

# Back to the Future

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 03 May 2015

Preacher: Derek Lamont

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Chapter 9, which in good Scottish parlance is a belter of a chapter, particularly the end of it. The early parts of the chapter are fairly self-explanatory, but I'll be spending longer on these parts of the chapter. But we'll come round to the difficult part also. But I wonder if when you come to church and you're looking at your own Christian life if there's times, and I'm sure there are times and there may be times like that, just now, when you feel a kind of need for inspiration and you feel a need to be moved and inspired a little bit in your faith and encouraged. And it might be that you're going through a period where you're battling and you're struggling with different things and you're tempted maybe even to give up. And as I was saying in prayer, that you don't feel particularly like persevering. Well, I hope that you'll be encouraged by this evening, particularly by Daniel. Because here's Daniel and he's 82 years old now. He's an old man. We've followed his story through from earlier in his life. He's been in exile. He's been out of his own home country. He's been out of the Promised Land since he was 14 years old. He's had a struggle. He's been a battle. He's been a difficult life for him. And yet as Corrie was saying last week when he was preaching from the previous chapter and looking at the life of Daniel, he's been just a model of consistency in his Christian and his belief and in his faith in God and in his trust and in the way he has been an ambassador in his ambassadorial role for God. He's been absolutely consistent. Now, if you'd flick back with me to chapter six very briefly, chapter six, we looked at a few weeks ago and that was the famous chapter of Daniel in the Lion's Den. We know that chapter is a very famous story. And if you'll notice that happened at the beginning of the Kingdom of Darius who was ruling and was the leader of the Meds and the Persians. This was after the Babylonian

Kingdom had collapsed. So that was when Daniel the Lion's Den happened. And in chapter nine we're at the same time. Okay, there's a few chapters in between, but we've gone back to the same time when Darius is king and Daniel's in this important position. Again, he had previously been sidelined, but now he's again in an important position. And in the first year of Darius, the son of Erxes, a Med by Persian, who was made ruler over the Babylonian Kingdom and took over as it were from that Kingdom. Well, in chapter six, we had the story of his public life. You know, how he was thrown into the... Why was he thrown into the Lion's Den? Because the leaders, the satraps and the other people knew they couldn't find anything that was wrong with his life, that he could be accused of cheating or lying or defrauding or doing anything that publicly would lead him to be exposed and to be thrown into the lion. So it was on account of his faith. So we have his public life. Well, here, three chapters later, but at the same time, we're kind of given an insight into his private life. Okay, so not many... In church, you'll see a lot of each other's public life, but you'll not see very much of people's private life. And very often it's the Bible that helps us to have insight into people's private lives because by God's grace and through their willing humility, their lives are exposed. So we see the huge kind of struggles of people like

Peter and David. And we're thankful to God and we can go... When we go to heaven, we can give thanks to God to them for their willingness to have their private lives exposed in a way that revealed their need of a Savior. But here we have Daniel's private life exposed.

This is why chapter nine is why chapter six could happen. Okay? The private life of Daniel allows his public life to be without fault and without blemish as a believer. This is...

In other words, this is his engine room. So what we're going to look at for a little while this evening is what makes Daniel Daniel and what makes him able to be consistent from 14 to 82. Now that, I would say, covers nearly everybody here. There's a one or two under 14. I don't think there's probably anyone over 82. There might be one or two, but it covers most of us. And he was consistent throughout that whole period. What makes him consistent?

[ 4 : 44 ] Well, if I was to sum it up, I would say it's because of his vital relationship with God. Now by vital, I'm using two meanings of that word, both meanings of that word. In other words, vital as an essential. You know, if you... something that is vital in your life is something that's essential. You must have it. But also by that, I mean lively. Okay?

