

Sermon Title: **Safe in a Pack of Lions**

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Vessel: Russ LaFlamme

Scripture Reference: **Daniel 4:28-33**

Thesis: **Once again, Daniel's faith is put to the test;**

Purpose: **God's tests often test our own human limitations and deepen our dependence on Him.**

Key Word: **"Trusting God"**

I) Introduction: Scripture Reading is: **Daniel 6:6-23**

A) The Setting:

- 1) **Most of you may have seen a lion.**
 - (a) But a doubt many have been in a pack of lions.
 - (b) Yet, at time you may feel like you have had to face the lions.
- 2) **When God called me to be the Training Officer for the Bangor Fire Department**
 - (a) It was God directed,
 - (b) First full time Training Officer for this 100-man department.
 - (c) No one wanted the job.
 - (d) I was an outsider asked to lead men with years of tradition and experience.
 - (e) I was resented, plotted against to see me fail; but God protected me.
 - (f) God always warned or prepared me when something was coming and it often turn on those who plotted my downfall.
- 3) **For me this was a time of testing my faith that taught me to trust God.**
 - (a) I had to trust God every day; I had to pray for strength and guidance daily.
 - (b) It was the most difficult time of my work career;
 - (c) And the most rewarding time of my work career.
- 4) **Maybe you have face professional jealousy or personal jealousy?**
 - (a) Maybe you have faced times where you felt persecuted with those who just didn't like you.
 - (b) My point; we all face the lions at times in our life.
- 5) **This is the situation Daniel will find himself in today.**
 - (a) It is a couple of years now past the events of Chapter 5.
 - (b) Daniel is well in his 80's back in a position of power.
 - (c) Now serving as one of three governors over one third of the empire.
 - (d) Each Governor had 60 Satraps, government officials to help with among other duties the collection of taxes.
- 6) **Daniel was blessed by God and did much better than the other Governors.**
 - (a) And he was a Jew, a foreigner who had spent his life serving the Kings of Babylon.
 - (b) Now he was serving Darius, the Mede.
- 7) **Darius was obviously smart enough to look around for the best people and Daniel's reputation must have caught his attention.**
 - (a) For once again, here is Daniel serving in a high position and quickly becoming a favorite of the king.
 - (b) That leads us to where we pick up our story in our scripture reading for today in **Daniel 6:6-23.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **What we just read is perhaps one of the most famous Bible stories that many of you learned when they were young.**
 - (a) It has it all . . .
 - (b) A hero, villains, betrayal, plot twist, redemption and justice.
- 2) **But why is God putting Daniel's faith to the test once again?**

- (a) After 80 plus years of service and faithfulness you would think that Daniel, of anyone, would have earned a break . . .
 - (b) Yet, here we are, Daniel is faced with another ultimatum; **compromise what you believe God is telling you to do . . . or face being thrown to the lions.**
 - (c) Even though the King did not want to do it, this kingdom was run by a king through laws that could not be broken.
- 3) **Daniel showed when he was a young man that he was unwilling to compromise his faith and now more than 70 years later we see that has not changed.**
- (a) Daniel's friends showed that they trusted God even if it meant death in a fiery furnace.
 - (b) And God rescued them without even a smell of smoke.
- 4) **God is watching over His people and while God may judge them and punish them . . . God is doing it to preserve them.**
- (a) The Israelites would need these times to hold them strong in their faith and trust in God.
 - (b) It was events like this that made sure the Jews remembered who they were and helped them survive for more than 2500 years without a country to call their own.

TS: **So, the first thing we are going to learn is . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **The Importance of Trusting God**

- 1) **Daniel had trusted God developing his relationship with the Lord all his life.**
 - (a) We learn that Daniel trusted God to allow him and his fellow Jews who served the King to avoid the food offered from the King's table.
 - (b) Daniel trusted God when he need to learn the King's dream and be able to interpret it for the King.
 - (c) Daniel saw God's plan for the ages where God's people are ruled by the Gentiles until near the time when God would return to establish His rule once and for all.
- 2) **All of this must have given Daniel great courage to follow God.**
 - (a) **I think many of us say . . . well, if I had those things happen to me I could be strong in my trusting of God.**
 - (b) But I would like to point out that Daniel's faith grew because of the trust he put in God.
 - (c) Daniel trusted God and God proved to be faithful.
- 3) **I don't want to say it was easy for Daniel to trust God when facing the lion's Den.**
 - (a) But I believe that Daniel reasoned that God had never failed to be with him in tough circumstances.
 - (b) So, Daniel wasn't going to say, *"Well God was with me those times; but I am not sure God is with me now. I think instead of doing what has worked in the past, I will try something different this time."*
- 4) **Daniel decided he would trust God even if it cost Him his life.**
 - (a) The Bible says that **"without faith it is impossible to please God."** (Hebrews 11:6)
 - (b) And Jesus said that, **"All things are possible to him who believes . . ."** (Mark 9:23)
 - (c) From God's perspective our faith, which equates to our trust, is critical . . . a principle Daniel well understood.

