

Daniel Was A Man Of Prayer

God is Still on the Throne

By Denis Lyle

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Daniel 6
Preached on: Tuesday, November 10, 2012

Lurgan Baptist Church

Johnston's Row, High Street,
Lurgan, Co Armagh
Northern Ireland, UK

Website: www.lurganbaptist.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/lurganbaptist

Now we're turning to Daniel's prophecy, chapter 6, please. The prophecy of Daniel 6 and we're reading at verse 1 and the overall theme is "God is Still on the Throne," and our subject for tonight is "Daniel Was A Man Of Prayer," daily he prayed three times. Daniel 6:1,

1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; 2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. 3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes,

Incidentally, that little phrase "this Daniel" occurs time and time again in the book of Daniel. Actually, there's a little commentary called "This Daniel." You've all heard of Ian Peasley, well, there's a beautiful little commentary by Harold Peasley entitled "This Daniel." I'm just throwing that out to you.

3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. 4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. 6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

You remember they put to him the proposal that no one should ask a petition of any god save of the king and that petition, that proposal was accepted by the king, it appealed to his ego. Verse 10 says,

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he

kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. 11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

You remember the outcome was that Daniel was cast into the den of lions. Verse 19,

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. 22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. 24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. 25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. 27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28 So this Daniel [there it is again] prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

David Jeremiah tells us that during the course of his life, the author of "Pilgrim's Progress," John Bunyan, was imprisoned under Charles II. If Bunyan had been willing to sign a petition or a statement that he wouldn't preach in public, he would have been released from prison. He was incarcerated for 12 years but he could sign this statement at any time if he agreed to the terms, and during those 12 years John Bunyan had a dependent wife and little children. One of his little daughters was a little girl by the name of Mary and Mary was blind, and in the dungeon John Bunyan often thought of his poor little Mary and his heart would almost break. On one occasion, he was heard to say, "What sorrow thou art likely to have in this world, my poor blind one. Oh Mary, thou mayest go naked and hungry and beg in the streets, be beaten and starved and I cannot do

anything for thee." Well, John Bunyan remained in the prison, in the dungeon, and he committed all his concerns including blind Mary to the keeping of God and it was toward the end of his incarceration that he wrote this glorious passage, "Unless I am willing to pluck out my eyes and let the blind lead me, then God Almighty being my witness in my defense, if it shall please him to let frail life last that long, the moss shall grow on my eyebrows before I surrender my principles or violate my conscience."

My friends, where have all our heroes gone? Where are the men the likes of Daniel, the likes of John Bunyan and others who saw the principles of obedience to God as the highest commitment a person could ever make in this life? The more I look at Daniel's life, the more there is a desire in my heart to be like him. The Apostle John says, "The world passeth away and the lust thereof but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." That could have been the epitaph of Daniel's life, the world and its lusts, the world and its kingdoms, the world and its empires all passed away but old Daniel continued. He continued through the changing of the kingdoms and through the years, and chapter 6 introduces us to another change.

Look at verse 1, "It pleased Darius." Now that's a change of world power. Look, for example, at the last verses of Daniel 5, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old. It pleased Darius," another change. Here's a change of world power. Babylon, the head of gold, is now being replaced by Medo-Persia, the breast and the arms of silver. Daniel has now witnessed the rise of two great world powers, the kingdom which he predicted in chapter 2. No doubt when Daniel was a teenager 15, 16, 17 years of age, when he was taken down to Babylon 70 years previous to this, no doubt the devil whispered in Daniel's ear, "Daniel, if you want to stay around for a while, you'd better forget your principles." But Daniel didn't forget his principles and, bless God, Daniel continued.

There's an unchanging principle throughout the word of God, it's this, "Them that honor me, I will honor saith the Lord." Here he was, he's no longer a teenager, he's aged between 80 and 90 years of age, he's still living in the midst of Babylon, he's still living in the midst of lust, in the midst of license, in the midst of luxury, a spiritual man working with government officials who are sinful, who are sensual, who are self-seeking. A man of purpose, yes, a man of prayer, yes, but a man of principle and nowhere is that better illustrated in Daniel 6. This is probably one of the most well-known chapters in the book of Daniel. It's perhaps one of the best known chapters in all of the Bible, the story of Daniel in the lions' den. I can still remember singing at the Good News Club, "Daniel was a man of prayer, daily he prayed three times."

