

FACING ROARING LIONS

Daniel 6

You can't be a genuine Christian & be a ...?

Salesman, lawyer, doctor, businessman, airline pilot? pastor?
student? housewife?

Work/professional situation:

Is it possible to be a true Christian and be a businessman?

What will co-workers do to you if you try to consistently live by
godly principles at work?

Home situation: Is it possible to be a true Christian and be a
husband/wife? son/daughter? brother/sister? *Specific situa-
tion?*

Political Situation:

Can you be a Christian politician?

What will pagans do to a politician who tries to be faithful? =>

DANIEL'S STORY

QUESTION:

***WHAT HAPPENS WHEN JEALOUS PAGANS TRY TO
DESTROY GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS?***

[Inductive: Faithful always win in the end!]

Daniel's story demonstrates that . . .

**WHEN GOD'S FAITHFUL SERVANTS GET AHEAD,
JEALOUS PAGANS SEEK
TO DESTROY THEM 1-19**

6th example from history: Previous exx. all from
Babylon –before *their* gods– *How does God of Israel fare
before **Persian** gods?*

What about the gods of the Greeks? Roman gods? gods of
the U.S.?

Could God give victory there too?

God's faithful servant distinguishes himself above world's leaders 1-3

Exaltation from last incident gives birth to latest incident.

Darius appoints the faithful servant as **1 of 3** commissioners over His entire kingdom. 1-2

"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ²& over them 3 high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss."

They have authority over 120 satraps, who rule provinces.

3 responsible to oversee others to prevent deceit & fraud

King recognizes Daniel's *integrity* & leadership ability

Faithful servant **distinguishes** himself above others

3a *"Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him."*

Darius wants to appoint the faithful servant over **whole** kingdom

3b *"The king planned to set him over the whole kingdom."*

How do the other leaders respond to Daniel's godly leadership?

Do they respect him for his integrity and ability?

They're *jealous!!!*

World's leaders try to find way to get God's faithful servant 4-9

Pagans try to **find grounds** to accuse God's faithful servant of negligence or corruption 4a ⁴*The high officials & the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom"*

They're out to destroy his career!

They're convinced that if you watch any politician long enough you'll find something!

They watched every move for weeks—couldn't find a thing!

They did learn about his lifestyle —*they learned about his daily time alone with God!*

They knew what he was doing in the privacy of his own home!

They aren't interested in what makes Daniel tick—they want *to destroy him!*

What's result of their test?

Pagans find **no ground** to accuse God's faithful servant 4b

"They could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him."

They find NO negligence nor corruption! — No lack of faithfulness

He's predictably faithful—100% loyal to God & to his king!

Modern report of east european pastor: “friend” spent time in his home & asked him to keep couple of suitcases for him. Authorities arrived, searched cases & found “stolen” material. Pastor faces imprisonment. They knew him well enough to get him—he could be trusted!

Due to faithful conduct, they’ll never find basis for accusation

Does godly lifestyle convince leaders?

Do they go away & leave him alone?

Pagans realize they have to **create conflict** between faithful servant’s king & his God 5 *“Then these men said,*

“We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”

Doesn’t mean his only weakness was spiritual!

Only way to get him is to *create a conflict*.

Would they come to conclusion that only way they’ll ever get US is to create a conflict between God and our country? ...God & our work?

What areas of OUR lives would have to change for OUR critics to conclude that?

Evangelist tells of a call from a pay phone. After he gave operator his name & number, he deposits the money, talks few minutes, & hung up. All his coins were returned. Calling operator, he said, "I don't know if you're the one who took my call, but my coins came back." "I know," she said. "I was in the audience tonight when you spoke on integrity, and wondered if you practice what you preach."

How do they finally get Daniel? Realize it's easier to trap king than the faithful servant

[Pagans trap the king 6-9]

They appeal to **king's pride**, to create conflict for Daniel **6-7**

"These high officials & satraps came by agreement to the king & said to him, "O King Darius, live forever!"⁷ All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects & the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions."

They knew king would fall for it!

—public display of dependence on king as benefactor.

All requests have to be addressed to king for 30 days.

Sounds pretty good to Darius!!!

