

**Into the Storm**  
**Week 3: Stand Your Ground**  
**Daniel 6**

Family Camp @ Camp Illiana. Memories all around that place.

2021 – Visited camp with the girls. Adalyn had just turned 9 and *REALLY* wanted me to blob her. Looking back, may not have been the best idea...(Adalyn Blob Video)

She was okay. I asked her, “Did it hurt?” -A little. “Was it worth it?” -Definitely! “Do you want to do it again?” -NOPE!

**Picture 1:** The moment I realized I made a mistake!

**Picture 2:** The moment Adalyn realized SHE made a mistake!

Her arms were flailing, looking for anything to grab onto that might save her. I think it's a good picture of how so many of us go into the storms that we face in life. When we face difficult, challenging times, our instinctive reaction is to steady ourselves, so we desperately look for something to grab onto.

- Money – If I just had a little more, THEN I'd feel some peace.
- Control – When life feels out of control, we try to micromanage situations or people.
- Busyness – Keep myself busy, even with good things, just to avoid dealing with the pain.
- Habits – Alcohol, pornography, gambling, food, shopping.

Walking into uncertain times in life can cause us to panic, and we just start trying to grab onto anything to save us. But, ***looking to these things is like trying to grasp for air while you're falling.*** You're not going to find what you're looking for. And many of us have experienced the emptiness that comes from trying. What we need is an anchor strong enough to hold us.

And what we see in the life of Daniel, and in our text today, is that when he was facing a storm, he didn't run away from it, but he also didn't try to take control of the situation, or numb the pain to avoid reality. Instead, he turned to the anchor of his soul. The One who had always held onto him through the good and the bad. And, in Daniel 6, we see him walking into his strongest storm yet.

Some context:

- Seemingly invincible kingdom of Babylon has been defeated.
- Their pride and hubris led to their destruction.
- Now, they're part of the Persian Empire, and this region of Babylon is being governed by a guy named Darius.

#### READ Daniel 6:1-5

- Daniel has been faithful to the Lord, and the Lord has been faithful to him. Daniel's influence has only grown over the years.
- Darius made him 1 of 3 administrators overseeing 120 satraps who oversaw smaller towns and regions, and Daniel was about to be named head over it all.
- Sparked some jealousy among his peers. They couldn't find anything corrupt in Daniel, but they knew he was devoted to God above everything else.

So, they set up a trap for Daniel. They convinced Darius to issue an decree that, for 30 days, no one could pray to anyone or anything except him. And if someone was caught praying to anyone or anything but him, they'd be thrown into a den of lions. That sounded pretty good to Darius. He probably liked that symbol of power and authority, so he signed it into law.

And with one stroke of the pen, Daniel is thrust into a storm he didn't see coming. How does he respond? Look at verse 10...

"Now, when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he decided it was safer to blend in. He reasoned that God couldn't use him if he were dead, and would surely understand if he paused his prayer life for a while. So he stayed silent, avoided attention, and chose comfort over conviction."

No, that's not it. Let's try this one...

"Now, when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he stormed into the streets and ranted about how unjust it was. He gathered supporters, stirred up anger, and launched a campaign against the king, hoping to overturn the edict through power and protest."

That's not it either...(READ Daniel 6:10)

When Daniel was thrust into this storm, his instinctive reaction is the same as ours. He tries to steady himself. But, he doesn't do it by retreating or defiantly resisting. Daniel steadies himself by doing what he'd always done. He goes back to the disciplines that had brought him this far.

And he doesn't make a big deal of it. He doesn't try to hide by closing the windows. He just goes and does what he's always done because **his trust in the Lord was greater than his fear of the king.**

Daniel is in his 80's by now. He's not a young pup anymore. He'd served faithfully under multiple kings. He'd earned high positions and outlived his enemies. He's learned how to walk into the storm with courage and confidence. Not wavering in his convictions, even if it costs him something. His trust in the Lord was greater than his fear of the king.

So, he continues to pray and, of course, he gets busted. King Darius seems to really like Daniel, but he has to follow through on his decree to save face, so he has him thrown into the lion's den. And don't miss this detail in verse 17...after Daniel's in there, they roll a stone over the entrance and seal it like it was a tomb.

Daniel had been betrayed, abandoned, and left to die. But, because he'd steadied his heart, and fortified his soul over a lifetime of devotion to the Lord, he walked into the storm with courage because he knew he didn't walk alone. The Lord was with Him.

And that night, God rescues Daniel from the mouths of the lions. Everyone celebrated, except for those who had conspired against him. Darius had them thrown into the lion's den, and it didn't end as well that time.