Now I think it's Jeffrey King who divides this chapter into five and I'm going to use those five words that he has used to summarize this chapter tonight. The words are: action, counteraction, reaction, inaction and satisfaction.

Look at verse 1, notice the action of the crown. Here we see a new regime, the Americans would call it a new administration. The head of gold is gone and it's replaced by the chest

and the arms of silver. Notice, for example, verse 1, a new power, Darius. It's probably that Darius was Cyrus' military ruler. If you look at verse 28, you'll notice that this was a dual kingship. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. It was Medo-Persia, although through time Persia became the dominant force. Cyrus was the king of the empire. Darius probably ruled Babylon and the surrounding area. So there's a new power.

Look at verse 1 again, there's a new party. "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom." Actually, there were 124 persons involved in the administration of this new regime. There was Darius the king, the three princes of which Daniel was number 1, and the 120 princes. Now there's a change in the nature of government here, isn't there? You see, Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch. He was an autocrat. If you look down at verse 19 of chapter 5, you'll get a summary of his life. Daniel is speaking to Belshazzar and he says, "And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive." Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon, was autocratic. Nebuchadnezzar did what he liked but Darius is different. The Medo-Persian empire is a constitutional monarchy, not an absolute one. We're to find that with this change of government, there's a change of capital punishment so you wouldn't fancy the burning fiery furnace, that's the way the Babylonians got rid of you, the Medes and the Persians, they were different, they just kept a den of lions. It was just as effective if not just as hygienic. And so there was a new power here, there was a new party here.

Look at verse 2 again, there was a new position here, "And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first." What a place of prominence Daniel occupied. He was truly first. He was first in the eyes of the king. Verse 3 says, "Then this Daniel was preferred above the princes." He outshone them all. There was a light in Daniel that wasn't found in these other counselors and cabinet ministers. Can you not imagine how the crooked dealing of the 120 princes would be cramped by Daniel's eagle eye and Daniel's relentless integrity? You see, Daniel was not just a good saint, he was a great statesman.

Now this is really amazing, it's amazing when you remember Daniel's background. He's a Jew but he's a Prime Minister. Imagine that. A Jew and he's outshone them all in Babylon and he's risen to this prominent position. Great statesman and it's amazing when you remember his background. Remember he was a Jew and it's amazing when you remember his age. How old was he? Well, scholars reckon that Daniel was born around the year 625 BC and when Cyrus overthrew Babylon, the year was 539 BC so what does that leave? He's about 86 years of age. At a time when a man should be slowing down, Daniel was placed in a position of prominence, indeed verse 3 tells us, "because an excellent spirit was in him." I mean, wouldn't you like to be like that when you reach old age? I mean, who wants to be cantankerous, bitter, and cross, and obstinate, and difficult to get along with? My dear friends, we don't need to be put out to pasture when we reach old age. Our greatest work for God might be done in our old age. Some of the most remarkable people in history have been elderly. William Gladstone was Prime Minister of Britain, of Great Britain at the age of 83. Michelangelo did his immortal "The Last Judgment" was he was

89. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was still preaching many times during the day when he was 88. Thomas Edison was inventing at 90. And Ronald Reagan was 77 when he was the President of the United States, still exhibiting the exuberance of his personality. Do you realize tonight that your best years for God could be still before you?

He's Prime Minister. It's amazing. When you think of his background, he's a Jew, it's amazing when you think of his age but it's amazing when you think of his stand. I mean, who says it doesn't pay to serve God? My dear friends, the promotions of Daniel in Babylon are evidence that a believer doesn't have to compromise to succeed. The Bible says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain in this life as well as the life to come." Young folk, tonight will you remember that it pays to be good, it pays to be right, it pays to be holy, it pays to be true, it pays to be pure.