So he had a living relationship with God, a vital relationship. So it was really lively and it was important. It was hugely significant to him to have this kind of life. So it was this vital relationship with God that he had. It was essential to him and it was also a living vital, lively relationship. And that to me, that for me is the key for this chapter, what it's revealing. Because he was listening. So if you've done this relationship, he was listening and he was talking. We're going to talk about him listening, talking and listening again. That's good. That's why we've got one mouth and two ears. Because we listen, we talk and then we listen again. And that's what Daniel was like. We're going to see him listening once and then listening again and in the middle he's talking. And then we'll do a little bit about what he was listening to at the end. So listening for God, number one. Okay? In the first place he was listening for God. God was no stranger to him. In the first section we recognize and see that he was someone who was listening for God, for

God's word. God wasn't a stranger to him. Okay? He had a relationship with God. It was a powerful and strong relationship. A relationship that was revealed through what he read, God's living word to him, the scriptures as they were at that time. And as he prayed to God, there was this great relationship. And we saw that he would face Jerusalem because it reminded him of the promised land and he would pray there every day. And we know that he, in this chapter he talks about using his own name, Daniel, the name that reminded him of his God given name from, it wasn't Belty Shazard that he used here, it was Daniel. And then there's an interesting, if you look at verse 21, it's just a kind of a side. It's a nice little side. It says, while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, man had seen the early, came to me and swiftly, about the time of the evening sacrifice. And it's just a little throwaway comment, but it reminds us that Daniel's still on Yahweh time. He's still on God's time because there was no evening sacrifice in Babylon. It wasn't what happened. He was still thinking of the evening sacrifice that they used to enjoy in his own promised land.

And so he was in touch with God. He knew about God. And he knew his Bible really well. And I'm tempted to say that at this point he had his calculator out, but I don't think he did because he knew what was in scripture. And I want you to read with me what he was reading. Okay. Because we're told that he was reading from the book of the scriptures, Jeremiah the prophet, about the time that the exile would last was going to be 70 years.

So can we read that together? Because that will bring us a little bit to understand what Daniel was reading. Okay. Did Daniel was reading in Jeremiah, same Jeremiah that we were reading, chapter 25, we presume, verses 11 and 12 there. Okay. This whole country will become a desolate wasteland. This is God prophesying that the people of Israel will be taken out of the promised land and will be exiled into Babylon. Daniel, of course, as you know by now has been the one who has lived through that. The whole country will become a desolate wasteland and these nations will serve the king of Babylon for 70 years. But when the 70 years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation. The land of the Babylonians for their guilt declares the Lord and I will make it desolate forever. And if you flick on to chapter 29 and verse 10 and 11, there's a letter to the exiles. This is what the Lord says, while 70 years are when 70 years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I very famous words, I know the plans I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. So he's been reading that about the 70 years and he's been reading that the people will get back to the promised land after 70 years and he's got his calculated out and he's probably worked out, I'm sure he knows this anyway, probably about 68 years in. We're just about there. We're just about at the 70 years. Now we know that Daniel had previously seen and listened to everything God had said and had seen prophecies coming to bear. We've seen that he was previously in Jeremiah 29 that God, just before the bit we read that God had said, Luke settled down in Babylon, you know, get married, build houses, seek the good and the blessing of that community.

[10:02] And he'd done that and he'd been there for 68 years. But now he was seeing that the prophecy of his God was about to come true that they would be taken back from exile and taken back to the promised land. And he was aware because he knew his Bible, he was aware of this bigger picture. He was aware that God was about to act. He knew that God was sovereign. He was completely confident that God's will would be done and this prophecy would come to pass and that the 70 years was actual and that soon the people would begin to move back into their own land once again. So at 82 years of age, what did he do? What did he do when he had read the scripture and when he knew this truth from Jeremiah and he was aware of the sovereignty of God and he knew that God would do it. What did he do? Did he sit back and put his feet up and say, well, now I'm going to watch the show. I'm going to watch God work and I'm going to watch us coming back from Babylon or from the land of the

Medes and the Persians and go back to the promised land. Did he say, well, I'm just going to wait because of God's sovereignty. What did he do? Well, what he did was he spoke to God and that's to tame. It's really to tame a word to use of this prayer that he offers here. Probably it would be better to talk about Daniel remonstrating with God because that's what he does in this passage. You see, he's absolutely not fatalistic. He doesn't look at the sovereign plan of God and the purpose of God and the will of God and the knowledge that God is sovereign over history and over time and he is not fatalistic about that and sits back. You may and I may get God's sovereignty wrong. If you think that God's sovereignty means that you sit back and don't do anything, sit back and just let God act, then that is a misunderstanding. You don't know. We don't know God properly if that's what we think. If we sit back and somehow think we are just to be victims of

