God would compromise. He knew the law and the consequences of not following it, and he went home and prayed!

Secondly, He didn't compromise. It takes courage not to compromise! He could have adjusted the location of his prayer routine to avoid being seen or caught praying to God instead of to Darius. He could have left the city and found a quiet place to pray towards Jerusalem. He could have gone home and prayed in his house instead of outside on the roof.

He had a small building constructed on the 2nd floor of his house that had windows to allow air movement in. We live in a desert, it's hot. Daniel didn't have the luxury of AC like we do. Moving up to the roof allowed cool breezes to be caught and provided comfort while praying. He could have just closed the windows. He could have gone down to the first floor and prayed in the house where no one would have seen him.

He continued to pray thrice daily so that people could see him. It seems that those watching him could understand the content of his prayer as well. They understood that while praying three times a day, he thanked his God!

Daniel could have taken many steps to change up his routine and still be able to pray, but he didn't. He knew his enemies were watching, and to change any part of his routine would consent to the issued edict. All he had to do was compromise in the smallest of ways, not publically pray for a month, close the window, and he would have been fine. Daniel knew their consequences and was still willing to live his faith.

Would we be able to do such a thing?

This past June, a student up in Idaho was barred from attending his high school graduation for disciplinary reasons. His offense, in an assembly the days before graduation, he stated as part of his advice for the rest of the school, "*Boys are boys and girls are girls, and there's no in between.*"⁴

This student wasn't willing to compromise on a biological truth and could not walk at his graduation.

There's been a push in some corners of the American churches to compromise biblical truths to make biblical doctrines more palatable to modern culture. Recently, I came across a church that had decided the Apostles Creed needed some updating. They termed the new version the Sparkle Creed⁵.

The opening of this new creed states -

"I believe in the non-binary God whose pronouns are plural. I believe in Jesus Christ, their child, who wore a fabulous tunic and had two dads and saw everyone as a sibling-child of God. I believe in the rainbow Spirit, who shatters our image of one white light and refracts it into a rainbow of gorgeous diversity..."

Somewhere, this church and its leadership compromised to cultural demands, and this is where it led them.

It takes great courage not to compromise and live our faith, knowing there can be significant consequences if we do.

Daniel paid the price. He was tossed into the Lion's Den.

<slide#15 title>

Living Courageously Will Impact Others -- Blessings and Opportunity (Matthew 28:19-20) | Daniel 6:25-27

Daniel was caught. The group who wanted him gone found him praying to God. They return to the king and remind him of the edict he had issued.

Verse 12 tells us about the superiority of Persian law. In Babylon, the king was the law. He could remake the law as he saw fit. Here in Persia, the king was under the law and couldn't change it if he wanted to. The group of conspirators (verse 13) makes it known that Daniel has broken the edict and, by the king's signed law and own admission, is liable to be punished under the directive.

The king was greatly displeased at the trap he had been manipulated into but was bound to carry out the command. He issues the order (verse 16), and Daniel is taken off to be thrown into the Lion's Den. This was intended to be his execution, death by being the Lion's meal.

The king is fond of Daniel and offers a thought – hoping that Daniel's God will spare him from the horrific punishment about to be brought upon him (Verse 16).

Daniel was tossed into the Lion's den, and the king sealed it with his signet ring (v17). He returned to his palace and had a terrible night in which he was worried about Daniel, unable to sleep and wanting to be left alone.

⁴ [Kellogg High School graduation took place Saturday | krem.com](http://krem.com)

⁵ [A New Interpretation of Faith: The Story Behind the LGBTQ+-Inclusive 'Sparkle Creed' \(religionunplugged.com\)](http://religionunplugged.com)

Darius gets up at first light and rushes to see what has become of Daniel. He calls down to ascertain the condition of Daniel and, to his relief and joy, calls back and answers. He says that God had miraculously delivered him from the hungry lions by sending an angel to shut the mouth of the lions and protect him during the night (verse 22).

