

DANIEL

Lesson 9: Daniel 6:1-28
Lion's Club Dinner

FEAR FACTORS

- Beach Boys – “In My Room” (1963)
- There's a world where I can go / Tell my secrets to / In my room / In my room (in my room)
- In this world I lock out / All my worries and my fears / In my room / In my room (in my room)
- The Beach Boys suggest “go to your room” for fear.

FEAR FACTORS

- Fear powerfully motivates human behavior
- Some of over 100 phobias: octophobia = fear of 8; cyberphobia = fear of computers; papyrophobia = fear of paper
- When both fears are triggered – the strongest fear can dominate one's actions

FEAR FACTORS

- Not all fears are alike: Some fears are more reasonable than others; fear of 8 versus fear of venomous snakes.
- In today's passage, an invitation to a Lion's Club Dinner could justify reasonable fear – it is logical that this will turn out badly.

FEAR FACTORS

- Daniel is dealing with “competing fears.”
- For Daniel, the question is, “Does the fear of dinner at the lion’s club trump my fear of God?”
- Daniel shows us what it looks like when someone fears God more than he fears anything else.
- Let’s see if we can learn how to “fear well”

FEAR WELL OR FAREWELL

- Those who have laid this trap for Daniel are reasonably confident that he will play into their scheme and be eliminated.
- The outcome will not be what they expect.
- In their case, they were oblivious to the peril to which they were exposing themselves.

BACKGROUND ON DANIEL 6

- Darius (the Mede) is also Cyrus the Persian; Not to be confused with Darius the Persian (later in Medo-Persian history).
- Daniel 6:28: *So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius, that is, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*
- Darius / Cyrus is a new king consolidating and organizing his empire.

BACKGROUND ON DANIEL 6

- Medo-Persia is a vast empire eventually stretching in an arc from Egypt to the Indus River.
- Darius established 120 satrapies (regions) to be overseen by three commissioners.
- Daniel was one of these three but coming up on a promotion.

BACKGROUND ON DANIEL 6

- Daniel negotiated a similar challenge (to compromise) in chapter 1 (almost 70 years earlier), but here in chapter 6 the challenge is contrived by those who seek his harm.
- We would not expect Daniel to deviate from a 70 year pattern. His opposition is counting on it.

THE PLOT IS HATCHED – VSS. 1-5

- Vs 2 – “the king might not suffer loss” – In the absence of effective and ethical oversight, such a vast empire could suffer material erosion through uprisings and graft. Hence 120 + 3.
- Vs. 3 – “Daniel began distinguishing himself” = surpassing his peers. King Darius is impressed.

THE PLOT IS HATCHED – VSS. 1-5

- Vs 3 – Daniel “possessed an extraordinary spirit” could mean he possessed God’s Spirit like Bezalel (Exodus 35).
- Vs 4 – Peers and downline “began trying to find a ground of accusation.” Looking for dirt.
- Daniel was squeaky clean. Background check was stunning.

THE PLOT IS HATCHED – VSS. 1-5

- So they come up with a plan that does not depend on finding a **moral lapse** but that uses Daniel’s devotion to God to question his devotion to Darius.
- This is not a novel challenge! Acts 5:29: *But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”*

THE SETUP – VSS. 6-9

- Vs. 7 – “Consulted together” should be stronger language that implies conspiracy and collusion.
- The conspirators secure broad-based support.
- Vs. 7 – Pass a 30 day allegiance consolidation trial.
- Vs. 7 – There is appeal in what they propose to a new king working to establish his new kingdom.

THE SETUP – VSS. 6-9

- Vs. 7 – “makes a petition” = what is prohibited. This is a ban on asking God for anything!
- Vs. 7 – Darius is saying don’t ask God, only ask me.
- There is nothing to suggest Darius suspected the end game.
- He has been played!

THE SETUP – VSS. 6-9

- For Darius to break his own law is to destroy his credibility as King. KD will crumble.
- There is an irony here: They think they have manipulated the King to their advantage (not doom).
- It will become apparent, however, that they don’t really know their King nor see what’s coming.

THE STING – VSS. 10-13

- Daniel is not operating out of ignorance. He knows exactly what has been passed and what it requires.
- He could easily have rationalized going “under cover” or taking a 30 day hiatus.
- Core Conviction: God matters more than life itself!
- This is a challenge that we could face too!

