

1. Want to look at Daniel and his life

- A. A man who stands out in Scripture as a leader - so courageous, committed and effective
 - 1). A man who prospered in what he did in a very tough situation - captivity in Babylon
- B. The reason: He was a man consumed by heaven - consumed by God
 - 1). Therefore he was a man who knew the power, presence & blessing of God upon his life
And he was a man God could use greatly – give him great influence
 - 2). A man we still look up to with awe and respect some 2500 years later – one of my heroes
- C. I love this verse in Daniel 6

Da 6:28 (ESV) Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

 - 1). I want to prosper spiritually – I want to be used by God here in Orange County
I hope you do too – if so we can learn much from Daniel - what made him so special

Transition: We are going to look at Daniel’s life – see 6 elements that made him so effective

3. Outline

- A. Daniel knew his God
- B. He had a great understanding of God’s providence
- C. He was faithful in his service unto God
- D. He was careful to maintain his purity
- E. He was disciplined in prayer
- F. He was a man of faith

I. DANIEL KNEW HIS GOD

TURN: Da 11:32 (ESV) He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who *know their God* shall stand firm and take action.

Better: Dan 11:32 (NKJV) “... *the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.*”

1. Daniel knew his God intimately – not just facts about Him

This is foundational - the primary thing to be desired above everything else

- A. To know God so well that He becomes our treasure and satisfaction
- B. But it is so easy to settle for much less than this in Christianity

Thought: So easy to settle for church activity – doing Christian things

 - A. We can be happy because we’re doing more – we’re evangelizing – school of the Bible
Prayer booth – Day laborers – all that excites me
 - 1). But we can be just like Ephesians (Rev 2) satisfied because of increased activity
 - a). Problem - they had left their first love – *motion without emotion*
 - 2). Jesus rebuked them – bulletins full with weekly events but heart is cold towards God
 - B. I want God in this church – I want us to know Him – love Him – be amazed by Him
 - 1). I want Him to shape the vision of this church – I feel like He is
 - a). Turning us outward – now we’re concentrating on training – to make a difference
 - 2). Whether we grow large or not isn’t the issue – He’s the issue
 - a). He is to be the primary blessing of the church – but it’s so easy to settle for less
 - C. I love Psalm 63 David longed for God - thirsted after Him in a dry and weary land

Ps 63:1 (ESV) O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

 - 1). I read that and think – that’s Christianity! To a large extent it has become dry and weary
 - a). But David had great joy, contentment, rest because God was his everything

- 2). He said in another place
Ps 42:1 (ESV) As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.
 - a). God do that here! Caused our souls to long after you
- 3). Don't let us settle for mere religion that has so little of God in it – Christ-less Christianity
 - a). Don't let us be Sunday only Christians!

Transition: This was the foundation that influenced everything else in Daniels life

- A. Everything else flowed out of this – He intimately knew God
 - 1). Result he desired to serve God – He was passionate for His glory – He was bold and strong
 - 2). **Result** he did great things for God

Daniel know His God

II. HE HAD A GREAT UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

1. See this throughout the book of Daniel

- A. He writes about God's control of the events of history – raising up and casting down nations - men

2. Providence defined

The Heidelberg Catechism from the 1500's: 'the almighty and ever-present power of God whereby he upholds, as it were by his own hand, heaven and earth together with all creatures, and rules in such a way that leaves and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and unfruitful years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, *and everything else, come to us not by chance but by his Fatherly hand*'

A.W. Pink: said this about the providence of God

Nothing is more strengthening to faith, stabilizing to the mind, and tranquilizing to the heart of a Christian, than for him *to be enabled to discern his Father's hand guiding, shaping, and controlling everything which enters his life...*

- A. Providence tells us we are not victims of circumstances – God is in control of all things
 - 1). There is a loving divine hand orchestrating all events that come into our life
 - 2). And what He allows comes through His love and perfect wisdom – there are no mistakes
 - a). Even when His will may include sickness – financial difficulties.... All things!
 - b). It's all under control – all designed for God's glory and our good