So there was a new power, Medo-Persia; there was a new party, 120; there's a new position. Look at verse 3, there's a new plan. Notice what it says, "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." Daniel performed so much better than the other presidents and the other officials that the king planned to make him superior to the rest. He was going to make Daniel the official second ruler and no doubt he had ventilated this idea. Now isn't it wonderful to stand back for a moment and maybe you don't see this but I do, but you will in a moment, isn't it wonderful to stand back to see the guiding shaping hand of God? You see, Daniel's high position was no accident of history. God wanted him in this position at this time for the 70 years of captivity were over and God was going to bring his people back to the land of Israel again.

You remember the Jeremiah prophecy concerning this, and you remember that Cyrus issued the decree. Come back for a moment to Ezra 1. I hadn't intended to do this but let me just do it very quickly. Ezra 1. You say, "Why did God put Daniel in this high position?" Well, here's one of the reasons. You remember that God said that he would bring his people into captivity for 70 years? Seventy years had run their course, 539 BC had arrived. Cyrus is now in control along with Darius, a dual empire. Here's verse 1 of Ezra, "in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled." You know, what God promises he's able to perform. What God says always comes to pass but we're so slow to believe it.

Now God said that after 70 years he would bring them back. Look at verse 1, "in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people," his people in Babylon, "his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem." And 50,000 of them went back to Judah to rebuild the temple.

Now do you not see Daniel's hand in this? I do. You see, God placed Daniel in a position whereby he could influence King Cyrus to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy and issue a decree that would allow the Israelites to go back to the land of Judah, and the decree in Ezra 1 is so favorable because Daniel has a part in it. My friends, you say to me tonight what's history? It's his story. It's his story. God's still on the throne. My dear friends, God is still in control and though the nations, though the Arab nations may surround Israel tonight, remember what the Palestinians are wanting, their own land, they were offered it when there was the partition of Israel but they didn't want it, but though all the nations of the world gather together against Israel, she shall never be destroyed for God has a purpose for Israel and God's promises will yet be fulfilled for God is still on the throne.

And so you can see here there's a new plan. Daniel is going to be second ruler. Looking back to chapter 6, there's an interesting wee word in verse 4, it says, "Then." Then. You can see the action of the crown, you can see the counteraction of the cabinet, "Then." I can imagine it that in a private, carefully guarded room in the palace of Babylon, the governors of more than 100 provinces are meeting secretly and they're talking among themselves, "The king plans to put this fellow Daniel as head over the whole nation. He's got to go or we'll never succeed with our plans. We need to discredit him in the eyes of the king and destroy him in the process." It's the night of the long knives. It's the annual business meeting and the men in the top have it for Daniel. They're determined to get Daniel. Why don't they pick on someone their own age? You see, my dear friends, if you stand for God and God blesses you, there will always be worldly jealous people who will seek to make a mark on you. When God takes a man and when God gifts a man, and God blesses a man, there will invariably come to that man a flood-tide of envy and jealousy and bitterness and you can expect it.

Now notice the stages in the plot. There was jealousy. Look at verse 4, "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel." Jealousy. The green-eyed monster reared its head. These princes were not too happy about Daniel's success. For one thing, he was a Jew and Satan has always hated the Jews and tried to eliminate them just like this evening, and typical of Gentiles, they could not tolerate a Jew being in a high position, and antisemitism consumed them so strongly that they were driven to get any, to use any tactic to get rid of Daniel.

Now we might ask why the princes were jealous of Daniel. Well, he was where they wanted to be even though he would soon be off the scene. Someone has said that envy ever hates the excellence it cannot reach. Jealousy and envy, W. E. Vines defines envy as wanting to take that which another has. Envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing about the advantage of others, the prosperity of others, and this envy is not only something that affects the ungodly, it affects the people of God. The book of Proverbs says, "A sound heart is the life of the flesh but envy the rottenness of the bones. Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous but who is able to stand before envy?"