God's fatalistic activity, then we don't know God and we don't understand the word. We have misunderstood sovereignty and we've misunderstood God's character. Daniel knows God. Daniel knows that God will bring the people back in 70 years, but Daniel remonstrates with God about it even though God is God and God is sovereign here. This is a great high picture of sovereignty that Daniel has. He doesn't go into some kind of tame ritual with God or some academic treatise in prayer or some casual half-hearted prayer. Some people say, why bother praying if God's sovereign? God's going to do what He's going to do. Why should we pray? Well, this is the reason why we pray, because we have examples of people like Daniel praying and because Daniel knows God and knows that his sovereignty doesn't mean that we don't have responsibility to act and serve. This is a prayer that is respectful.

If you've read it with me, but it's also risky. He knows God and he also knows that God wants him to be praying at this time. It's a classic prayer. It's a classic prayer for us and it's recorded, I believe, for our instruction from verse 4 right through to verse 20. He's speaking with God. I'll just say a few things about this prayer very briefly.

I'll go through this briefly. I'm not going to take it section by section, but we do see that it's a serious prayer. He knows God. He knows God's sovereign. He knows God is going to act, but yet he is absolutely serious about speaking with God, about the condition of his people and of himself. So I turn in verse 3 to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition and fasting and sackcloth and ashes. So this wasn't just a perfunctory prayer. This was a prayer that was absolutely serious and became a priority for him, so much so that he didn't eat his daily bread. He didn't eat his food. He was fasting. He was willing to break his routine in order to speak with God here, to see God's face.

[ 14 : 32 ] And that's like not only as someone here who knows God do that, but Jesus, who is God, does that. He does that when he prays. He breaks his routine. He gets up really early before the crowds get up to pray to his Father in heaven. And it reveals to us that there is a cost of time, cost of time when we speak with the eternal God who is out of time. So it costs us time and energy and effort if we are going to pray to the living God. I wonder if that hugely convicts me. I wonder if it convicts us as we think about Daniel, who takes this time to pray to God. And he prays in this remarkable and amazing way. He makes time for God. It's a high priority. And I think for us, very often in our post-New Testament, post-Calvary time, sometimes I think prayer, because as we looked this morning, the work of cross is finished, we give prayer a low priority. It comes well after family and work and church and box sets and Facebook and sleep and all these things. There's nothing else in the agenda. Maybe we can turn to prayer. And yet this is the higher the view we have of God, the greater we understand God, the more we will prioritize and make time for him. So we find this prayer and it's a biblical prayer and it's biblical. And by that, I mean it's modelled in other places in the Bible as well, similar things. So we look at acts, adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. Well, it's kind of got these elements in it.

Certainly adoration and thanksgiving. Oh, Lord, the great and awesome God who keeps the covenant and love with those who love him and so on. It speaks about God's mercy. It speaks about God being righteous. God being the rescuer. It's recalling God's character to us and how important all of these things are. He sees God as a sovereign God, but also as a personal God in his life. So there's adoration and thanksgiving, always time in the urgency of the moment for adoration and thanksgiving and worship. But if you were looking at this prayer and if you were asked to summarize it in one word, I presume you would probably, I would imagine you would probably summarize it the same way as I have as being one of confession.

It's a real Sam of confession here. So he almost, he pours out all the verbs he can think of to describe his needs or adjectives. There's, you know, we are people who have sinned, we're people who've rebelled, we're who're wicked, we've turned from you, we've not listened, we're unfaithful. He's trying to imagine all the different words he can use to describe their sinfulness and their distance from him. Daniel knows that part of the prophecy is that they will repent and turn back to the promised land. And he doesn't see any evidence of that. And so he's praying that prayer for them and for himself. They're defiant, they're deaf and they're defecting from him. And it's kind of a sad prayer. But it's a great place for us to start our prayer life and to start our relationship with God.

There's a great quote, I've been using this book quite a lot in the study of Daniel, Dale Ralph Davis's commentary. And he's got a quote from a guy called Herman Velkamp on this confession.

