

Do you trust God with your life Daniel 6:1-3 and 16-24

We continue exploring the book of Daniel and this morning we witness a miracle, something only God could achieve.

Last Sunday we witnessed how God enabled Daniel to decipher what the writing on the wall was about which left one King dead and now a new one in his place – King Darius.

Now King Darius respected Daniel and all that he could do – so much so that the other officials were jealous and wanted to get rid of Daniel.

They got together and made up a law to last 30 days. They presented the law as an appeal to truth and justice but their ulterior motive was to appeal to one of Darius' fatal flaws – his pride. And sadly, he fell for their plan. He signed their law.

Devotion to established laws was one of the special features of the Persian empire, so when a law was made even the king couldn't change it. This law in fact meant that Darius would be made a god for 30 days and this law could not be broken, not even by an important official like Daniel.

Daniel was a man of marvellous faith and courage and he continued to fall on his knees in prayer. He knew he was not supposed to pray to any god but Darius but for Daniel prayer to the true God was as necessary as his breath. So he continued to pray 3 times a day as per his religion. He even did this in front of his window, knowing that people would see him. This made the other officials more jealous and furious – thus the snare pulled tighter on the net around Daniel.

Daniel could have simply closed the window – what difference did the open window make to the effectiveness of his prayers anyway? Well it did make a difference for Daniel as he had faith in God and that

overcame any insecurity he felt. He chose not to cower in the corner or hide his faith in God.

The officials returned to King Darius to tell him that Daniel was disobeying the law. Now Darius was caught in a Catch 22 situation – if he disagreed then his people would revolt and he would lose his kingdom – he would be taken out. If he agreed, then Daniel would be killed. Not a good choice – Darius chose to keep his job.

Daniel was thrown into a deep den where lions lived. You see lions roamed the area in Mesopotamia and they were feared. Some kings hunted them for sport. The Persians kept the lions fed and cared for and then used them to execute people.

A heavy stone was rolled across the entrance of the den and King Darius was sure that he would never see Daniel again. He couldn't eat or sleep all night. Early the next morning he returned to the den and he called out. He was hoping that Daniel would respond – and he did – Daniel had indeed survived as God had shut the mouths of the lions and they didn't hurt him.

God had found Daniel innocent as he continued to serve Him even if it meant his death. God showed the King and the others that He is the one and only God and can be trusted.

And we read on that those officials who falsely accused Daniel and used manipulation in the hope of having him killed – ended up punished. Now we might not like what we read – that the officials and their families were eaten by the lions, but we need to recognise that their evil was instigated by the devil, therefore their evil was abolished.

Now how does this help us today?

Daniel was over 80 years of age at that time. And his behaviour didn't become negative or complaining as sometimes it can. After all, we have aches and pains that we knew nothing about when we were younger.

I now struggle if I am on my knees to get up again easily. Sometimes we lose our energy – it takes longer to complete things.

But how about this – Edison continued to invent things at the age of 90; Colonel Sanders didn't make his first million dollars till he was over 60 years of age – ooh hope for me at last. You can do your greatest deeds for God in your older years, just as Daniel did.

We may face ridicule today in relation to our faith – you know – someone saying Oh so you go to church; or you are one of those goody-goody Christians; or how can you believe in God with all that is happening in the world today? Some people have lost friends and family because they have chosen God.

Daniel's religion was attacked because the officials couldn't find anything else to criticise him about.

If we face jealous critics because of our faith, be glad. Perhaps they had to focus on your belief as a last resort. Perhaps they find your faith arrogant. Perhaps they want to have your faith so they put you down because you have what they want.

How would you react if a law was passed today that said we weren't allowed to pray in public, in church or anywhere and if we disobeyed we would be thrown into jail for life?

Fear is a terrible thing. Remember Lot's wife who feared leaving Sodom and Gomorrah, feeling it was such a terrible loss – her home, her possessions, her friends she would miss. So she looked back – and

turned into a pillar of salt. Her fear caused her to do this and she lost more than she thought.

We cannot look back – to the past, to things we have said or done, to circumstances, to treatment we may have had to endure – we must turn our eyes always to Jesus.

How did Daniel respond? What was his secret?

His victory was because of his active prayer life. And the devil had to know that the only way to stop Daniel was to stop his prayer life. The devil knows that about us as well. That may be why many of us pray so little – the devil robs us of this practice in our daily lives.

Daniel was a busy official in the palace at that time, but his duties did not keep him from spending time with God. He set aside a place to pray and made it a commitment to meet God there daily.

Do you have a place to pray and meet with God daily?

When we set aside a place and time to meet with God and ensure that nothing else becomes more important in our lives then that place will become sacred. Even just moving into that area to meet with God can give us a sense of peace.

Sometimes we may think, well one or two days won't matter if I don't pray, or even a week. Now Daniel could have used that excuse – what's 30 days really. It is not that it is evil or anything. But Daniel knew this was a test of his faith – so he continued to face Jerusalem at the open window. Perhaps you could diary even just 3 specific times of the day to pause and talk to God. And I don't mean just a quick thanks God or give me this God but at least 20-30 minutes 3 times a day. You will be amazed how things start to turn around and yes, miracles still happen today.

PRAYER IS OUR LIFELINE TO GOD.

There is a cute story of a little girl who went into her room and threw her shoe under her bed. Her mother asked her, why did you do that? She replied – well if I have to get down on my knees to get my shoe in the morning it will remind me to pray while I am down there. Out of the mouths of babes.

Daniel continued to pray because the king could not guide or strengthen him – only God could provide what he really needed.

We need to really listen to this – it is helpful at times to seek counsel from someone – friend, family, pastor, but this should always be considered in the light of God’s word and prayer – which should happen first.

God has a way of delivering His people that we can never imagine.

We need to hang onto our lifeline to God and not prematurely give up and give in to the pressure of unbelievers because God has power.

What do others see in your service to God?

The unbelievers witnessed Daniel’s consistency, continued service and faithful devotion to God.

What can unbelievers and others determine about your life?

The person who trusts in God and obeys His will is untouchable until God calls them home.

To trust in God is to have immeasurable peace.

God, who delivered Daniel will deliver you.

Do you trust Him with your life?