I wonder tonight do you have an envious jealous streak about you? I wonder if you're jealous of other believers? Their home? Their kids? Their job? Their position? Their property? Their holidays? Their clothes? Do you know what envy does? It hinders your

growth as a Christian and marks you out as carnal. When the young preacher Charles Spurgeon came to London, there was an older preacher in the city who had been there for a long time. Immediately Spurgeon came to London and they couldn't find a place big enough to hold the crowds. He was like a star that appeared in the sky and the old pastor said that when Spurgeon came to the city of London and the crowds began to gather around this young man, jealousy entered his heart and began to eat him up. There he was, a famous preacher also but the crowds were flocking to hear the young Spurgeon. He said he had to deal with that jealousy and so he got before the Lord and he told the Lord about it and the Lord began to put praise and prayer into his heart until the day came when every victory that Spurgeon had, he looked upon as his own victory. He said, "I rejoiced and was glad."

But there was jealousy here. Look at verse 4, that led to conspiracy. Jealousy, conspiracy. "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." Why did these guys want Daniel's neck? Well, if you look at this empire under Darius, it was much like modern government. You see, the 120 princes were ripping off the king. Darius was no fool. He knew that the princes were withholding money that they collected from taxation, and he knew that they were using it for themselves and costly government programs, and he knew Daniel's reputation, he knew Daniel's character, and so he put him at the top and he wanted Daniel to sort this thing out.

Do you see now why he was hated? Do you see now why he was hated by the extortioners who had their Rolls Royce chariots and their Riviera holidays courtesy of the tax collectors? Do you see now why they put a detective on the job to find some reason, something with which they could charge Daniel? Have a look at this. Look at verse 4, they examined Daniel's public life, "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom." His public life was above criticism. What a testimony. What about your public life? Is yours a life of transparency? A life of honesty? A life of integrity?

Robert Thomasey writes about a Christian friend of his who lived in the middle west, in the midwest of America, and he was the manager of a chain of newspapers. One of his responsibilities was the setting up of advertisement policies and at one time he ordered that advertising clients who used a Christian symbol or a Christian verse on cards or stationery would be required to pay cash in advance. Need I tell you those were his worst paying accounts? Do you realize tonight that one of the most effective ways that we can witness to non-Christians is through what we do? And yet sometimes the unbelieving world looks at our public life and says, "Forget it."

They examined his public life. Look at verse 4, they examined his private life. Notice what it says, "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." They examined his public life, it was above reproach. They examined his private life, it was above reproach. No

skeletons in Daniel's cupboard. They could not find one accusation to lay against him for all his 80 odd years. I've been telling you about Spurgeon, let me tell you another story. Some fellows came to see C. H. Spurgeon on one occasion. They were trying to blackmail him and they walked into his office, his room one day and they threatened him and they said that if he didn't meet their demands, they would publish all they knew about Spurgeon across London and they would ruin his reputation. Do you know what Spurgeon said? He said, "Write all you know about me across the heavens." That's the power of a clear conscience.

Daniel is trustworthy. He's not corrupt. He's not negligent. He has integrity. Too often Christians are the ones who lack integrity. They lie. They cheat. They steal. They manipulate. They take advantage of people. You can't rely on them. They're not honest in what they say or do. They do not work hard. They get by with the least that they do. I wonder is that you? If someone put a private investigator to work in your life, what would they find? Would they find you living like a holy Jew on Sunday and living like the devil on Monday?

Jealousy, conspiracy. Look again, third stage, flatter. Darius god for a month. Why that would appeal to his ego, didn't it? He liked to think that for 30 days they could pray to no god, only him. Now let me tell you something about flatter. It's like perfume. It's nice to smell but it's awful to swallow. And so the decree was signed, a decree that flew in the face of God's law which opposed idolatry.

Now if that kind of law were passed in our country, it wouldn't bother a great many people at all. Some people go for 30 days at a time, they go for a month at a time and never pray to God. I mean, there are people who claim to be Christians and they can go for weeks on end and never pray to the Lord. I mean, how can a person be saved and never pray to his or her heavenly Father? How can a person claim to know the Savior and never talk to him in prayer? Thirty days, no prayer?

