

DANIEL-ONE OF TIMOTHY'S HEROES

MOLD BOLD GOLD TOLD SOLD OUT -- Pastor Richard P. Carlson
M-Dan. 1:1-7, B-Dan. 1:8-16, G-Dan. 1: 17-21, T-Dan. 2: 1-29, SO—Dan. 6: 1-28

This is our final message about Timothy, a fearful, bi-racial, weak-stomached young man. Maybe Timothy was gluten intolerant or maybe, he had lots of anxieties and fears, and thus, faced lots of acid reflux. Timothy lived in the first century AD in Galatia, part of Asia Minor. God decided to use Timothy as a “spiritual son,” adopted by Paul, to shape the first century church for His glory. Timothy’s life was touched by God’s grace. Timothy knew that his sins, small as we might think them to be, his sins had eternal consequences, and he knew he deserved eternal hell, punishment, and separation from God forever. Growing up, learning the Bible at the feet of his Grandma Lois and his mother, Eunice, when the apostle Paul came to his hometown in Lystra, Timothy learned about God’s Messiah, Jesus spoken about by the prophets Isaiah and Daniel. Timothy learned that God being rich in mercy, provided a way for redemption for every person who has ever lived, to be saved, through Jesus, who died for us all on the cross. Timothy soon was converted, born-again, and he became a disciple and follower of Jesus. As we study Timothy, do you ever feel you are a fearful person as he was? Do you wonder if God could use you? Remember that God uses the willing, the available, the fearful, the weak, and God uses you and me, not because He needs us. No, God uses us because He loves us, and He wants us to experience the glory of serving Him, being wholly surrendered to Him, and being daily empowered by the Holy Spirit. God can use each of us as vessels through whom He works. The only requirement for God to use us is a surrendered heart that puts Jesus first.

We have been reminded at this Snow Retreat 2022 that God’s Word tells us about Timothy in II Timothy 3: 15, saying, “How from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” We will never on this side of heaven, know all that Timothy was taught, but there is no doubt in my mind that Timothy learned and memorized much of the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job. Timothy knew the love story in Song of Solomon, the awesome story of Ruth and Boaz, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the tough book of Ecclesiastes, the history books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and I and II Chronicles. Today, I want us to learn about one Old Testament young man whom Timothy knew much about, and probably would have counted as one of his top Jewish heroes as I do. He was Daniel. Going back over 500 years before Timothy, Daniel had the same mission as Paul and his spiritual son, Timothy. Daniel said in 534 BC, in Daniel 12: 3, “And those who are wise, shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars, forever and ever.” We can’t get into Timothy’s brain and ask, “Why was Daniel one of your godly heroes?” But if we could, I am certain this morning, in his reply to us, he would tell us about Daniel’s **mold**, his being **bold**, his coming out of trials as **gold**, his seeking God’s face to interpret dreams until he was **told**, and in the face of certain death, he was **sold out**. Today, let’s learn five of these holy character traits of Daniel that each of us need desperately today in 2022.

THE MOLD FROM GOD. (I.) Turn to Daniel 1: 1-7. We read, “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, (somewhere in the years 607 to 604 BC) Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he (Nebuchadnezzar) brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Beltshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.” Now Josephus lets us know that what is going on in Ukraine happened back then. War is war, and it is awful, full of unspeakable atrocities. These noble young men from Judah were made into eunuchs, Josephus writes on page 313, Book X, Chapter X. Never think this was ever the dream of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abegnego—to be physically mutilated, castrated, so they could not become husbands and fathers, the dream of most young men, to grow up, to get married, and to be the father of children. The book of Daniel doesn't focus on this, but I don't want you to think this being taken captive by king Nebuchadnezzar from Judah, and carried off to Babylon, was a walk in the park, or like a trip to Orlando, Florida to Disney World. In a moment of time, their lives were changed, but oh, the mold of these 4 men, and Daniel was their leader. They knew God, and they would serve Him with every bone in their bodies until death.

These men were highly educated, good looking, handsome men, skillful in wisdom, endowed with knowledge, competent men for the service of the king as his captives. People say, “When God made Daniel and his companions, He broke the mold.” Don't dream it is any different way for each of you. God made you too, and God broke the mold. No two people are cookie cutter “alikes,” made on an assembly line. Every human being is a unique, one-of-a-kind individual. God has a glorious plan for each of your lives, a part for you each to play in His eternal plan. Accept the mold God gave to you. You each are unique. The 2nd characteristic is:

THE BOLD FOR GOD. (II.) Turn to Daniel 1: 8-15. We read, “But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. (How bold!) And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, “I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So, you would endanger my head with the king.” Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and

Azariah, “Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.” So, he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. At the end of ten days, it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food.” We have a choice. We can play it safe, or we can seize the life God has in mind for us. What’s it going to be for you? Which of us are bold for God? A man was bragging that he had cut off the tail of a man-eating lion with his pocket-knife. When asked why he had not cut off the lion's head, the man replied: “Someone had already done that.”

