

Sermon Title: **Daniel: A Living Faith**

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Scripture Reference: **Daniel 1:1-17**

Thesis: **Daniel dared to put his faith in God when by all appearances, God has abandoned the people of Israel;**

Purpose: **Because of Daniel's faithfulness in God He was blessed and God raised him up as a shining example for us to follow.**

Key Word: **"God's Faithfulness"**

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Daniel 1:1-17**

A) The Setting:

- 1) **Have you ever felt like God has abandoned you?**
 - (a) Like the circumstances of your life have crashed in on you and everything is working against you?
 - (b) Like it seems that the bad are prospering?
 - (c) While you, who are trying to live a faithful life, are losing the race?
- 2) **Well, imagine then what it must have felt like for Daniel . . .**
 - (a) A young nobleman in the family of the King of Judea, living the best of what life has to offer for education and living environment; handsome and strong for a teenager.
 - (b) Jerusalem had come under siege by the Babylonians, the most ruthless Pagan empire of his time.
- 3) **Surely God would not let His people fall into the hands of such barbarians.**
 - (a) And yet at this time, most of Judea has already fallen into their hands.
 - (b) **And here the Babylonian Army was surrounding Judea's capital city;**
 - (i) letting no one in or out; no supplies, no commerce,
 - (ii) no army coming to rescue them and no escape.
- 4) **I am sure that Daniel had heard either some of Jeremiah or other prophets, whom the king declared as mad alarmists.**
 - (a) At the very least perhaps Daniel heard of the rumors circulation of God's coming judgment?
 - (b) But how could God use such evil . . . to judge His people?
- 5) **This is the situation as we open the book of Daniel.**
 - (a) What was God doing?
 - (b) Could they no longer trust God?
 - (c) Did God turned His back on His promise to Abraham?
- 6) **Let's look for ourselves with our scripture reading for today in Daniel 1:1-17.**
(Page 1004 in the Red pew Bible and page 819 in the black pew Bibles)

B) Sermon Prayer

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **So, as we open this true story on the life of Daniel his whole world has been turned upside down.**
 - (a) From Daniel's perspective, it must have seemed that the world was coming to an end.
 - (b) Jerusalem has fallen into the hands of the Babylonians in the year 605 BC,
- 2) **They should have seen this coming as the 10 northern Tribes of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC.**
 - (a) This should have served as a warning to the last two remaining tribes of Judea and Benjamin . . . but it did not.
 - (b) God was judging His people for failing to obey His commands.
- 3) **The two biggest judgments came from failing to be faithful to God and not observing the Sabbath years.**

- (a) Over the years, they allowed the worship of other idols and gods in direct violation to the First and greatest commandment.
 - (b) **Second, when in the wilderness, the Israelites were to observe the Sabbath which is? . . . Saturday, the seventh and last day of the week.**
 - (i) They were to gather no food on this day but could store food from the day before to get them through the day of rest.
 - (ii) The day before the Sabbath was the only day they were allowed to do that for if they tried to store food on any other day it would rot overnight.
- 4) **God made us to observe a Sabbath, one day of rest in Seven where our only focus should be on God.**
- (a) It will make us stronger in our faith,
 - (b) And stronger physically.
- 5) **When God gave the Israelites the Promised Land God commanded that every 7th year would be a Sabbath year;**
- (a) **They were to let the land lie dormant and plant no crops during this year; this served two purposes:**
 - (i) One, to allow the land time to recover nutrients (*Farmers know that you have to add chemicals or not use part of your land every few years to allow for natural recovery from the plants that pull nutrients from the soil*)
 - (ii) Second, it was a way of building their faith and trust in God to provide their food and needs during the Sabbath year.
 - (b) **For 490 years, the Israelites had failed to observe this commandment.**
 - (i) That meant that 70 Sabbaths had been skipped.
 - (ii) **2 Chronicles 36:21**, tells us that **"The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah."**
 - (iii) This is what **Jeremiah 36:8-12**, wrote **"Therefore the Lord Almighty says this: "Because you have not listened to my words, 9 I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon," declares the Lord, "and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. 10 I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. 11 This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years."**
- 6) **Some people will tell you that God wants to bless you with riches and that all your problems will be easily handled with God at your side.**
- (a) But this is just not true!
 - (b) In fact, as disciples of Christ we are more likely to experience more persecution, trials and troubles.
- 7) **God's Word teaches us that He uses "ALL THINGS" for our good, when we love God and are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28)**
- (a) That simply means that when we are doing God's will, He promises to use our circumstances and events of our life for our ultimate good.
 - (b) He didn't say He would make it easy; but that He would help us through our trials.
 - (c) Daniel understood this.

TS: **So, this is why we find in our story . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **Daniel was unwilling to compromise His Faith**

