

“Serving the Worldly Kingdom”
Daniel 6:1-4
(Preached at Trinity, June 22, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The Book of Daniel is rich in stories that have been loved from generation to generation. We love the stories of Daniel, and of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We gaze upon their faith with appreciation. We marvel at the boldness of their words:
Daniel 3:16-18 NAU - "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. ¹⁷ "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ "But *even* if *He does* not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."
2. And we marvel at how God did preserve them in the midst of their fiery ordeal. And King Nebuchadnezzar was also amazed:
Daniel 3:24-25 NAU - "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." ²⁵ He said, "Look! I see four men loosed *and* walking *about* in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of *the* gods!"
Daniel 3:28 NAU - "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God."
3. Tonight we begin **Chapter 6** which contains the other famous deliverance of these faithful servants of God. We'll look at Daniel and the Lion's Den. We begin the chapter where we ended the previous chapter. Babylon has fallen and is now under the control of the Medes and Persians. **Chapter 5** ended:
Daniel 5:31 NAU - "So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two."
4. Daniel had proven himself to be a man of honor and great ability but now that the Babylonian Empire had come crashing down perhaps the future of Daniel was uncertain. But there is an axiom that is true in every generation. Men and women of honor and ability are always of great value, no matter who is in power.
 - A. We've seen this in the life of Joseph. Sold into the foreign land of Egypt, Joseph was quickly recognized as a man of great value.
Genesis 39:1-6 NAU - "Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. ³ Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and *how* the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand. ⁴ So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. ⁵ It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD

blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD'S blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field. ⁶ So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him *there* he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate."

Eventually Pharaoh would recognize the qualities of Joseph and elevated him to the second highest position in the land.

Genesis 41:41-44 NAU - "Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put the gold necklace around his neck. ⁴³ He had him ride in his second chariot; and they proclaimed before him, "Bow the knee!" And he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴ Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, "*Though* I am Pharaoh, yet without your permission no one shall raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

- B. Another Jew of honor in the Medo-Persian Empire was Mordecai. We read at the end of the Book of Esther
- Esther 10:2-3 NAU** - "And all the accomplishments of his authority and strength, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia? ³ For Mordecai the Jew was second *only* to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and in favor with his many kinsmen, one who sought the good of his people and one who spoke for the welfare of his whole nation."
- C. Mordecai's niece, Esther had also shown herself to be a lady of virtue and wisdom and courage.
5. Such was the situation with Daniel. After serving Nebuchadnezzar Daniel continued to be recognized as a man to be treasured. We read in **Verse 3**
Daniel 6:3 NAU - "Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom."
 6. One thing all of these had in common was that they maintained their faithfulness to the Kingdom of God even while serving to promote a worldly kingdom.
 7. Too often, well-meaning Christian teachers instruct us to an isolationist mentality regarding this world. They teach that we are to maintain complete separation in this evil world. This is the mentality that motivated monastic isolation where a man moves into a monastery in order to live out his life in separation from this world. This is far from the Biblical model.
 8. How are we to live in this world while maintaining faithfulness to God? Is it possible to serve and promote this world's kingdoms and still be good citizens in Christ's Kingdom? The answer is yes. In fact, we *should* labor in service to this world's kingdoms. Joseph did, Mordecai and Esther did, Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did, and so must we.

- I. The world is blessed physically because of the presence of the righteous
- A. Many Biblical examples
1. Potiphar prospered because of Joseph who worked for him
Genesis 39:5 NAU - "It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD'S blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field."
 2. The Babylonian and Medo-Persian kings promoted these young Hebrew men because they saw the unique benefit they provided to the kingdom. Notice Daniel's faithfulness in his governmental duties
Daniel 6:4 NAU - "Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or *evidence of corruption*, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was *to be found* in him."
 3. There was never any doubt regarding the chief allegiance of Daniel or Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But they also labored hard in their worldly duties and God blessed them.
- B. The Christian maintains a unique balance - in the world but not of the world
1. He is not of this world
 - a. He does not become entangled with the ways world, the wickedness of this age.
 - b. He does not develop close relations in this world – he never becomes unequally yoked
2 Corinthians 6:17 KJV – "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,"
James 4:4 NAU - "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."
 - c. But the Christian does not live in isolation. He has an effect upon the world around him. The world should know nothing but good because of us.
1 Peter 2:11-12 NAU - "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation."
 2. Jesus called us the "Salt of the Earth"
Matthew 5:13 NAU - "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men."
 - a. First this declares how bad the earth is - - it is in decay. It is rotten, polluted, and offensive

