

## Sermon: Courage

Text: Daniel 6

### Discussion Questions:

We have certainly entered crazy days—not just here in the U.S., but around the world. New announcements are being made, and restrictions being enacted on a daily basis. All of us have opinions and deep emotions over all that’s happening globally in response to the coronavirus—which quite honestly can change from moment to moment. One moment we’re angry, and the next moment fear begins to set in. One moment we view all of this as hysteria and over-reaction, and then next moment we see the wisdom in all of the precautions. But one thing is certain, things are changing quickly all around us. Time will tell how all of these changes will make a lasting impact on our world and our daily lives.

And while these might be “unprecedented” events in my lifetime and in my personal experience—they are far from unprecedented in terms of history, or even in terms of other countries. I’ve visited Haiti numerous times in the past several years. Trust me when I tell you that what we are going through right now pales in comparison to what the Haitian people have been dealing with for years and years.

We are continuing our study of the Book of Daniel. At the opening of the book, back in chapter 1, we find the people of Israel caught up in a time of incredible chaos and upheaval. Daniel and his three friends are taken as prisoners of war to the foreign city of Babylon. Our experiences of fear, chaos and hysteria really don’t compare to everything they were certainly experiencing.

- Go back and read Daniel chapter 1. How did Daniel and his friends respond to all of the chaos?
- We read in Daniel 1:8 that Daniel “resolved” not to defile himself with the royal food and wine. What does it look like for us to make these same kinds of “resolutions” when things are changing all around us?
- What is God prompting your heart to resolve to do in light of these crazy days?
- How did God honor the choices that Daniel and his friends made at a time when it would have been so easy to get caught up in fear or external pressures?
- Think about the Lower Story in light of the Upper Story? Was all of this happening for a reason? Was God in control—even when it didn’t seem as though He was?

Today, we turn our attention to Daniel chapter 6. This story takes place nearly 70 years after Daniel chapter 1. Daniel is in his mid-eighties. The Babylonians are no longer in charge—they have been replaced by the Persians. But despite all of the changes, things are very much the same in many respects. Daniel is still in Babylon. Daniel is still DEEPLY committed to God. And Daniel is still living in a culture and crowd that stands in complete opposition to his faith in God.

- What word comes to mind when you think about the fact that Daniel was exactly the same person at 85 that he was at 15?
- How does this happen? What enables people to live lives of consistency and faithfulness, as we see in Daniel? Can you think of anyone you’ve seen live this out?

## Examination:

- Read **Daniel 6:1-9**
  - Read these first few verses carefully. Darius is establishing a new government. What role do the satraps play. What is a modern-day comparison to a satrap? What role to the administrators play, and what is a modern-day comparison?
  - Compare Daniel 6:3 with Daniel 1:19-20. What does this say about Daniel both as a 15-year-old, and now as an 85-year-old?
  - Sum up verse 4 in a word?
  - Sum up verse 5 in a word?
  - What do Daniel chapter 6 and Daniel chapter 3 have in common?
  
- Read **Daniel 6:10-20**
  - Why do you think Daniel prayed toward Jerusalem? What help does 1 Kings 8:33-35 give us in understanding why Daniel did this?
  - Not only did Daniel continue to pray three times a day after the edict was given—we are told that he also “gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before.” (v. 10) Does that strike you as remarkable? Why do you think Daniel gave thanks to God? What might he have been thankful for?
  - We read in verse 14 that the king “made every effort” to “rescue” Daniel. How do you think he did this? What do you think he did? Why did he do it?
  - What the king says to Daniel in verse 16 is quite powerful. Take some time to talk (or think) about this verse. Do you think the king believed it would happen? Do you serve God “continually”? Do you believe that Jesus can rescue you?
  - Hmm...what other scenario comes to your mind when you read verse 17? (Hint: Matthew 27:57-60; 65-66)
  - And what other scenario comes to your mind when you read verse 19? (Hint: Matthew 28:1-6)
  
- Read **Daniel 6:21-28**
  - Why do you think Daniel gave such honor in verse 21 to the man that just condemned him to the lion’s den?
  - According to Daniel in verse 22—what did God do, and why did He do it? How does this fit with Psalm 34:6-7?
  - What do you think it means that “Daniel trusted in his God”? Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you had this kind of trust in God?
  - How does King Darius remind you of King Nebuchadnezzar at the end of Daniel 3?
  - Do you believe that God is in complete control of the chaos and upheaval that we are experiencing in the world today?
  - What do you think God is calling you to do in response to current events?

## Application:

The most convicting question in all of this is: Would a watching world “accuse and convict” each of us for being people who “continually worship God”? Do we lead the kind of consistent lives that we see in the life of Daniel? Allow this to convict you. What changes do you need to begin making today to live a more consistent, prayerful, and obviously God-honoring life?