An anonymous person said it well about boldness for Jesus. “I’m part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I’m a disciple of Jesus Christ. I won’t look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still. My past is redeemed, my future is secure. I now live by faith, lean on God’s presence, walk by His patience, live by prayer and labor by His power. My face is set, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my companions few, my Guide is reliable, and my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, or negotiate at the table of the enemy. I won’t give up, or let up until I have prayed up, paid up, and spoken up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go ‘till He comes, give my all ‘till I drop, testify of Christ ‘till all know, and work ‘till He says “stop.” And when Jesus comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me.” Is our mold bold? Are we bold for Jesus? Thirdly,

THE GOLD FROM GOD. (III.) Notice the words of Daniel 1: 17-21. We read, “As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore, they stood before the king. And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. (That’s gold!) And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.” These four young men went through many trials, trusting in the Lord. Timothy must have remembered Job’s trials, also included in the books of poetry. What did Job say about his future, by faith? He announced to his “sorry comforters,” named Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar, the Naamathite, “But He knows the way that I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” My mother made Job’s words into a song I will sing for you. “He knoweth the way that I take (2X) And when He hath tried me (2X) I will come forth as gold.” (Job 23: 10)

In 1799, Conrad Reed discovered a seventeen-pound rock while fishing in Little Meadow Creek in North Carolina. Not knowing what it was made of, his family used it as a doorstep for three years. In 1802, his father, John Reed, kept looking at it and he finally took it to a jeweler who identified it as a lump of gold worth about

\$3,600 then. Today that same gold would be worth \$392,720.00. Imagine! That lump of gold, which was used as a doorstop for three years in North Carolina, is one of the biggest gold nuggets ever found east of the Rockies. You may get kicked around, shoved here and there, made fun of, mocked, unfriended on Facebook, but God will bring you through your trials. After allowing them for a time, not to hurt you, but to strengthen and prove you, you will come forth as gold. Andrew Murray, a Dutch Reformed Church Missionary from Scotland in the mid 1800s, wrote his own personal formula for a hard trial he was going through. His words about coming forth as gold were! “He brought me here. It is by His will I am in this difficult place and in that fact I will rest. He will keep me here in His love and give me grace to behave as His child. Then He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends for me to learn. In His good time, He will bring me out again; how and when, He knows. So let me say, I am here by God's appointment; in His keeping; under His training; for His time.” Fourthly,

THE TOLD FROM GOD (IV.) Turn to Daniel 2: 1-30. I will read it to us. Follow with me in your Bibles. This unique part of Daniel’s life is that God gave him the ability to know things from Him, even a dream that he had never heard, and to then interpret it. Few young men or old men have ever had such a closeness with God and an ear for listening to God that they could ever be told by God what no one else was told, and even in a dream or vision, to know of another’s dream. Listen to the **Told** part of Daniel’s life as a captive in Babylon. (Notice verses 11-16.) I love the words of Daniel praising God in Daniel 2: 19-23. We read, “Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him. To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter.” Did you notice in Daniel 2: 17-18 that Daniel asked his three companions to pray with him for the **Told** part of their lives, for their own lives would have been taken if, God had not told them everything.

Let me tell us all, God has given us His Word, and that is 66 books, 1189 chapters, and that is His will for us. If there is anything that God wishes to reveal to us beyond His holy Word, He will reveal it, but it will never go against His Word. It may go against our common sense, or against our timing for things as we know it, but remember God is timeless, and He knows us inside out, and all our needs, and He knows everyone and everything. Just make sure if you find God speaking to you as He spoke to Daniel, remember like Samuel to be still before the Lord and say, “Speak, Lord for your servant is listening.” Be aware that there are many people who have a habit of saying, “The Lord told me, “Eat pancakes for breakfast, or to buy a brand new car,” or “He told me to marry you” and on and on it goes. First of all, don’t agree to marry someone you hardly know or buy a car you can’t afford. Don’t wait for a voice from heaven to decide if you should eat pancakes for

breakfast. Above all, get to know whomever you decide to marry someday. If they say God told them to marry you, give that word from the Lord time to germinate and time for you to get to know that person, and know that you do love them and that you both have the same love for Jesus. If that happens, God will be confirming His word from heaven. God at times does speak with me, but I have never heard His audible voice. If God does speak to me, I do what He says, as best I can, if it is a message to me alone, without telling others that God instructed me to do it. If the message is from God and it has instructions for me and someone else, or for me and a number of other people, that is more complicated, and only God, in His good time can, or will, confirm that His message is from the Lord. My advice is (1) do not quickly accept another's word from the Lord without testing it with God, and then seeing if the word from the Lord coincides with God's Word. (2) Do not ever deny a word from God because it doesn't sound right to you or logical to your way of thinking. I would not be here preaching today if I denied God spoke to my heart back in 1976, telling me "You will not be working with another pastor our church was calling to be my associate." After two weeks of thinking God's voice was the devil's voice, I did realize I misinterpreted God's voice for the devil's and I did resign, and God led me here. My best advice is Isaiah 30: 20-21. Fifthly.

THE SOLD-OUT TO GOD. (V.) This part is the most well-known part of Daniel in Daniel 6. 1-28. Let me read part of this, and then, tell the rest of the story. Listen as I read verse 6-12. "Then, these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and 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. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." Therefore, King Darius signed the document and injunction. 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. Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and 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 thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." Most of you know the rest of the story. God spared Daniel all night long as he was walking with the lions—I have a picture in my office of this. Who in their right mind would pray aloud to God as usual when they knew full well, they were going to be lion feed for hungry lions that night? You would have to be sold out. Daniel was! Sadly, but truly for the 120 officials who plotted against Daniel, they with their wives and children did become lion feed—vs. 24. Look at Daniel 6: 25-26, and then, tell me what happens when you are sold out. God is willing to add his Name to yours. He will! "The God of Daniel." Restate the 5 challenges. Let's pray. I ask you – 1,2,3,4,5 I love you all! Amen.