If requirement were fulfilled literally, it'd be major headache. Can you imagine if we were to pass a law saying no one could ask a favor of anyone except you for next 24 hrs--just in our church. Every prayer request would have to go to you alone. This is for entire country—for 30 days!

They've been watching Daniel.

They know him well.

There's no way he'll avoid praying to his God for 30 days!

They told Darius ALL officials agree about this.

They get king to affirm decree with official seal — that binds him by “the laws of the Medes & the Persians.”

Decree sounds severe.

Darius never expects to *enforce* it!

Who'd feel that strongly about religion that they'd die for their faith?

Pagans don't worship gods that way. Their god had been defeated by gods of Medes & Persians. Who'd make that sacrifice for defeated idol? He assumed this was just symbolic affirmation of dependence on the king--the benevolent dictator!

They get king to sign a **legal injunction** to trap Daniel. **8-9** *“Now, O king, establish the injunction & sign the document, so it can't be changed, according to the law of the Medes & Persians, which cannot be revoked.”*

⁹*Therefore King Darius signed the document & injunction.”*

Possible responses:

Neg.—Rebellion against king—Lead protest

Pos.—Stop practice, it's only 30 days!

—go through motions, God knows the heart.

Most of Israel--Christians too!

--would just go along with it!

It's only a month--then they could go back to worship as usual.

It wasn't as if they were asking them to worship pagan gods.

Most people don't spend that much time talking to God anyway!

What would YOU do?

*** *Some people would start praying for first time!***

Maybe we suddenly realize how precious the privilege is.

Sometimes its perverted rebelliousness that motivates us!

Like child with unused toy at side--until another child wants it!

We complain about school prayer--do we pray at home?!!!

"There appears to be more protest about denial of our "right" to pray in public, than about prayerlessness in the church!"

How many come to prayer meetings?

*** *Others stage protest at courthouse or justice dept., or in stadium***

*** *Others would be intimidated and stop.***

How many who already spend time with God daily, would keep doing it?

Sooner or later it may come to that!

God's people are going to get squeezed into corner where we'll have to take a stand for what we believe, and pay a price for our faith!

How does Daniel respond to the threat?

Is he willing to compromise to escape harm?

God's faithful servant continues to pray & give thanks to God 10-11

Faithful servant continues to **pray** to His God **10**

"When Daniel knew 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 3 times a day & prayed & gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously".

Daniel kept doing what he'd always done, faithfully walking with God.

He was willing to pay price—without protest.

He's not showy He's not rebellious

Doesn't flaunt it Doesn't schedule a protest

He quietly does what he always did, faithfully praying

That's the way the godly in Scripture *always* did it
—cp. apostles in jail singing doxology!

Only one surprised by what happens is the king!

Pagans **catch** faithful servant praying **11** *“These men came by agreement & found Daniel making petition & plea before his God.”*

Leaders run and tell—the king is trapped!

Pagan leaders trap king; force him to throw faithful servant in lions' den 12-19

Pagans **remind** king of law he made **12** *“They came near & said before the king, concerning the injunction, “O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within 30 days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered & said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.”*

Pagans **accuse** faithful servant of breaking law **13** *“They answered & said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”*

How does Darius respond to Daniel's law-breaking disobedience?

Pagan king realizes he's **trapped** & tries to get out of it 14 *"The king, when*

he heard these words, was much distressed & set his mind to deliver Daniel. He labored till the sun went down to rescue him.

Rulers force pagan king to **enforce** his law 15-16a

"These men came by agreement to the king & said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."

¹⁶*Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions."*

What is **Darius' one last hope**?

Pagan king hopes the faithful servant's God can deliver him

16b *The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!"*

Pagan king is forced to **seal** the judgment 17 *"A stone was brought & laid on the mouth of the den, & the king sealed it with his own signet & with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.*

Who can't sleep?

Pagan king can't **sleep** 18-19 *"The king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. At break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions."*

Couldn't enjoy TV that night—didn't even watch video they rented!

How does the test come out?

Who wins the contest?

When pagans seek to destroy God's faithful servants, the faithful always win in the end 20-28

God delivers His faithful servant from the lions 20-24

Pagan king asks the **critical question 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?"*

Question filled with implications for future generations who would pass through affliction by pagan kings, on account of their faith.