Now how would you react? Well, look at Daniel's reaction. Look at verse 10. Now if you're too warm, you feel free to shed your jacket. Don't you fall asleep on me.

Look at verse 10. Action, counteraction, reaction. The reaction of the chancellor. Now listen, did Daniel debate the alternatives? Were there other options open to him? Why not stop praying for 30 days and outwit his enemies? Why not change his custom and pray elsewhere perhaps in secret? Why not just stop praying audibly and pray inaudibly? That's what Daniel could have done but look at what Daniel did do. Daniel wasn't a man who served God only when there was no price to be paid. Look at verse 10, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." There was no change in his practice.

Now let me ask you tonight: would you be willing to die for prayer? Would you? Well, Daniel is. When it came to choosing prayer and death or no prayer and life, Daniel

chooses prayer and death. You see, for Daniel prayer has a high level of value. He's willing to die for it. My friend, tonight what is valuable to you? For most of us it's not prayer, it's really not. We wouldn't die for it. You say, "Well, I would." Well, let me ask you: are you living for it? Are you making the sacrifices now? Are you praying on your knees now to God?

Now look, no change in his practice. Look at verse 10, there's five things that flow out of it. He loves the usual place. Look at verse 10, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house." He loves the usual place. He had a place for prayer. Have you got a place for prayer? The Savior said, "But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Do you get alone with God? Do you shut the door? Do you shut the outside world out? He loves the usual place.

Look at verse 10, he pleads the usual promise, "his windows being open." You remember what God said, God said that his people, that if his people found themselves in captivity and if they prayed toward the Promised Land, if they prayed toward the city of Jerusalem acknowledging their sins, then God would be entreated of them and God would restore them and God would bring them back to the land again. He's pleading the promises of Jehovah. Do you know what it is to plead the promises of God, to come into the presence of the Lord and say, "Lord, do as you've said. You've said this in your word. Lord, do as you've said."

He loves the usual place, he pleads the usual promise. Look at verse 10 again, "and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees." He loves the usual place, he pleads the usual promises, he adopts the usual posture. He's kneeling. Now we don't have to kneel to pray but sometimes it helps to humble, it sometimes helps us to be marked by humility, to humble our body in order that we might humble our heart. Can you see the old warrior, the writing is signed, the decree is passed, the enemies are joyful, the lions are roaring and Daniel is praying.

Have a look again. He not only loves the usual place and pleads the usual promises and adopts the usual posture, he continues the usual plan. Notice what it says, verse 10, "three times a day." He's just like the Psalmist who said, "Evening and morning and at noon will I pray." He had not only a place for prayer but he had a time for prayer. Do you remember his age? He's 85. Sometimes when I go to visit old Christians, they're longing to get home, I mean home to glory. I thank God for their attitude. And they often say to me, "Why do you think the Lord's keeping me here?" I always say the same thing, "So that you can pray." So that you can pray. Prayer is a ministry. My friends, prayer is the work. If only we realized that tonight. Prayer is the work. M'Cheyne said, "What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and no more." That reduces me down to that level. What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and no more and if you're elderly tonight, you might say, "Why has God left me on planet earth?" That you might engage in the ministry of prayer.

Remember, he's the Prime Minister now. Three times a day he's on his knees. You see, to him prayer is not supplemental, prayer is fundamental. Can you see him? He loves the usual place, he pleads the usual promises, he adopts the usual position, he continues the usual plan. Look at verse 10 again, he offers the usual petition, "and gave thanks." Where did Daniel do that? Where did he learn to do that? Well, I'll tell you: he's an old man but remember he was taken captive when he was just a teenager, but back in the land where his forefathers lived there had been a father and mother and the godly home and they had taught their little boy the name of Jehovah, the name of God, and the worship of Jehovah, and all the glitter of Babylon couldn't erase that memory. Let me ask you a question: how will your children remember you? Come on now, how will your children remember you? Look at verse 11, it says, "Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying." Has anyone ever found you praying? Will your kids find you praying? What a lasting impact it will make on them if they do.