Thought: To prove my point let's work this out in Daniels life

- A. As a teenager he's ripped out of his own land and taken by force into a foreign land
 - 1). We never hear him complain once – WHY? *He applied doctrine - Providence!*
He viewed all this as God's will for his life – not just bad luck
 - 2). *He trusted that he was in Babylon because God wanted him in Babylon*
- B. Therefore – since he believed he was there because God put him there
 - 1). He determined to serve God wholeheartedly while he was there
 - a). He determined to bring God glory in this place that obviously wouldn't be his first choice
 - b). He determined to fulfill those purposes God put him there for

- C. The understanding of doctrine – Providence

Set him free to flourish in circumstances most would only find reasons to complain

Thought: See the same thing in Joseph's life

- A. Innocent young man – sold into *slavery* by jealous brothers – then sent to *prison* through another's lie
 - 1). Never find him complaining "Great God! I live for you and this is the thanks I get"
- B. He trusted in the providence of God – saw it all coming from the hand of God – no accidents
He said to His brothers: Gen 50:20 (NIV) You intended to harm me, *but God intended it for good* to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

- 1). He looked beyond temporal circumstances and saw a divine hand choreographing events
- 2). Because of that understanding – he determined to fulfill God’s plan in slavery and prison

3. The doctrine of providence brings great comfort and strength into our lives

- A. If Joseph and Daniel didn’t cling to this truth their circumstances would have devoured them
 - 1). Understanding this truth enabled them to flourish – to shine for God
 - a). It enabled them to serve Him faithfully – fulfilling the purposes He put them there for

Point: Joseph and Daniel knew their God – understood the great doctrine of providence

- A. And this strengthened them – enabling them to carry out great exploits

4. Application: What are you going through today?

- A. Are you trusting God in it? Are you seeing a loving, divine hand behind it
 - 1). Are you choosing to serve God through it – to bring Him glory like Daniel did?
- B. What is the other option? To complain – to get bitter and waste precious time
 - 1). Think Biblically – apply providence and it will stabilize you
Choose to complain – you will get bitter – your flesh will control you – you will go backwards

He knew his God - He trusted in the providence of God

III. HE WAS FAITHFUL IN HIS SERVICE UNTO GOD

TURN: Da 6:3 (ESV) Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, *because an excellent spirit was in him*. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

1. He strove for excellence in everything He did

- A. He knew God - loved God – trusted that God had him right where He wanted him
 - 1). Therefore he wanted to represent God in a way that honored Him

2. Daniel served in this way for approximately 80 years

- A. He never lost sight of who he was serving - never lost the drive to be faithful in that service
- B. Because he was faithful in whatever God gave him – God kept giving him more – way it works

Da 6:3 (ESV) And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

- 1). Those who are faithful in the little are given more – God raises them through the ranks
Those who aren’t even what they have will be taken from them

3. Application: What about you?

- A. The Christian should be the best student at school - the best employee in his workplace
 - 1). Their lives should be marked with an excellence because they represent their King
- B. Your service here at church – you don’t do this for man – it is for Him
 - 1). Has He called you into it? And He has if you’re a member of the church
He hasn’t called you to spectate – then serve Him diligently – faithfully
- C. Daniel served God with excellence – therefore God was able to lift up Daniel

He knew His God - He understood providence - He served faithfully

IV. HE WAS CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN HIS PURITY

Da 6:4 (ESV) Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could *find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful...*

1. He lived in a way that was above reproach for 80+ years

- A. Carefully guarding his purity – living a life that could stand up to investigation
 - 1). When they looked for anything to find to use against him they couldn’t find anything
- B. He wasn’t living one way in public but another in private – therefore God could use him

2. So many have been ruined by sin

- A. So much potential – so many talents and gifts – but they fail to *guard* their purity
- 1). They end up destroying their testimony and losing their influence with those around them

- B. Paul tells Timothy who it is that God can use

2 Ti 2:20–22 (ESV) Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. ⁽²¹⁾ *Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.* ⁽²²⁾ So **(because of this)** flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

- 1). Time is short – let’s choose to live in a way that God can use you
Pursue those things that build you up - flee those things that weaken you

Point: Daniel had a long and lasting impact because his personal purity was long and lasting

- A. He guarded his heart so that God could use him! He won’t use a dirty vessel

Transition: What would give Him the strength to be faithful in service and pure for 80+ years – next point