And he says, what distinguishes us from the world is not that we are less wicked, but by the grace of God we have learned to see our wickedness for what it is and we confess our sins. The church is the only body on earth that confesses sin. Where the confession of sin dies out, the church is no longer church. So whatever else the church is, it's a church that recognises confession and sin and forgiveness and grace. So there's confession and there's also supplication. He pleads. You know, verse 17, isn't it great that this is a sovereign God that he prays to? But he pleads with him. He said, look, almost, it's quite a risky language that he uses. He says, you know, God give ear, open your eyes, open your ears.

[ 19 : 15 ] Look at the desolation. Oh Lord, hear, act, do something. He's pleading to the living God to pray that God will act. But this is someone who knows God. And we can see from this that he knows God and therefore he can be holy and bold at the same time. And he's saying, look, God act because of your reputation. You've promised that after 70 years we'll go back, but we're not seeing it yet. So please begin to act. Can you see that vitality? There's an urgency, but there's also a liveliness and a real living relationship between God and Daniel. And that reality or that realism and that intimacy should mark our prayers.

If we look and take example from him, here's this great 82 year old prayer, praying man, and he's confident about the response. That's why he's praying with such urgency because God is consistent and he knows who God is. Okay, if you know someone is going to do something, you will plead for that to be done. Now, Ross, most nights Ross has, he's got his iPad and he wants to take it to the bedroom when he goes to bed. And I'll say, no, you can't take that to the room. So he gives up asking. But if I give in to that and say, yeah, of course you can, you can take it with you to your room. Then he would ask and ask until I gave it to him. But if you know somebody is not going to give you something, you stop asking.

If you think God doesn't love you and God isn't interested in you and God will not answer your prayers, you will stop asking. The reason Daniel was willing to plead and plead and plead like this and to be bold and to be courageous and to be almost irreverent in his prayer was because he was confident that God would act according to his own character and would act according to his own prophecy and his own promises. And so when we have promises in scripture, we have promises for wisdom and we feel very stupid. What we do is we plead for wisdom because he's promised it and we don't have courage. We plead for courage because he promises it and because he is faithful and true and because we don't give up. It's not, isn't it strange that when we're struggling in our faith, what we often do is we stop praying. We stop going to God. We become distant from God. And yet these are the times when we plead his promises and his help and his persevering strength and all that we need.

So that vital relationship of prayer is the key to consistent Christian living. So he prayed. He was someone who listened for God. We've seen that. He prayed. And then can I just briefly talk about him listening for God second time? He listens for God in the towards the end of this chapter two. And there's a promise and there's a challenge and there's a revelation and the promise is in verse 20 where Gabriel comes to him and basically reminds him that there will be an answer, that God will answer. There's this great promise, isn't it? That we're told that Daniel, I've come verse 23, as soon as you began to pray, an answer was given. Isn't that great? That Daniel was given that assurance from Gabriel that God is answering his prayer and more than that, that you are someone who is highly esteemed. Daniel, you're highly esteemed. And there's just three quick verses that I want to bring up from different parts of the Bible that say the same kind of thing about before our prayers being made that the answer is given. People of Zion who live in

Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help. As soon as he hears, he will answer you. It's the same kind of thing. And then we've got another one. Before they call, I will answer while they're yet speaking. I will hear. There's another one. This is the confidence we have in approaching God that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears it. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have, we know that we have what we ask from him. So we've got these same great, strong, heavenly, appointed promises that God answers prayer. That is a great motivation to pray. If you're not praying, you're missing out on this hugely significant relationship with vital relationship with God that he sovereignly wants us to have. You know, over and above any kind of communal living and worship and church and everything. There's this vital relationship, personal eyeball to eyeball relationship with God through prayer that we all must seek as a matter of priority. So there's this great promise that he answers.

[ 25 : 05 ] That motivates, does that not motivate prayer for us, this sovereign God who answers. But also there's a challenge given to us and to Daniel. He said, Gabriel says, instructed me, said, Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. And therefore, he goes on to therefore consider the message and understand the vision. So there's a prophecy coming. There's a vision coming. And it's a tough vision. And the challenge that Daniel's given is he says, you're going to need this insight and understanding that I will give you. In other words, the gift of the spirit he's going to have. But he also says, now consider the message and understand the vision. And that is a challenge to be thoughtful, to put effort into understanding. So there's a kind of, there's a cooperation going on here is that to understand the word, we need the gift of the Holy Spirit, but we also need to use our minds and we need to work hard. It's a bit like the whole thing about praying.