Daniel was miraculously protected. God stepped in and delivered him from this evil plot to kill him. There are many other stories of God miraculously delivering His followers from terrible situations. The episode of Daniel's Friends and the Fiery Furnace comes to mind.

Just as much as God can deliver, there are many times when there are no miraculous deliverances, and the price for remaining obedient to following God is high. Sometimes, it does cost believers their lives. Think of the Apostles, and tradition tells us that all of them were martyred for their faith (except for John, who was sentenced to exile on the island of Patmos at an old age).

Living Courageously will impact others

We can see Daniel's life's impact on the king. The conspirators who try to get rid of Daniel end up meeting the same fate that had thrust Daniel into (verse 24)

Daniel was unwilling to compromise. This has a significant impact on the king! Before he was tossed into the Lion's Den, the King hoped, praying? That God would intervene on Daniel's behalf. After finding Daniel alive and understanding the miracle he had just witnessed, Darius made the following decree.

<slide#16-verse>

Then King Darius wrote to those of every people, nation, and language who live on the whole earth: "May your prosperity abound. ²⁶ I issue a decree that in all my royal dominion, people must tremble in fear before the God of Daniel: For he is the living God, and he endures forever; his kingdom will never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end. ²⁷ He rescues and delivers; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth, for he has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." (v25-27)

This was the very same king who had issued a decree that no petitions could be made for 30 days except to himself. Now, the King is giving a decree that all of Persia must tremble before the Living God of Daniel.

The impact that Daniel's courageous life had on Darius was profound!

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Paul tells us that Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient to the plan of redemption, even though it would cost Him everything, a terrible, cruel death on the cross (Phil 2:8). However, even in His death, the Roman centurion overseeing His execution remarked.

When the centurion, who was standing opposite him, saw the way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39—parallel – Matt 27:54, Luke 23:47).

How we live in obedience to God can impact those around us—a profound impact.

If you look at our culture, it seems that it is trending away from shifting away from Judeo-Christian values. Extensive research has been done into younger generations, including the Millennial Generation. In this generation, this is talk of the group called the nones, those who are religiously unaffiliated, those who want nothing to do with faith and religion, and the number has grown over time (up to a third of this generation potentially identifies with this label).

This trend seems to have shifted with Gen Z (those born between 1997 and 2012).

Several studies by Barna and The American Bible Society found that the "*vast majority of Gen Z say they're curious about the Bible and two-thirds reported they wanted to read the Scriptures more.*"⁶

Gen Z is currently our teenagers. They are the 6th graders that entered the youth group. This group, as a whole, is curious about the Bible and wants to know what it is about. They've grown up with no Biblical basis; the Biblical doctrines we take for granted that were culturally known have disappeared.

There's Gospel opportunity outside these walls (in the upcoming generations.)

What is required of us is to live our faith courteously. We need to be obedient to live out the Great Commission – to go into all the world and make disciples by preaching the good news of Jesus!

<slide18-Apply it>

Apply It

-Courageously Follow God – The Bible is filled with accounts of those who have come before us. You can read some of their accounts in Hebrews 11, what some termed the faith hall of fame. These saints who have come before had to step in faith in many different situations that were hard. Sometimes there was great personal cost. None the less they remained obedient to God, living with great courage.

At some points, it might take great courage to live your faith

You may be tempted to compromise. Don't

You may be tempted to hide your faith. Don't

It may cost us to remain faithful. We have to decide if we are willing to pay that price. We need to make the choice now, so were ready when opposition comes.

It will take courage to remain faithful

<slide#19-Apply it2>

-Be ready to share the gospel – as opportunities present themselves – be ready to share the Gospel, the good news of Jesus. If we live our faith, people will take notice! Christians are called to be the Salt and Light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14). In order to this, we need to be living our faith, and people will take notice if we are.

Jesus tells the disciples in John 13:35 - People know you are my disciples by your love

<slide#20-blank- close in prayer>

⁶ [Study: Gen Z Wants to Know More About Jesus..... | News & Reporting | Christianity Today](#)