And then Darius, this man who did not share Daniel's faith, but had grown to respect and admire him, sent out a memo to all the nations and people of every language, celebrating and praising the Lord for His power and faithfulness to Daniel. And chapter 6 ends with these words...(READ Daniel 6:28)

65+ years of faithful obedience to the Lord...walking a tightrope between living in a land that wasn't his home, that didn't value the things he valued, and trying to remain faithful to the Lord and walk with Him. As I studied for this sermon, I just found myself asking the question, "How?" How was Daniel able to do it?

Because there are times I feel like I'm walking that same tightrope. As followers of Jesus, we live in a land that is not our true home. Our culture does not value the same things we value. And it can be hard sometimes to remain faithful and walk with the Lord.

So, how was Daniel able to stand his ground when the storm was raging all around him? I think it comes down to this...no matter where Daniel's home was, his heart was at home in the Lord.

Daniel's external circumstances never caused his internal anchor to give way. He didn't have to grasp for air because he held on tightly to the Lord. His heart was at home in Him.

He felt safe and secure in the presence of God, so he was able to face whatever storm came at him.

In the Sierra Nevada mountains, there's a species of tree called the **Bristlecone Pine (show image)**. They're some of the oldest living trees in the world. Some of them are over 4,000 years old. But that's not the most amazing thing about them. They live at altitudes of 10,000 feet in rocky soil, harsh winds, cold winters, and little water. Most trees wouldn't last a season in these conditions, but the bristlecone pine thrives in it.

How? Because its roots run deep. These trees grow slowly over time, so they send their roots deep into the earth. They don't depend on surface-level comfort. They draw life from something secure and unseen.

The wind still blows and the storms still come, but they don't move. That's Daniel. His heart was at home in the Lord, so his roots ran deep. His external environment couldn't shake his internal anchor.

And so, the question I've been asking myself this week is this...**Is my heart at home in the Lord?** Do my roots run deep in him so that I can face the storms around me, or does my soul flap around when times get tough, looking for something to save me?

I think there are times when I'm both, and I imagine many of us feel the same way. And so, how do we get to that place where, no matter what is happening around us, our hearts are at home in the Lord because our roots run deep?

It sounds so simplistic, and like a Sunday School answer, but it comes down to practicing the same disciplines we see in the life of Daniel and countless others throughout history. Spending time in prayer and Scripture.

### **Prayer**

- Daniel didn't wait for crisis to come before he started to pray. He made it a habit to set aside a time and place to anchor his soul into the presence of God.
- We can grow those same roots by making prayer a steady habit, not just a last resort.

### **Scripture**

- In chapter 9, we find Daniel reading from the prophet Jeremiah, who was a contemporary. His words gave Daniel wisdom and discernment for how to live.
- I think it's so cool that Daniel was grounded in the very same Scriptures that we hold in our hands today! If we want deep roots like his, we've got to sink them into the truth of God's Word.

If you're not sure how to do that, or what next steps to take, come to Core Classes starting on Wednesday. We have one class on prayer and another class on how to study the Bible.

What we see in the life of Daniel is that **public witness flows from private devotion**. The reason why Daniel, and so many people after him, have been able to faithfully walk into the storm is because their lives were rooted in disciplines of devotion to the Lord long before the trial came.

And so often, their faithfulness served as a witness to the goodness of God and caused others to worship Him. It's because their hearts were at home in the Lord. They weren't searching or reaching for anyone other than Him.

And, through Daniel's story, we don't just see an example of courageous faith, fueled by devotion to God. We catch a glimpse of Jesus, whose heart was at home with the Lord more than anyone who's ever lived. And it gave him the courage to walk into the storms he faced.

In Daniel 6, we see a faithful man betrayed, sentenced to death by a reluctant ruler, sealed in his own tomb, and miraculously given life by the hand of God that rescued him.

But in Jesus, we see the true and better Daniel. We see the One who was sinless, yet betrayed and condemned to death. The ruler who signed his death warrant tried to save him, but couldn't. He was crucified, and then placed in a sealed tomb.

But, on the third day, Jesus was raised by the power of God, not just to save himself, but to rescue all of us who call on the name of the Lord to be saved.

In Daniel, we see a foreshadowing of Jesus, 600 years before he comes. But **Jesus didn't just survive death, he defeated it**. And when we put our faith and trust in Him, we have the promise of life, and courage, and the presence of God **in us** as we walk into the storms.

### **Invitation**

So, as we close, my question to you is this: Have you trusted in the One who is greater than Daniel? Jesus doesn't just show us how to live with courage, He gives us the grace and power to do it. And no matter where you are, or how far you think you've drifted away from Him, your heart can find a home in the Lord when you give your life to Him.

You don't have to grasp for air looking for something to steady you. You can be held by the One who will never let you go. If you're ready to take that step...

### **Communion**