He trusted in the providence of God - He served with excellence - He was careful about purity

V. HE WAS DISCIPLINED IN PRAYER

Da 6:10 (ESV) When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

1. Background

- A. The officials wanted to destroy Daniel – but couldn’t find any indiscretion in his life
- 1). Came up with a plan – make it illegal to pray – He will never obey that!
- B. They convince King Darius – nobody should pray to anybody else but you – if they do = Lion’s Den
- 1). He thinks it’s a good idea and signs the law into place
- C. Daniel does exactly what they knew he’d do – prays anyway
- 1). *God was his priority and he proved it by his actions!* Wasn’t just talk for him

Thought: Don’t miss the connection between the point before and this one

- A. He was able to remain pure for 80+ years because he maintained his prayer life for 80+ years
- 1). That kept him connected to the source of power necessary for holy living
- B. There is no chance of sustained purity without sustained prayer
- 1). Why? Because without prayer we try to live out our Christianity in our own strength
 - a). Your strength is not strong enough – eventually temptation will wear you down – you’ll fall

2. This is also connected to our first point – Daniel KNEW his God

- A. He knew God intimately because He spent time with Him

Thought: All this ties together – prayer is foundational and affects everything else

- A. Purity - strength – God’s desires flow into us and they cause us to act
- 1). His heart is infused into you – and you desire to do works that bring Him honor
 - 2). His power is given to you so that you are enabled to do those works

Thought: I think this is a good test of how closely you are living for God – do you desire to do good works?
Is His heart affecting yours? His desires becoming yours?

Watch what grace does: Titus 2:11-14 (NKJV) For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ⁽¹²⁾ teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ⁽¹³⁾ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ⁽¹⁴⁾ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, *zealous for good works.*

- A. You were saved to do good works – your new nature is wired to be zealous for good works
- B. And He has arranged those good words for you

Eph 2:8-10 (NIV) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- (9) not by works, so that no one can boast. (10) For we are God's workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

- 1). Created to do good works - if your life is barren you should be concerned – somethings wrong
 - a). We haven't been saved to sit – or coast – we are saved to be involved in His kingdom

Point: But all that flows out of really knowing God – and knowing God is a result of prayer

3. I love reading biographies of the great saints of the past – so powerful

- A. There are common threads you see – one is - they were *all men of the Word and prayer*

- 1). Example: George Whitefield – who was used as much as anybody

- a). A man so many other great saints used as a model to pattern their life after
- b). He started every morning with his Bible and prayer and on his knees

Whitefield was devoted to God in earnest prayer. (**Watch the benefits**) Through time spent on his knees, his heart for God was further deepened and developed. The real secret of his public ministry was not found primarily in his vivid vocabulary, dramatic skills, or Oxford education. The true source of power in his preaching lay far deeper. It was discovered behind closed doors in time alone with God . He urged, “Be much in secret prayer. Converse less with man, and more with God.” Whitefield poured out his heart to God in prayer, and he was effectively used before men.

- 1a). Whitefield was much for God because he was much with God
- 2a). He said “Prayer raises man up to God and brings God down to man”
 - Here God's heart is transferred to us – His power infused into us
- 3a). Here is where effectiveness in ministry – in evangelism is birthed
- 3). Prayer prepares us to live a life that has impact in our world – a life that counts for eternity

VI. HE WAS A MAN OF FAITH

1. You see that in his boldness

- A. King Darius signs the edict – no prayer except to him – the cost of prayer = lion's den
- B. He prays out in the open like he always did – he's caught – so he pays the cost
 - 1). King Darius didn't want to throw him in – but after his signed law his hands were bound
 - 2). Next day he goes to the den of lions to see the results

TURN: Da 6:19–23 (ESV) Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ⁽²⁰⁾ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” ⁽²¹⁾ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! ⁽²²⁾ My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” ⁽²³⁾ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, *because he had trusted in his God.*

What would build up a faith like that?

1. His faith grew out of prayer – KNOWING God

- A. We don't trust God because it's hard to trust a stranger – prayer is the answer to that

2. His faith grew out of His knowledge of the word

Ro 10:17 (ESV) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- A. All throughout this book you see his intimate knowledge of Scripture

- 1). Knew the promises – understood the doctrine of providence – had the assurance of glory
The lion’s den may be God’s way of taking him home – the upgrade – fine!