Let me tell you about Spurgeon again. No one knew him as much as a man called Archibald Brown. Archibald Brown was saved through Spurgeon's ministry and then he went into Spurgeon's college and he became the pastor of the old East London Tabernacle and he had a son called Douglas, and Douglas was very fond of his dad. Young Douglas would tell how every Friday night after dinner his father would ascend the attic steps and go into the attic and there he would pour out his heart, Friday night he would pour out his heart to God for the services in the Tabernacle on the Sunday. He knew that his father adopted this practice and so a few minutes after his father would go up those steps into the attic, young Douglas would follow and he would listen. He would just listen on the stairs of the attic and he would listen to his dad praying, and that precious memory of his father never left him. I wonder how your children will remember you? Will they remember you as a man of prayer?

Now listen, look at verse 10. There was no change in his practice but look again, there was no compromise of his principles. You see, loyalty to God came before loyalty to man. You remember that in chapter 1, Daniel and his three friends were loyal. You remember that in chapter 3, his three friends were loyal. And now in chapter 6, Daniel is loyal. In chapter 3, Daniel's three friends were standing when everyone is kneeling. Now Daniel is kneeling to the true and living God when everyone else is standing before a man. My friends, what are we to do when the laws of man run contrary to the law of God? The believer in Christ has but one option. We ought to obey God rather than man.

Daniel obeyed God. The result, he was cast into the den of lions. God allowed his servant to be cast into the den of lions just as previously he had allowed his three friends to be cast into the furnace, just as he had allowed Paul and Silas to be cast into the prison, just as he had allowed Fanny Crosby to spend 90 of her 95 years in blindness. Let me ask you tonight: are you in the lions' den? What are the lions in your life? Maybe the lions that confront you tonight are illness, business reverses, slander, domestic friction, but sooner or later it is inevitable that all of us will face the lion. The Bible says, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

What are we to do when we face the lions? Well, look what Daniel did, verse 23. Here's what it says, verse 23b, "So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God." He put his full trust in God for the new situation in which he found himself, and do you know what? God delivered him. Now you remember the photographs or the pictures you used to get of the lions' den when you were a kid? Sunday school? They tell us that the lions' dens were deep caverns in the ground and there was a wall about three foot round them, and you could look down into the den of lions, and caverns were usually divided into two, and there was a door that you could lift up, and what would happen would be this: the lion keeper would lift the door and the lions would go into one end of the den, and then he would lower the door and they would come in and clean the other half of the cavern. There was also a little entrance at the foot of the cavern where the lions could be taken out or brought in as pleased. I want you to try and visualize this scene in your mind. I want you to see Satan gloating at Daniel's predicament. I can almost hear the devil saying, "Oh man, you've made your final mistake. You've slipped through my fingers for 70 years but now I've got you. Daniel, you've been an extremist, you've been a fundamentalist, but now you're going to end up as a latent snack for the big cats."

Now notice how wrong he was. Look at the inaction of the creatures very quickly. Can you see Daniel, can you visualize the scene? Can you see Daniel as he slides down to the floor of the den? Do you see this man, verse 23? Because he believes in God, he commits his crisis to God. I can almost see him as he leans his back against the wall to make himself comfortable for the night, and the den is damp and chilly and I can see two little cubs making their way over to Daniel, moving toward him in obvious friendliness and they nestle close to him and they're providing him with warmth, and the old lioness creeps over and lies in front of them and he strokes them and they lick his hand, and before long Daniel is pillowed on one of the cubs and the four are sleeping soundly in perfect peace and tranquility.

Look at verse 18, notice the contrast. "Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him." Do you see the contrast? There is Daniel in the den of lions and the king is sleeping in his silent night bed, the instruments of music have gone and he cannot sleep. And in the morning, look at verse 20, he comes to the scene and he cries, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" Now I want you to see this was down to two things. Look at verse 20, the ability of God. Notice what the king says, "is thy God able?" Do you see it in verse 20? John Walvoord translates the last line of verse 16 like this, he says, "Your God must deliver you." In other words, "Daniel, only your God could possibly do anything for you." Of course, God is able. He was able to deliver Daniel's three friends from the fiery furnace. He's able to deliver Daniel from the den of lions. Daniel, who spent the night not only with the king of the beasts but with the Creator, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the lion of the tribe of Judah.