He's a sovereign God, but he still wants us to pray and to be involved in. So he says, to be students of the word is a wider implication here. It's not about intelligence, but it is about the gift of insight and understanding. Gabriel gives here, which we ask for in our Christian lives for the will of God, but also this need to work at understanding God and his character. If you like cars, if you like engines, you want to work on engines that you may have a gift for that. You may have an incident, but you're going to have to work at knowing and understanding how an engine works. If you're interested in politics, you might be able to speak a good message, but you need to work at the different policies and work at understanding the reality of the political world that we're in. You've got exams, you might have great gifts at the particular subjects you're studying, but that doesn't mean we sit back and don't learn and understand more about what we're doing. In our workplaces, we may be promoted, but we'd expect to work and learn about the job that we're in. And at that level, our relationship with Christ is no different. Yes, we know that grace is free and we know that we can do nothing as Corrie was reminding us last week when we looked at justification. We can't do anything to add to our faith in terms of being made right with God through grace, but grace isn't cheap. And we need to develop our relationship with God and develop our knowledge of God and work at that. There's no, there isn't really a shortcut for us. We need to spend time in prayer and in understanding the Word.

When we're struggling with God's will, the worst thing to do is to sit back and either wait in a lazy fashion or blame God for not making himself clear. We have to keep learning and keep praying. Otherwise, we're heading into a kind of dark vortex spiritually that's going downwards. So there's a great challenge. There's a promise that he will answer. There's a challenge that he gives us his word and that he wants us to work at his word. And very lastly and briefly, I've left this to the very end because I don't understand it.

And I'll go over it quickly. But I'm not too ashamed about that because I think for the last 2000 years or more that there's been a whole variety of different opinions about these passages, this last section about times and seven times and seven times seven and everything else. So I'm going to, you know, Corey thinks he did a great job last week in the difficult passage he had. But his was easy. He had a couple of shaggy goats and he had the interpretation given to him by God. There's no interpretation in this section.

It's much harder. It's much more difficult. This is a different league altogether. But at very basic level here, you know, there's numerology, biblical numerology here. And some people are really interested in that. And some people spend hours and hours and lots of time on these things. And there's much being written. And if you have a deep interest in these things, then follow that up. But can I just say a couple of very brief things as we close on this revelation that he's given basically from verse 25 onwards. Daniel had been reading about the 70 years. Okay. From Jeremiah that the captivity would last 70 years. And then they would be back in the promised land. And in a sense, this section here is God saying to Daniel, there's many more 70s still. That isn't the end. You know, it may have been that Daniel thought and the people thought, oh, when we get back to Jerusalem, we're back in the promised land, everything will be tremendous. It'll be just like what it was. And then it'll usher in the Messiah and things will be fine and great. God is really saying here in many ways, particularly verse 24 and 25, that there's many more 70s that lie ahead. There's many more times that lie ahead before the end, before everlasting righteousness will be ushered in and the victory sealed up.

[ 30 : 43 ] The restoring exiles to Jerusalem needed to know that it wasn't the end of the story. And there was more in God's purposes, much more in God's purposes still to come. The second thing that may be been has been spoken of here is that the city, Jerusalem is going to be rebuilt.

Verse 27, we're told that the city will be rebuilt, will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but it will be rebuilt in times of trouble. But also that then verse 28 says it will be destroyed, the city will be destroyed and it's sanctuary destroyed. And again, he's saying that don't put your hope just in the city. The city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt, but it is going to be destroyed again and there's more to it than that. It may well be that these numbers and these times and these years can be picked off historically to refer to Cyrus and the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah.

And then it talks about the coming of the anointed one after 62 sevens. The anointed one will be cut off and will have nothing. It's generally taken to reflect, to speak of Jesus Christ, the great anointed often spoken of the anointed one in the Old Testament and his crucifixion being cut off. And then the destruction of the city being, the destruction of Jerusalem 70 years after Jesus was crucified in AD 70 that is prophesied in Matthew 24.

Like a lot of these prophecies, both in Matthew 24 and the Old Testament, they're kind of, I think I've mentioned this to you before, it's like prophetic foreshortening. It's like looking at a picture of a mountain and you see two or three different peaks and in the photograph, in the 2D photograph, they all look the same distance away. But then if you climb the first peak, if you could walk into the photograph and climb the first peak, you get to the top of the first peak and see that there's a big long valley before the second peak comes. And if you climb the second peak, there'd be a big long valley for the third peak. So they all look that they're happening together in the flat picture.