THE STING – VSS. 10-13

- Revelation 12:11: *And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. **Daniel illustrates what motivates overcomers!***
- He continued praying and giving thanks before his God, despite it now being a capital offense.

THE STING – VSS. 10-13

- Vs. 10 – Daniel is “on his knees three times a day.”
- Daniel uses a daily prayer plan outlined by David: Psalm 55:16–17: *As for me, I shall call upon God, and the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, and He will hear my voice.*
- Vs. 10 – “As he had been doing previously” – no change!

THE STING – VSS. 10-13

- Daniel also uses an approach to prayer that Solomon says is ideally suited to the situation Daniel finds himself in.
- When Solomon’s Temple was dedicated about 400 years earlier, Solomon predicted what Daniel would face and should pray for.

- 1 Kings 8:46–49: *“When they [Israel] sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near; if they take thought in the land where they have been taken captive, and repent and make supplication to You in the land of those who have taken them captive, saying, **‘We have sinned and have committed iniquity, we have acted wickedly’;***

- if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who have taken them captive, and pray to You **toward their land** which You have given to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, **and the house which I have built** for Your name; then hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven Your dwelling place, and maintain their cause.”

THE STING – VSS. 10-13

- This is exactly what Daniel is doing! Praying facing Jerusalem and the Temple as a way of saying, “I am looking to you, the God of Israel, for my help.”
- Now here is where it takes my breath away. Solomon outlines what a Daniel should pray: **We have sinned and have committed iniquity, we have acted wickedly.**

THE STING – VSS. 10-13

- **Daniel’s Prayer Journal:** Daniel 9:1, 3–5: **In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus**, ...I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, “Alas, O Lord, ...**we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly** and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.”

THE STING – VSS. 10-13

- In exile in year one of Darius’ reign, Daniel is praying exactly as Solomon recommends and directing His prayer toward the God who has chosen to make himself known in Jerusalem.
- This prayer, as we will learn, was answered by the dispatch of an angel to answer Daniel’s request – this answer to prayer is recoded in Daniel 10-11.

THE STING – VSS. 10-13

- He does not pray to be seen (Matthew 6:5) but does not fear being seen praying.
- Obedience to God does not necessarily oppose loyalty to the King. But when a divergence is created, we choose God.
- The conspirators converge for a coordinated sting operation.

THE STING – VSS. 10-13

- We seem to recall you passing a loyalty law, right? Well we found a blatant violator! This outsider / exile!
- The king has been trapped by the manipulators! To save Daniel is to destroy his credibility as king.

NO ESCAPE! – VSS. 14-15

- The king has no interest in sending Daniel to the lion's den and looks for every legal means to avoid doing so.
- But the conspirator's plan is well thought out and artfully executed. Between a rock and a hard place.

A LONG NIGHT – VSS. 16-18

- The king demonstrates incredible faith – “God will Himself deliver you” – has Daniel been building a relationship with Darius?
- The signet seal (like that on the tomb of Jesus) makes a miracle irrefutable.
- Darius spends the night fasting! He recognizes the situation is beyond his ability!

SAVED THROUGH – VSS. 19-24

- In the AM, the king asks, “Is your God able?”
- Over 60 years earlier, Daniel’s three friends once said, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace” (Daniel 3:17).
- God is able, again! In this case, God dispatched an angel lion-tamer. Daniel was not saved from but saved through the lions’ den.

SAVED THROUGH – VSS. 19-24

- The conspirators live a proverb: Proverbs 26:27: *He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.*
- They were malicious (lit. “eating the pieces of Daniel.”) but only hurt themselves.
- Sometimes (as in this case) the consequences of a man’s sin affects his family.

MAKING HEADLINES – VSS. 25-28

- Darius issues a proclamation that doesn’t have an expiration date.
- This report goes empire wide!
- He enjoins fear and reverence for the living God.
- Daniel finished well and “enjoyed success” in his latter years.

GOTTA ASK: HOW DID DANIEL DO IT?

- Word Words
- Fear One and None
- Persecution Plus
- Looking Beyond
- Peripheral Vision

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