- 1) **There was nothing in the commandments that Daniel had been taught that would prevent him from changing his name or clothes.**
 - (a) There was nothing that would prevent him from learning a new language or living in a new culture.
 - (b) However, there was a commandment that he not eat food that had been sacrificed to idols or false gods.
 - (c) This would have been seen as a sign of worship.
- 2) **Daniel found himself picked to be one of those who were to directly serve King Nebuchadnezzar, first because:**
 - (a) He was clearly seen as one who was handsome, without defect.
 - (b) He was also educated so as to pass the intellect test.
 - (c) He was trained in social graces to pass the social test.
 - (d) He was already from a royal family line.
- 3) **The cost of service came at a great price to Daniel.**
 - (a) **Daniel was emasculated making him an eunuch.**
 - (i) This meant no family of his own; and a life of celibacy.
 - (ii) **Daniel had his name changed to Belteshazzar.**
 - The name Daniel means "*God is my judge*"
 - The name Belteshazzar means "*Bel protect his life;*" Bel being one of the gods that was worshipped in Babylon.
 - (b) **Daniel had to learn a new culture and a new language.**
 - (i) The food provided from the King's table was meant to obligate the new slaves to their new masters.
 - (ii) The idea being that with living in the best of conditions which their society had to offered, they would not seek to leave.
 - (c) **It was also meant to assimilate them into the culture.**
 - (i) So that you could not even tell that they were from another country.
 - (ii) When in Babylon, do as the Babylonians do . . . so to speak.
- 4) **Yet, Daniel refused to compromise his Faith.**
 - (a) Daniel was living in a decadent society that brought items from the Temple back to their own temple and placed them in the temple treasury as a sign to all that the Babylonian gods were more powerful than the God of the Israelites.
 - (b) But in **Jeremiah 36:12**, we see God's answer to that "***But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt, declares the Lord, "and will make it desolate forever."***
- 5) **Daniel believed in God's absolute power and authority over his life.**
 - (a) This gave Daniel the courage to stand his ground even when faced with death.
 - (b) For Daniel believed that either God would rescue him for His purpose,
 - (c) Or God would bring Daniel to be with him in the next life.

TS: **Daniel had a living, uncompromising faith and . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **God rewarded Daniel's Faith.**

- 1) **Daniel and His friends asked to only be fed water, vegetables and fruit.**
 - (a) Ashpenaz, the head Eunuch feared for his own life if Daniel and company did not do well on a diet not prescribed by the king.
 - (b) While vegetarians may think that they can survive without meat in their diet; they need to make up for the iron, protein and other nutrients that they provide.
 - (c) A strict diet of only veggies and fruit would not make Daniel and his friends look healthier than the others unless God had not intervened.
- 2) **God rewarded Daniel and his friends by making sure that they were the healthiest in the bunch.**

- (a) After 10 days on this diet, they looked fatter and healthier than the others who ate from the king's table.
- (b) Don't be fooled, they would have not looked this good if God had not done it.
- 3) **Second, Daniel 1, verse 17 tells us that God rewarded these 4 with the best wisdom.**
 - (a) It says, **"To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning."**
 - (b) And the end of verse 17 says that God gave Daniel a special gift, **"And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds."**
- 4) In fact, the rest of chapter one is a glowing acknowledgment that God blessed these 4 faithful friends reading Daniel 1:18-21 it says,

"At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom."
- 5) 10 times better than the rest of the group.
 - (a) How do you account for that unless God is not in it?
 - (b) It is God who provides true wisdom.
 - (c) We can study all we want and we have all met what I refer to as educated idiots.
 - (d) But true understanding and wisdom comes from God.
- 6) **Daniel would spend the rest of his life serving the kings ruling Babylon.**
 - (a) About Daniel nothing bad is said of him.
 - (b) Rare among Bible characters.

TS: **So, what have we learned from Daniel so far?**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

- A) **Daniel dared to put his faith in God when by all appearances, God has abandoned the people of Israel;**
 - 1) Because of Daniel's faithfulness in God,
 - 2) He was blessed and God raised him up as a shining example for us to follow.
 - 3) **When things seem to be going against us we would be wise to take a lesson from Daniel and remember that God is in charge of all our circumstances.**
 - (a) And God is more than capable of making good come out of what we perceive as a bad situation.
 - (b) **God may want us to learn from the experience.**
 - (i) God may want to use us as an example to help someone else.
 - (ii) God may also be disciplining us because we are acting on our own purposes and not what God wants for us.
 - (c) **Whichever it is; we need to do like Daniel and turn to God in prayer to seek what God wants us to learn out of whatever it is we are experiencing.**
- B) **People today don't want to believe that God is a God who will judge.**
 - 1) They don't like the harsh side of God portraying Him as cruel, unloving, with no understanding and unforgiving.
 - 2) But this couldn't be further from the truth.
 - 3) **God corrects His children just a loving parent corrects and teaches their growing child.**
 - (a) At the time the child doesn't always see the correction as an act of love.
 - (b) In fact, they think it is sometime downright mean.
 - (c) But the parent knows that for the child to grow up right in the world that some correction must take place.

- 4) **And with human nature, being what it is, God knows that it has to be harsh enough to make a lasting impression.**
 - (a) God loves us enough and has enough concern for our eternal souls that He is willing to put us through various trials in order to teach us what we need to know.
 - (b) What seems harsh at the time may be the very lesson we need to avoid the real danger later on in life.
- 5) **The same can be said for God using circumstances**
 - (a) Even the bad things which happen in order to make the impression strong enough to steer us onto the right path.
 - (b) It takes a lot sometimes to get our attention; but if we are His Child, then God loves us enough to do whatever it takes.
- 6) **People also don't like to think that God will sometimes use evil in this world for the purpose of accomplishing His ultimate goal in us.**
 - (a) But he does.
 - (b) Ultimately, it comes down to the fact that we either have enough faith to believe God has our good in mind or we think we know better than God.
- 7) **Our Country would be wise to heed this lesson.**
 - (a) For if we as a country continue to turn our backs on God and His ways . . .
 - (b) God may just use some evil country to teach us a lesson.
- C) **Finally, if we want to truly be wise; we need to come to the source of wisdom.**
 - 1) We need to come to God and ask Him to show us or reveal to us that which is right and true.
 - 2) Jesus said, "***I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me.***" (John 14:6)
 - 3) Jesus is God and the source of all wisdom and truth.
 - 4) Have you come to Jesus for wisdom?

IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**