

The Lord Seeks to Show His Strength

Daniel 6:10-22,25-27 ¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. ¹¹ Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹² And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, 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 does not alter." ¹³ So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day." ¹⁴ And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. ¹⁵ Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed." ¹⁶ So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast *him* into the den of lions. *But* the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." ¹⁷ Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. ¹⁸ Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. ¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you." . . . ²⁵ Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom *men must* tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He *is* the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom *is the one* which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion *shall endure* to the end. ²⁷ He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

One of the classic events at a circus is the strong man. These days you can see strength events on TV and at the Olympics. In either case it can be quite thrilling to see just how much one man can lift. That of course is nothing compared to seeing the strength of the Lord active in our own life. Bible stories like David and Goliath and Daniel in the Lions' Den are some of favorites for this simple reason that we love to watch and see the strength of the Lord doing impossible things in the lives of His people. But we don't have to only hear about. God's word promises that God's strength is active in our life as well. In fact, God's word tells us that God wants to do for us what He did for David and Daniel.

2 Chronicles 16:9 NKJ For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

It is God's desire not only to bring us in the end and to the trees of life which are waiting for us in heaven, but it is also His good and gracious desire to bless us along the path which leads to that end.

So, who wants to see God's strength in your own life?

Last week we heard about David and Goliath. David had complete confidence in facing Goliath because Goliath was attempting to come between God and God's promise to His people. If Goliath had succeeded, he would have ruined God's plan of bringing salvation to all the people of the earth. There is no way that God was going to let that happen.

David also had a specific command. The Lord had told the people of Israel to destroy the Philistines.

Thus, David when he faced Goliath had two important things, a promise of God and a command from God.

Daniel's situation was different. Daniel had neither. He did not have a specific command go and pray with the window open, nor did he have a promise from God that he would not be eaten by the Lions. Neither the lions nor the wicked men who plotted behind Daniel's back were attacking God's plan of salvation. They were only attacking Daniel. If Daniel had died, there is no reason to think it would have affected God's plan of salvation or anyone really other than Daniel.

Earlier in the book of Daniel Shadrack, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, were to be thrown into the furnace of fire. They confessed before the king that God "is able to deliver us from the furnace." They did not say that God would deliver them but only that He is able to do it.

Daniel is in the same situation. David knew what God's plan was. Daniel does not. He knows that God is **able** but he does not know if God **will**.

For this reason Daniel's situation is more similar to the situations we usually face, than is David's. We rarely face an enemy that is directly attacking God's plan of salvation. We almost never have a direct command from God go and do this. Normally we face dangers more like Daniel's. Is God going to deliver us from the Lions or from the fiery furnace? We do not know what His plan for us is. But we know that He is able to deliver if that is His will. And if it is not His will we trust that it is for the best.

Daniel did not have a specific promise but he did have a general promise. The same one we have

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The Lord is looking for opportunities to show His strength in the lives of those whose “hearts are loyal to him.” And that is exactly what God does. He shows His strength in the life of Daniel, one whose heart certainly was loyal to God.

It is that loyal heart which makes Daniel so different from many of the Israelites and we have to admit from many of us as well.

A little before the time of David and Goliath, for nearly five hundred years the people of Israel had no king. During this time they were constantly attacked by the Philistines, the Midainites, the Edomites, etc. It was a constant cycle of being attacked calling on the Lord for help, being delivered and then getting attacked again.

The people of Israel came up with a brilliant plan. We need a king they said. If we have a king he will keep us safe from our enemies.

Last week we saw how well that work. Their king who was supposed to keep them safe was cowering in his tent while a little boy went out to face the giant Goliath. The Israelites were also cowering in fear.

The king didn't work out in the time of Saul and the idea of King didn't work out in the end either. Rather than keep the people safe the kings lead them into rebellion against God and the result was that the people were taken captive into Babylon.

The problem wasn't that they needed a king. The problem was that their hearts were not loyal to God and that is why they kept getting attacked.

On the other hand we have the example of Daniel whose heart was loyal to God and was always safe at all times from his enemies. Daniel put his trust in the Lord and even in the midst of Babylon with his enemies plotting against him he was safe from all evil.

God is seeking those whose hearts are loyal to him in order to make His strength known in their lives. And God showed His strength in the life of Daniel.

When there are problems in our life instead of trusting our own solutions, like we need a king, or we need more money, rather we need to look to God

Psa 37:37 Mark the blameless man, and observe the upright; For the future of that man is peace.

Daniel shows a heart that is loyal to God in his willingness to do the right thing. Not just to avoid the wrong thing but to also do the right thing even in the midst of peril.

Daniel 6:10 NKJ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

It would have been very easy for Daniel to say to himself, "Well I don't have to pray three times a day. Nowhere does God's law say I have to pray three times a day. Well I don't have to pray in my room, nowhere does God word say I have to do it in my room. Well I don't have to do it with my window open, nowhere does it say I have to do it with my window open."

There are times when there are things that are not wrong but they are not the right either. You can't say it would be wrong to shut the window, but it wouldn't be right either.

Satan often convinces us to avoid doing what is right by telling us, well there is nothing wrong with this other option. He loves to get us to think in terms of avoiding sin rather than doing what is right. If Daniel had closed that window he may not have faced the lions den but he would have missed the opportunity to see the strength of God in his life.

When we do what is right we have this promise that God will show himself strong on our behalf.

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Those words were spoken to Asa king of Judah. Asa was a good king and a man of faith. He worshipped the Lord and did not worship the Idols that many in Judah worshipped. Nevertheless, when he was threatened by the King of Israel, he sent gold to the king of Syria asking the King of Syria to help him defeat the King of Israel. Here is a good example of something that is not wrong but was not right. It is not wrong for the King of Judah to make treaties with other kings. But it was not the right thing. The right thing would have been for King Asa to go and ask the Lord for help. He should have put his trust in the Lord.

The prophet of the Lord comes to Asa and speaks this passage we just read above. In effect the prophet is saying, "The Lord is looking for a chance to show his strength. The Lord is waiting for an opportunity to prove his power on your behalf, but you asked the King of Syria for help instead."

How often is it that we avoid the right thing because it seems too hard, and because there is a convenient excuse at hand to avoid it. IF we instead trust God and go forward with the right thing even if it is hard, God shows his strength in our life.

A little sin can sometimes have huge consequences. Dairus pride caused Daniel to be thrown to the Lions even though Darius regretted doing it. But a little faith can likewise result in major blessings. Daniel's heart was loyal to the Lord and the Lord showed His strength in Daniel's life.

The Lord is seeking those whose hearts are loyal to him to show his strength in their lives.

Jesus died upon a tree. That cross is for us the tree of life. WE have life because Jesus died on that cross. Each one of us has the promise of forgiveness of sins. Jesus will lead us to the trees of life which wait in heaven. God wants to do even more than that for us. He wants us to put our trust in Him. He wants us to have hearts that are loyal to Him, so that He can show His strength in our life.

The Lord doesn't always save us from the lions, but He does always bless those who wait for Him.

Who wishes to see the strong man act of the Lord? Put your trust in Him and do not lean on your own understanding.

2Co 1:20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. Amen.