A teacher was teaching her Sunday school class one day as they thought Daniel was afraid and one little girl answered, "I don't think he was scared." She said, "One of the

lions was the lion of the tribe of Judah and he was in there with him." She knew her Bible, didn't she?

I wonder tonight what lions are you facing? Do you believe that God's able to deliver you? Do you believe that the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and deliver them? Look at that question, "Is thy God able?" God is able to keep that which hath committed to him. God is able to make all grace abound toward me. God is able to succor you that are tempted. God is able to keep you from falling. That's the ability of God.

But look at verse 23. Notice what it says. "Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him," why, "because he believed in his God." On the one hand the ability of God. On the other hand the activity of faith. No, Daniel wasn't different. He wasn't any different from you and me except in the measure of his faith in God. My friends, the history of what God has done in a miraculous way from the beginning of Christianity right up to the modern day is contained in what God does for someone who believes in him. The great Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11 tells us what happens to the life of someone who believes in God. It tells that the prophets quenched or stopped the lions' mouths. Who did that? Daniel. You say why? Because he believed in God.

Look at the result. We started with action, we went to counteraction, we went to reaction, we went to interaction, look at satisfaction. Notice three things in closing. The prophet was delivered, look at verse 23, they "commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den." The prophet was delivered. Do you know something? He couldn't be put in the den again. The law was satisfied. The sentence had been carried out. Do you know, my dear friends, does that not remind you of what happened at Calvary? Christ was crucified to take my place and take my punishment and they'll never go to the cross again for that payment, that once and for all payment is enough for eternity? The prophet was delivered. The princes were destroyed. There was no doubt about the ferocity of those old beasts. Instead of one tough old Jew, they got a lot of tender spineless people for breakfast. Let me quote Spurgeon, he said, "It was a good thing the lions didn't eat Daniel, they could never have enjoyed him. He was 50% grit and 50% backbone." The Psalmist says concerning the wicked, "He made a pit and digged it and has fallen into the ditch which he made."

Can I issue a little warning tonight? It's a serious thing to put forth your hand against the Lord's anointed. Serious. Here were men who put forth their hand against the Lord's anointed and not only were they destroyed but their families were destroyed, and I've seen in my lifetime people who have put forward their hand against the Lord's anointed and not only has God dealt with them but he has dealt with their family.

The prophet was delivered, princes were destroyed. Look at how the chapter ends very quickly. The potentate was declared to be the personal god. Look at verse 26, the God of Daniel, the living God, the steadfast God, the eternal God, his kingdom that which shall

not be destroyed. The act of God, verse 27, "He delivereth and rescueth." The omnipotent God "who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." My dear friends, do you realize tonight that the same God who's described here is alive today? Do you know that? He's very much alive. He's real. He exists. He lives. K. C. Addy expressed it like this, "When Daniel faithful to his God would not bow to men and by God's enemies were hurled into the lions' den, God shut the lions' mouths, we read, and robbed them of their prey, and the God that lived in Daniel's day is just the same today." And this God is our God forever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death.

Let's pray.

Father, we just want to thank you tonight for the wonderful God that you are. We thank you, our Father, tonight that amidst all that is going on in our world today and even in the Middle East, we thank you there's a hand that's shaping and a heart that's planning. And we thank you, our Father, for Daniel, we thank you for his life of prayer. O God, we remember the word of the disciples so long ago, "Lord, Lord, teach us to pray." And Father, if there's one thing we need to learn to do, it's to pray. Help us to know what it is to lay hold upon God. Help us to know what it is to spend time with God. Help us to shut out the world. O God, we pray that we may be marked as men of principle, men of passion, but men of prayer. Father, we thank you for the lessons that we have learned from Daniel's life tonight and we pray that as his life glorified the Lord, so we pray that our life might glorify our Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

We're going to turn to our hymnbooks.