

Staying Power: The Great Illusion

Daniel 6

Small Group Discussion

Intro question (try to give everyone a chance to answer):

- Our guest speaker this Sunday, Nick Ecker, shared about the experience of being in a car accident in Chile, which reminded him that he was outside of his home culture. Have you ever had an experience, outside of your home culture, which starkly reminded you that you were not “at home?”
- The Bible often makes the case that God’s people are “in exile” in the present world—in other words, our true home is in God’s kingdom.
 - What experiences remind us that we are not really “at home” here?
 - In what ways are we susceptible to becoming *too comfortable* in this present world, such that we forget where our true loyalty lies?

READ Daniel 6:1-16, then discuss the following.

- Why do you think Daniel’s underlings are looking for a way to trap him?
- What do you notice about Daniel’s character, from vv. 1-5? Is there anything surprising about this observation?
- Note that the king in this story is a new one to us (there was another king after Nebuchadnezzar, prior to Darius, named Belshazzar). In v. 14, what do you notice about King Darius’ feelings for Daniel? How is it that Daniel has continued to stay in the favor of three administrations, while remaining faithful to God in exile?
- What aspect of Daniel’s devotion to God do the accusers target in an effort to bring him down? Why do they choose this one?
- What did Daniel stand to lose if he obeyed God rather than King Darius? What did Daniel stand to lose if he had obeyed King Darius’ order?
- On Sunday, Nick said that Daniel was tempted to “sacrifice a permanent command for temporary advancement.” Have you ever experienced this temptation? What determined how you responded?
- Is there anything about your current circumstances that makes it difficult to maintain your devotion to God? What is helping to sustain you?
- Daniel’s prayers show that his worship of God was foremost in your life. Nick added Sunday that our prayers reveal the nature of our worship to God. How does this work? What do your prayers say about your worship of God?

READ Daniel 6:17-28, then discuss the following.

- Pay attention to Daniel’s description of his rescue, in vv. 21-22.
 - According to Daniel, why did God rescue him?
 - Who did God send to rescue Daniel?
 - Recall from Daniel 3, that when God sends “his angel,” most likely it is the Angel of the LORD who is in mind—a revelation of God himself. What is the significance of this realization for understanding this chapter?
 - In what way is this scene a foreshadowing of the gospel? Recall that Jesus (in Luke 24, after his resurrection) said that all the Old Testament Scriptures

were pointing to what he would do. He was declared “innocent” by God—in a much fuller way than Daniel—and yet when he went into the Lion’s Den, so to speak, on the cross, he was not rescued. He was crushed for our sins.

- What long-term good did Jesus embrace instead of a temporary escape?
- How does the resurrection of Christ validate his innocence and the sufficiency of his death?
- How does this picture of the gospel enable you to worship God even when it will cost you in your present context?
- In v. 28, what do you notice about Daniel’s continued influence in exile? (Cyrus of Persia was the final king during Judah’s exile, who would ultimately free them to return to their homeland at the end of 70 years). What enable this continued influence to happen?
- Nick said on Sunday that when we continue to faithfully worship God in Exile, evangelism will be the natural overflow. How does this happen?
- What does this story show us about *staying power*?

Share and pray

- Invite people to share how this passage may challenge them, and pray for them to be able to respond.
- If you haven’t already, pray for the people in your group whose circumstances are making it difficult to be faithful to God.
- Make sure that your prayers on this occasion are marked by worship and adoration of God!