His response reverberates down through history:

Faithful servant testifies to **God's faithfulness 21-22**

"Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²²My God sent his angel & shut the lions' mouths, & they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; & also before you, O king, I have done no harm."

Daniel responds respectfully, explaining how God closed mouths of the lions—royal case of lock jaw!

Pagan king frees faithful servant & witnesses God's faithfulness **23** *"The king was exceedingly glad, & commanded that Daniel be taken out of the den. So Daniel was taken out of the den, & no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.*

Pagan king condemns accusers [accusers caught in their own trap] **24** *“The king commanded, & those men who maliciously accused Daniel were brought & cast into the den of lions—they, their children, & their wives. Before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them & broke all their bones in pieces.”*

It doesn't pay to go after those who serve God faithfully!

Were lions too full to feast on Daniel?

In case anyone had doubts...

Accusers & families were devoured immediately!

Lions were starved after a night in the den with Daniel!

What's the **ULTIMATE result** of the test?

Who wins?

Pagan King proclaims superiority of faithful servant's God 25-28

25-27 *“King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, & languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble & fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, & his dominion shall be to the end. ²⁷He delivers & rescues; he works signs & wonders in heaven & on earth, he has saved Dan. from the power of the lions.”*

What does king recognize about Yahweh, based on what happened?

He is the living God!

His rule is eternal

He miraculously delivers those who truly worship Him.

Faithful servant prospers during pagan king's reign

28 *"This Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius & reign of Cyrus the Persian."*

Result of Daniel's faithfulness in face of threat:

God wins! Daniel wins with Him!

Daniel & God are BOTH honored.

Question: What happens when jealous pagans try to destroy God's faithful servants?

Though jealous pagans seek to destroy God's faithful servants, the faithful always win in the end!

It pays to remain faithful!!!

Hang in there!

Don't throw in the towel!

God protects his servants when we're faithful to him!

Lessons we learn:

- 1. When we face dark/uncertain hours, we can trust God on basis of what He's done in the past.**

*If He could handle the past,
He can handle our future!*

- 2. Whatever "lions" threaten to devour us, if we focus on God, we can trust Him to handle lions!**

There's lesson about lions also — not *main* lesson, but there:

Someone observed: "There are a lot of lions out there. Lions are scary! Lions want to devour us!"

Because Daniel is a man of integrity, he has confidence before God.

Our business: walk in integrity with God;

We can trust God to handle lions

Whatever lions threaten to devour us, we can be sure that if we concentrate on walking in integrity, we can trust God to handle the lions

He may allow us to be thrown to the lions

But there's a promise: He won't abandon us there.

Spurgeon: "Should everything go amiss with us after we have done the right thing, there is no cause for regret!"

What's the worse they can do to us?

We think "kill us!" as if that's bad.

"Absent from body is present with the Lord!" When did that become bad?

"Don't fear those who can only kill the body and then can't do any more!"

The one to fear controls eternity!

Our circumstances may seem impossible to us;

Daniel's may seem like fairy tale in comparison to what we're facing!

Work pressure—faithfulness might cost our job; keep us from "qualifying."

Others facing strained marriage—about to come unglued—you may lose your spouse or children!

Some have been eliminated from academic programs because of their faith.

3. Daniel's God is STILL in control! He meets OUR needs as He did Daniel's in times of affliction.

What difference will genuine faith make in life of God's faithful servants?

Key point: priority in Daniel's life: spending time with God.

His custom: 3 times a day,
alone with God on his knees

As 2nd in command, he was busy as most overloaded of us.
Luther: "I have so much to do today I can't possibly get it all done with less than 3 hours of prayer."

Daniel prayed for his people, & for completion of God's program. His time with God was high priority; even when it might cost his life.

How high a priority is time with God in our lives?

Do we thirst for Him? Do we have longing to spend time with Him?

Large old Bible, used by Abraham Lincoln during Civil War, falls open to 34th Psalm. If you examine that page, you will note that it is smudged at one spot. Lincoln's long, tapering fingers often rested on the fourth verse, *"I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."*

Daniel. Luther. Lincoln.

They all established the habit of spending time with God--daily.
Daniel started when he was young; kept it up for over 60 years.

He started faithful. He finished faithful.
How about us? Will we finish well?
Those who start faithful, finish faithful!
The faithful triumph in the end!
Will WE be among them?