- b. Salt is a preservative – it slows down decay
 - c. Salt also provides savor – it enhances flavor
 - Life without Christianity is bland – our presence here is good
 - C. From the beginning Christians have brought this savor to the world
 - 1. The mere religious man has little positive effect upon the world
 - a. He *is* the world – he thinks like the world, behaves like the world
He likes the world just like it is. He leaves the world just like he found it
 - b. He is saltless salt. Good for nothing
 - 2. The believer has a positive effect on life around him
 - a. Christians should be the best employees, the best neighbors, the most loyal, faithful, loving people to be around.
 - b. Christians have always left a mark upon the world
Acts 17:6 – “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;”
 - c. Many of the benevolent works today were started by Christians or by those influenced by Christians.
For 2000 years Christians have gone about doing good.
The greatest benefits of humanity have come through the good deeds of Christians – Where did the hospitals come from? Where did education come from? Where did relief for the poor, orphanages come from? All from the Christian Church.
Our two main hospitals in BR were started by a Christian influence.
 - e. The presence of Christians in the world has brought nothing but good
 - D. It is also perfectly acceptable for Christians to become civil servants or run for office.
LBC, Chapter 24:2 – “It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate when called thereunto; in the management whereof, as they ought especially to maintain justice and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each kingdom and commonwealth, so far that end they may lawfully now, under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.”
- II. The presence of Christianity has had a positive spiritual effect upon this world
 - A. God continues to spare the world because of us
 - 1. Sodom and Gomorrah were being spared because of the presence of Lot
Could it be that the United States is being spared because of the presence of the righteous?
Godless men know little of the blessings they experience due to the presence of God’s elect.
 - 2. The world is here today because God chose to save a multitude of sinners
 - a. All of history is unfolding because of God's redemptive plan for the elect
 - Why wasn’t the world destroyed when Adam sinned?
 - Why wasn’t all of humanity destroyed in the flood?

- b. This is why the coming of Christ was a blessing to the whole world
Luke 2:10 NAU - " But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people"
 - c. God is continuing to sustain the earth because of the elect
2 Peter 3:9 KJV – “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
- B. Christianity has the effect of restraining lawlessness
- 1. Christians continue to stand for justice and equity
 - 2. Christians continue to stand against sins that have a devastating effect upon the wellbeing of society
 - 3. Christians are often the dam that keeps the floods of lawlessness at bay
- C. Christianity is God's means of spreading His Gospel upon the earth
Acts 1:8 NAU - "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
- 1. Christians are the ones God has charged with spreading the Gospel
We are the ones putting out the tracts
 - 2. We have been given possession of the Good News

Conclusion:

1. The primary focus of the church in this world is to evangelize and bring people to the knowledge of Christ not to reform the world - the world cannot be reformed.
But we also recognize the light we shine upon this world of darkness.
2. As we live in this present age we must always maintain a proper perspective and priority
 - a. Too often Christians enter the world and are drawn into its influence. Our absolute allegiance to Christ is compromised.
In the interest of serving the worldly kingdom we begin to forsake the gathering of the local assembly. We begin to fall under this world's influence.
 - b. Life in this world is always of secondary importance
It is described as a pilgrimage - we are pilgrims and strangers
1 Peter 2:11 KJV - "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as pilgrims and strangers, abstain from filthy lusts, which war against the soul."
Colossians 3:1-2 NAU - "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."
John 18:36 NAU - "Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."
3. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego always made it clear where their allegiance was. They would never compromise, even at the risk of life.
4. Our priority must always be the kingdom of God
Matthew 6:33 NAU - "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."