TS: **But there is also another element and that is . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **The Importance of Praying to God**

- 1) **This relationship Daniel had with God didn't happen by accident.**
 - (a) We learned that Daniel had developed the habit of meeting with God in prayer three times a day.
 - (b) Why is this important?
 - (c) Because God's purpose, power, and presence is released in prayer.
 - (d) For Daniel, this unbreakable routine was the secret to his character, his reputation, and his influence.
 - (e) Therefore, the question for us is how do we become powerful men and women of prayer?
- 2) **David Jeremiah suggests 3 steps to becoming powerful men and women of prayer.¹**
 - (a) **First, Establish a daily time for prayer and be serious about it.**
 - (i) Too many Christians utter a hasty, "Lord bless me!" while dashing to work in the morning.
 - (ii) But true power is found in true sincere prayer,
 - (iii) And true prayer must become a serious habit in our lives.
 - (iv) New habits are hard to make; but once made, are hard to break.
 - (v) **Think through your schedule and begin to spend time in prayer each day, at certain times and in a certain place.**
 - (vi) If you miss a day, don't give up.
 - (vii) Stick with it until it's an unbreakable pattern in your life.
 - (b) **Second, Adopt a method of praying.**
 - (i) There is not a single method of prayer that works best for everyone.
 - (ii) Many people like to keep praise and prayer lists or a simple prayer journal.
 - (iii) Many follow a sequence that includes Bible reading and meditation, praise, confession, and various petitions for oneself and for others.
 - (iv) Your practice will evolve as you pursue it, and it will grow richer and deeper as the days and years pass.
 - (c) **Third, Don't be ashamed of praying.**
 - (i) While we don't want to flaunt our prayers as the scribes and hypocrites did in Jesus' day. (Matthew 6:5).
 - (ii) We are thankful to have access to God's throne day and night.
 - (iii) Our prayers form an important line of defense against that roaring lion, Satan.
 - (iv) Daniel wasn't ashamed to be known as a man of prayer, and neither should we.
- 3) **Prayer is the key to unlocking our faith and growing in our relationship with God.**

TS: Again, Dr. David Jeremiah points to the question we are all dying to know; for, we need to ask, . . .

C) Key Point #3: Why Did God Save Daniel?²

- 1) **Throughout history, many other martyrs died for their faith, some of them in Old Testament times.**
 - (a) Some are dying even today for their faith.
 - (b) So, why did God decide to spare Daniel?
- 2) **The miraculous act of shutting the lion's mouth vindicated Daniel and displayed God's power before the king.**
 - (a) Yes, God's power could have been evident even if Daniel was eaten by the lions. . .
 - (b) God would have been glorified by Daniel's faithfulness regardless of his fate in the lion's den;
 - (c) But God's miraculous intervention showed beyond a shadow of a doubt that Daniel's God was real and powerful.

¹ Agents of Babylon, Dr. David Jeremiah, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 2015, pp 192-193

² Agents of Babylon, Dr. David Jeremiah, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 2015, p189

- 3) **The King was delighted that Daniel was spared;**
 - (a) But he was also furious that he had been manipulated by the other governors into making the law.
 - (b) For he now realized that they lied to him when they said that ALL the governors agreed that He should make this law.
- 4) **So now, the King made a new law commanding that those who had conspired to manipulate him so as to entrap Daniel would now share in the punishment decreed for Daniel.**
 - (a) Not just the governors; but their families as well.
 - (b) This is important to the story to show just how ferocious these lions were.
- 5) **But again, many martyrs have died even though they had just as much faith and trust as Daniel.**
 - (a) This is where we have to trust that God's purpose may be best served when a saint dies and moves directly into God's presence.
 - (b) For God's Word teaches us that, **"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."** (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)
- 6) **In the case of Daniel, I believe that God wanted to establish that he is in control and will take care of His chosen people, the Jews.**
 - (a) This was important for the Jews to know during their time of captivity.
 - (b) God had not abandoned or rejected them;
 - (c) **But God was disciplining them to prepare them for what was to come.**
- 7) **This is true in the life of all believers;**
 - (a) God may choose at times to rescue us from impossible situations;
 - (b) Or at other times let us go through them even if it means facing death.
 - (c) But death is not the end of the story for a believer;
 - (d) It is just the beginning of a new chapter in the presence of God.

TS: **So, as we bring this to an end; what is important for us to take home today?**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

- A) **First of All ... realize that age does not matter to an eternal God.**
 - 1) From God's perspective, we are all babes in Christ.
 - 2) God will continue to grow our faith and dependence in Him so that we can learn what it means to truly trust God in ALL circumstances.
 - 3) **At times His testing may be for our benefit.**
 - (a) At other times, it may be for the benefit of others.
 - (b) Maybe seeing how we handle a test of our faith will give others the courage to find their faith.
- B) **So, what are the lions that we have to face?**
 - 1) **There are lions all about me that I have to face such as struggles with my old habits and sins.**
 - (a) At times, you may deal with those who are jealous of your success.
 - (b) There will always be people who for whatever reason do not want you to succeed.
 - (c) Even pastors can be jealous of the success of other pastors if they are not careful.
 - 2) **1 Peter 5:8** says that, **"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."**
 - 3) **Satan does not want you to grow or glorify God, or especially to pray to God.**
 - (a) For Satan knows that this is what makes you strong.
 - (b) So, trust in God, trust in Jesus and pray for strength and guidance.
 - (c) The work you do now in building a relationship with God will prepare you for the times when you are facing the lions.

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