But if you actually went in 3D as it were, you would find that there was time and distance between each of these peaks. And much of that Old Testament prophecy was like that. It kind of brought together different times of prophetic reality and made it all look that happened again at the same time, but there was great times before it and in between it. But then the prophecy finishes really by saying that the end will come. So in many ways, this is saying there's much more to happen. The anointed one, the Messiah will come. He will be cut off. The city will be built, will be destroyed. There will be difficult times and maybe even a focused time towards the end, but the end will come. So if you look at these times, some people say there's a restricted time and there's an extended time and then there's a climactic time at the end. It may be that the restricted time leads us up to the coming of Christ and the extended time is the last days between Christ's first and second coming.

[ 34 : 07 ] And just before his second coming, there's this climactic time, this 1-7 period, where there will be abomination that causes desolation. And other parts of Scripture seems to speak about that intense period just before Jesus comes back, where it's as if Satan has his last thrash before he's ultimately taken and destroyed eternally. Possibly prefigured, I think Kori mentioned it before, the time of Antiochus epiphanies in the Old Testament and then Titus, who was the leader who destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70. And that prefigures this coming of someone who will be very anti-Christian and during which time there will be great persecution for the Christian faith, but the everlasting righteousness will prevail and that God will make clear his sovereign victory. And that involves all of us at one level or another, and we're all involved in that history. And the truth and encouragement for us as we look at something like this, even the hardest of prophetic visions that are given here, is that God is sovereign, God knows what he's doing, God has done what he has done in Christ and he's coming back to take us home, whatever the persecution might be for us before then and it's difficult to work out what that is. What matters is that you know him and as Christians we know him better and that our relationship is a vital one with him. What do I mean by that? That it is essential to us and that it is lively, that we know God well enough to be bold and courageous and risky in prayer with him because we know his promises and we know his prayer and we know his will. And that's what will give us consistency. We look for in our lives whether we're 14 or 82 or anything in between or on either side of that as Christians are greatest longing. My greatest longing is for a consistent Christian witness that the problems of life and the difficulties that I face don't always just make me cold or affect my spiritual temperature depending on what's happening in my life so that there's just a consistency. I don't fall into the same sins, don't make the same mistakes, don't give in to the same temptations but because if we have this vital relationship we are faithful in the small things and in the big things and that's very much what we see in the life of Daniel isn't it? That he was consistent in small matters that we almost think well why does it matter? And that enabled him to be consistent throughout his life and a huge powerful witness for God throughout his many years. In exile remember that he was in exile, he was in a difficult secular godless environment and we praise God for Daniel, he really is tremendous and we thank God for his testimony and we can learn so much from his prayers and from God's sovereignty and how that affects the way we pray. So let's power heads briefly in and pray together. Father God help us we pray to learn from Daniel, not in a cold or a detached way, not in a simply theological or ecclesiastical way but in a personal living and vibrant spiritual way where we can know also this great living God and much more so than Daniel because we have God incarnate and Jesus, we have the finished work of the

cross, we have the promises and teaching of Jesus, we have the resurrection, we have the ascension, we have the teaching of the apostles, we have the gospels written, we have so many things, we have Revelation itself, it's the last great book of the Bible which compliments so much of what Daniel says and what the prophecies were meaning and were given then.



So help us Lord to be consistent and vital in our relationship with you, nothing that we can do vicariously, nothing we can do just by watching other people, nothing we can do by depending on others but is that absolutely personal responsibility before the sovereign God that we come to you by faith and that we live in relationship with you and learn to know you absolutely as much as we can by grace and through the insight of the Holy Spirit and the effort of grace at work in our lives.

So help us we pray and I am being encouraged by that, that Daniel is just ordinary like us and that we too can know that great courage and strength and unfailing witness which will surely be the means by which many people in this city will come to faith in Jesus Christ.

As we live our lives as we are and pray as we are then we know that God will use that to trigger people's thinking and trigger people's questions.

[ 39 : 41 ] So help us not just to live for ourselves but to live for you and for your glory. Amen.