B. The Scriptures put backbone into him – lifted his heart from being shackled to the world – set it on God

Point: Scriptures put fire in our soul

A. Whitefield again – every morning 5:00 you’d find him on his knees with the Bible opened before him

He said: “I began to read the Holy Scriptures upon my knees.... This proved meat indeed and drink indeed to my soul. *I daily received fresh light and power from above.*”

He confessed how his daily devotion to the Scripture became like fire upon the altar of his soul, *fueling his love for Christ.*

Question: You want ignition in your heart? Of course you do – get your Bible out

Read it *not to add facts but to see God in it – to be thrilled by Him and His Son*

A. How can your heart be ignited if you’re just putting in the things of the world

Those things are dampeners of spiritual excitement not excitors – like throwing water on a flame

B. Get the Word out until you are so consumed with God – you’ll be willing to take risks for Him

Thought: Do what is necessary to love God and remain in that state – not losing your first love

Jud 21 (ESV) keep yourselves in the love of God...

A. Pour the fuel of the word in – then ignite that fuel through prayer – until your soul is ablaze

His faith grew out of His time in the Word and prayer

3. His faith grew out of his experience with God

A. He loved and obeyed God – He stayed in the Word and prayer – He kept his life pure

- 1). This kept the door open for God to reveal Himself to Him – to come to Him

Jn 14:21 (ESV) Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, *and I will love him and manifest myself to him.*”

B. When God starts manifesting Himself to you – your faith will soar

- 1). You see Him moving in your life – you sense His tender Fatherly care

You see Him fulfilling the promises that bring so much comfort

The problems of the world seem to dim as He blazes in your life

- 2). He becomes your all-in-all – and you start to rest in Him!

Thought: Daniel is leading the way by example – you can’t coast into this kind of life

A. This takes *intentional living* – there are things we must rid ourselves of that weaken us

There are disciplines we must embrace that take us to God and strengthen us

B. I pray we would all be like Paul the Apostle

Phil 3:7-8 (NIV) But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. (8) What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. *I consider them rubbish (dung),* that I may gain Christ

- 1). He had everything going for Him – the man - Power – Prestige – Position – wealth etc.

- 2). He looked at it all and said in comparison to knowing Christ it is rubbish – DUNG

a). Don’t trade in intimacy with Christ to cling to manure – lousy choice

THE RESULT OF DANIEL’S FAITH

Let’s pick up our story again after King Darius discovers Daniel is alright

TURN: Da 6:24–27 (ESV) And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces. ⁽²⁵⁾ *Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ⁽²⁶⁾ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the*

end. (27) He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”

1. God uses this man with a solitary heart in an incredible way

- A. His life becomes an instrument God pours His purposes through
 - 1). **Result:** God is proclaimed throughout the land
 - B. May God fill this church with men and women like this – undivided hearts – sold out
 - 1). Who believe that God is worth pursuing – losing some of the world for
 - 2). Let’s see what He can do with us! Let’s rise up in these last days and make a difference
 - a). God has placed ordinary men and women in the Bible as examples of what can happen
When people like us choose to put God first in all things
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CONCLUSION

1. What an example Daniel leaves us

- A. Just a man – but a man who put God first in his life – what about us

2. How did Daniel live?

- A. He knew His God
- B. He rested in the providence of God
- C. He served God with excellence wherever God placed him
- D. He guarded his life from sin - he chose purity and persevered in that decision
- E. He disciplined himself in prayer
 - 1). God was his priority and his prayer life proved it
- F. He had a great faith in God
 - 1). A faith that grew out of the scriptures - simply believing what they say
 - 2). A faith that grew out of prayer - you can only trust somebody that you really know
 - 3). A faith that grew out of his experience of walking with God and being used by Him

3. Result: We look at Daniel 2500 years later and we’re still amazed

- A. We preach series titled “Dare to be a Daniel” – Because this is what Daniel was like
 - 1). What a man to study – God has put Him in His book to give us an example
And to encourage us – God will bless those who sell out
 - a). You can rise about the rut and routine of life – live out an adventure with God!