

Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

The Text: Daniel 6: 6-27

6 ⁶ So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: “May King Darius live forever! ⁷ The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions’ den. ⁸ Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” ⁹ So King Darius put the decree in writing.

¹⁰ Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. ¹¹ Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. ¹² So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: “Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions’ den?” The king answered, “The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.”

¹³ Then they said to the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.” ¹⁴ When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

¹⁵ Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, “Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.”

¹⁶ So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!”

¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel’s situation might not be changed. ¹⁸ Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

¹⁹ At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den. ²⁰ When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?”

²¹ Daniel answered, “May the king live forever! ²² My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.” ²³ The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

²⁴ At the king’s command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions’ den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth: “May you prosper greatly!

²⁶ “I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. “For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.

²⁷ He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”

Background:

The story of Daniel is a testament of faithfulness when facing persecution. Whether this story is a parable or details a historical event, nonetheless its purpose was to instill courage among the people of Israel living under the rule of foreigners. It was a testimony to the faithfulness of God as well as an assurance that our faithfulness will indeed serve as 'a light unto the Gentiles.'

Theology Connection:

We see in this story that faithfulness does not necessarily mean that we will avoid the schemes of humankind. In a way we see a repeat of the story of Joseph whose brothers tossed him into a well and then sold him into slavery. Yet as with the Joseph story, what was intended for evil God reworked for something good. As we begin this season of Advent, this is a good reminder to stay focused upon our hope.

Application:

We cannot navigate life without experiencing unfair moments or events. All of us have experienced betrayal at one time or another. This text reminds us that while God may not be fair, God is good. While the world will betray us, God will redeem us. The purpose of apocalyptic literature such as Daniel, was simply to give people hope in hopeless times. Do you sense hope for yourself from reading this story?

ADULT

We begin Advent with the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den. Now we might understand this story as a commentary on our cultural celebration of Christmas and our responsibility to combat the secular drift of this holiday.

Yet, Daniel was not the one trying to enforce his beliefs upon others. No, instead of God counting on Daniel, this is a story where Daniel could count on God. Isn't that the story of Christmas?

We can count on God to show up. Can we make it our task this week to keep a record of the many and various ways God has shown up for us? I imagine if we take the time to remember, we will be amazed. God is not absent from this world; God shows up in surprising even if it might be subtle ways.

As we light the first candle of Advent may it give us light that we might see the hope that is ours in Christ.

Peace
Pal

YOUTH

Please read Daniel 6: 6-27

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent is all about waiting. The problem is that we hate to wait! Are you as impatient as I am? Waiting is hard to do.

What can we learn from this passage about waiting?

Daniel made it a priority to align himself with God throughout the day so he could be sensitive to God's leading. Daniel did this through prayer each day. Why is it important to have a consistent time in prayer and study of God's Word?

What have you learned about the greatness and power of God in this story about Daniel?

When people think of you, do they think of your faith? Do they know where you stand?

Let us pray:

Dear God, you rescued Daniel from the mouth of the lions. Please rescue us from any harm that we face today. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

CHILDREN'S

Daniel served God for many years. King Darius trusted Daniel more than any other man in his court, and it was out of jealousy that Daniel's enemies wrote the unfair law that sent him to the lions. But Daniel never wavered in his faith! There was never a question what Daniel would do. The question was, would God protect his servant? God showed that He is greater than any king, and stronger than any beast! God shut the mouths of the lions and the mouths of Daniel's enemies. Daniel's adventure in the lion's den proved to King Darius, and to all of us, that God is mighty to save those who believe in Him!

Think:

1. What is the most dangerous wild animal that you have seen in person? (It may have been at a zoo or circus)
2. What happened when Daniel was thrown into the lion den?
3. Who saved Daniel?

Remember:

God can use your faith to make you a witness to others. God will reveal Himself to everyone, just as He has revealed Himself to King Darius! Your faith can be an example to others! How cool is that?

Pray:

Dear God,
Thank You for being our comfort and strength. We know that by following You, our lives will be full of grace!
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen!