

Daniel and the Lions' Den

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Preacher: Cory Brock

[0:00] Amen. I'm going to read scripture now from the book of Daniel. This is the passage. Corey's going to come and preach to us very shortly. And over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account so that the king might suffer no loss.

Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom.

But they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. Then these men said, we shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel, unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.

Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, O King Darius, live forever. All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the councillors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction that whoever makes petition to any God or man for 30 days except you, O King, shall be cast into the den of lions.

Now, O King, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it cannot be changed according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked. Therefore, King Darius signed the document and injunction.

[1:51] When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber towards Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he had done previously.

Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and said before the king concerning the injunction, O King, did you not sign an injunction that anyone who makes petition to any God or man within 30 days except you, O King, shall be cast into the den of lions?

The king answered and said, the thing stands fast according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked. Then they answered and said before the king, Daniel, who's one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O King, or the injunction you've signed, but makes his petition three times a day.

Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, no, O King, that is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.

Then the king commanded and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, may your gods, whom you serve continually, deliver you. And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.

[3:28] Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. No diversions were brought to him and sleep fled from him. Then at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions.

As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?

Then Daniel said to the king, O King, live forever. My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths. And they've not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him.

And also before you, O King, I have done no harm. Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Amen. This is God's holy word. Amen. I've been wrestling with a tooth abscess for a few days, and I'm losing the battle.

[4:37] And that means that my diction may be worse than normal today, even more American. And it also means that I may have my head in my notes a little bit more than normal.

So pardon me for that. It's a very familiar story. Daniel 6, Daniel and the lion's den. It's so famous. It's a bedtime story, a story that lots of people know in and outside the church.

That's part of the problem, is that it is so famous. And so when stories are very famous, we miss what's so distinctive about them. We often miss the details. Just to get your historical bearings on where we are in Daniel, Babylon had conquered Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem and brought exiles in 605 B.C. over to the city of Babylon. But now Babylon has been defeated by the Persian kingdom. And Darius is king.

And Darius is 62 years old, and he's a Median. The Medians, the Medes, were part of a separate kingdom from Persia that Persia took over at some point.

[5:39] This is all in the location we now know is Iran today, near Kurdistan, where we would know Kurdistan today. And Darius is ethnically a Mede, but leading the Persian kingdom.

And he's the king here. And the subplot, one of the subplots, it's not the main point today, but a subplot throughout this book is that you will have seen power is always shifting. Whoever leads today will not be leading tomorrow.

And it's very important to realize that the rise and fall story of the kingdoms is all present throughout this book. And it teaches us that we've got to look for a better kingdom than the shifting sands of political leaders will give us.

Whoever leads today will be gone tomorrow, and that's very present throughout this book. So here we are, a brand new kingdom, the Persians instead of the Babylonians. Now the literary context, so important to remember if you've been around, you'll have heard this several times already, but chapter 2 to chapter 7 is in Aramaic, not Hebrew.

And in this Aramaic section, it's called a chiasm, meaning the different chapters correspond to each other. It works like this, A, B, C, C, B, A.

[6:50] So chapter 2 and chapter 7 are in parallel. Chapter 3 and chapter 6, that's where we are today. Chapter 4 and chapter 5. So we've already reached the middle, and now we're working our way back out to the corners.

And today, chapter 3 and 6 are the ones that correspond. And you'll hear why immediately. Chapter 3 is about the fiery furnace. Chapter 6 is about the lion's den. So in chapter 3 and chapter 6, you've got these young men who are faithful to the real God, the Lord, who are asked to bow down and worship a king as a god, and they refuse.

And so they're sent into the pit. The fiery furnace on the one hand or the lion's den on the other. And the question is fairly obvious. It's something like, are you willing to count the cost of faithfulness to the real God, even if it costs you everything?

Even if it costs you your life? That's the question of chapter 3 and chapter 6. But the fact that we've got two of these stories, and they're parallel to each other, the author is trying to get us in this chiastic structure of the correspondence between all these chapters to ask what's different about the other story.

So what's distinct in each of them that makes them different? What's different in the fiery furnace and the lion's den? So let's ask that. I think that's what the author wants us to ask. Here it is.

[8:11] Here's the answer to the question we need to ask. What got Daniel into the lion's den? That's what makes the story distinct from chapter 3. What got him in? And then we'll see the cost of his integrity, and lastly, hope in the man of integrity.

So first, what got Daniel thrown into the lion's den? Did you see that? Did you pay attention to that? The answer is simple. I can say it very briefly, and it's this.

He did excellent work at his day job. That's what got him thrown in. He was a very good worker, and he just did a wonderful job working for the king. And so if you look down at verse 1, you'll see this organizational chart we're given here.

There's a king. There's 120 satraps, regional governors. And then there are three high officials or presidents. Each of the three rule 40 of the satraps or the governors.

And so the king, three vice presidents, 120 regional vice presidents or governors in modern corporate terms. But then we're told here that Daniel, verse 3, distinguished himself.

[9:24] He distinguished himself. How did he do it? Well, if you look back at verse 2, it says the structure existed so that the king might suffer no loss. Meaning the king wanted to make sure that the government was well ruled so that he didn't miss out on any tax money.

It probably means that the satraps were shearing the sheep twice, as they say. You know, skimming on both sides, taken from king and commons. They were probably pocketing tax money.

They were, it's implicit, but they were very likely very dishonest. But Daniel distinguishes himself. And so just look at verse 4. It says there was no fault found in him.

They couldn't find any guilt in him. There was no ground to complain about him. He was faithful. There was no error in anything that he did. And so the reason that all this happens is because Daniel was so good at his job.

And another way to say it, we've been saying all along that this book is about wisdom. It's a wisdom book. And alongside the word wisdom in the book of Proverbs is a very important second word.

[10:31] And that's the word integrity. Wisdom and integrity. And they go together. The wise man or woman in the book of Proverbs also has integrity. And this is a passage that's distinctive from chapter 3 because it's really trying to get us to focus in on Daniel's integrity.

What is integrity? The Hebrew word for integrity is a word that means wholeness, holistic, one thing. Integrity, it's the same as the word. We get the same root from the word integer.

So you math people know the word integer. And what is that? It means a whole number, one thing, a holistic thing. And that's the biblical idea of integrity. Integrity is consistency, wholeness, between the disposition of your heart and the life you live publicly.

Integrity is when what you believe inside, internally, matches the way that you live on the outside. And this is so famously simple, this idea of the call to integrity, that it's almost cheesy to say.

But sometimes things are cheesy because they're very true. And this is very true. And it's this. Integrity is doing what is good when nobody is watching. And Daniel is being commended here.

- [11:46] Darius is putting him in the number one position because he was a man of honesty and integrity. That's what we're being told. Jonathan Edwards is very famous for, this is the American preacher during the Great Awakening.

Jonathan Edwards is famous for his resolutions. As he would ride around on his horse, he would think of something where he would say, Be it resolved, like a New Year's resolution. And he would write it down and sew it into the inner lining of his jacket.

And one of the famous resolutions of Edwards is, Be it resolved, I will do whatever I think will be most to God's glory today. Integrity is what the New Testament calls being single-minded, not double-minded.

So it's having this holistic, singular focus and purpose. And then living out of that in every sphere of life, every department of your life. And Edwards nailed it.

He said, What is the single-minded focus that grounds biblical integrity? Be it resolved, I will do whatever I think is most to God's glory today.

- [12:52] That produces external integrity. It begins with that wholeness, that singular focus. I live for God's glory. Daniel lived for God's glory. He was a great worker. He was an excellent worker.

J.I. Packer says it like this, Wisdom is the ability to see what is good, to see the highest ideal, serving God. But then he says, Integrity is the willingness to live by that goal in actual life.

So wisdom and integrity go together. Wisdom says, Wisdom, the wise person can see the highest ideal, the thing to curate your entire life around. And integrity actually pursues it.

Where the inner life matches the public life, the public life matches the inner life. Now, how did Daniel become this person? And the key word, I think, is in verse 3.

It said that he had an excellent spirit. Now, does that mean Daniel had so much integrity, was such a great worker for King Darius because he was an excellent person?

- [13:57] His soul was excellent. Or does it mean, as some commentators say, that it's referring to the Holy Spirit's work in his life, making him excellent? And the language, I think, the answer, I should say, I think is yes.

And the reason that I think he had an excellent spirit, it means he had the Holy Spirit in him, who over many, many years of his life made him excellent, is because of one factor, one connection that we have not yet pointed out in the series on Daniel.

And that's that we could have gone through the whole book of Daniel so far and pointed out how almost every narrative about Daniel is in parallel, not only to another part of Daniel, but also to the Joseph story in the book of Genesis.

And maybe you've picked up on that, if you're a Bible reader and you've read through Genesis, you might have picked up on the parallels, the connections between Joseph and Daniel. Remember Joseph in Genesis?

Joseph was thrown into a pit by his brothers and sent into exile in a foreign land as a slave. And when he got to that foreign land as a slave, he rose up to the second most important person in the kingdom.

- [15:07] How? By interpreting the king's dream, just like Daniel. And then, well, I won't go through all the parallels because we could do a whole sermon on them. So I won't do that to you today. But what we learn about Joseph in Genesis 41, this is what Pharaoh says about Joseph.

He says, It says, The writer of Daniel is pointing us subtly to that connection and saying, when he says excellent spirit, he's saying this is like a new Joseph.

He had an excellent spirit because he walked in step with the spirit who was with him all his life. Daniel's an old man. This did not happen overnight. This was slow formation over decades and decades of walking in step with the spirit.

What is an expression of the work of the Holy Spirit in your life? If you're a Christian today, one of the things we learn here is one expression of the work of the Holy Spirit in your life is that you are becoming more and more a wonderful worker.

An excellent, honest, just, helpful worker in the workplace like Daniel was here. It's a single-minded ambition that whether you're at work or family or church or wherever it is in life, that you say, Today, be it resolved, I exist to do whatever I think will most glorify God in this moment.

[16 : 33] I love the way one theologian puts it. He was asked once, What is the Christian ethic? And he said, By the power of the Spirit, do the next right thing. Do the next right thing.

That was Daniel's life. Now, how do you become a person like that? Press pause on that question for two minutes, and I want to say one word about the case for integrity.

Today, some of you will know this very well, but there are a lot of famous people recently, famous public intellectuals who have become Christians in the last couple of years. Larry Sanger, the founder of Wikipedia, earlier this year publicly professed faith and wrote his testimony out on Wikipedia that you can read.

It's a beautiful story. Very famously, even more than him, probably Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who she's been called the fifth most famous atheist in the world until 2024.

And Ayaan was born and raised in Somalia. She was part of the Muslim Brotherhood. She fled that, and she landed in the Netherlands and became the fifth of what's been called the four horsemen of the new atheist movement, alongside Dawkins and Hitchens and Dennett and Harris.

[17 : 46] And last year, Ayaan came to faith in Christ. And she just recently debated Richard Dawkins in Oxford over this. And Richard Dawkins, the very famous public atheist, wrote an open letter to her last year when she professed faith that read, quote, Dear Ayaan, seriously?

A Christian? Question mark. End of letter. Now, I point these couple of folks out just to say one thing, and that's this, that one of the reasons a lot of public intellectuals have been coming to faith, one writer says they begin as reality respecters.

Reality respecters. What's a reality respecer? It's a person who begins to see that something like integrity is actually real. So who among us wouldn't want to go to a workplace and work with people of integrity?

Who among us doesn't want to live with somebody who has honesty and integrity in their hearts and lives? But if you desire that, you have to be willing to say that what integrity points to a moral good, where honesty is better than lying, where laws like do good unto others as you would have them do unto you, where laws like it is always good not to torture people actually exist.

A reality. They were, Ayaan began as a reality respecer. Listen to C.S. Lewis talk about his own conversion in this way. He said, My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust, but how had I gotten an idea of just and unjust?

[19 : 23] A man does not call a crooked line crooked unless he first has an idea of a straight line. A person cannot call something unjust unless they first have an idea of justice.

And this is what he says, Whenever you find a person today who says, I don't believe in real right and wrong, you will find them in the very next moment going back against this in the way they live their life.

None of us wants to live in a world where there is no real right and wrong. Reality respecters point us to something, and that's that God made the world morally upright. A place where you can respect integrity.

And so you've got to, in order to long for integrity, you've got to believe in integrity. And to believe in integrity, you've got to believe in a God, a moral lawgiver who made it. We all want that. It's a deep evidence for the existence of God.

Now, back to the main plot. How do you become a person with an excellent spirit like Daniel? And let's see, secondly, the cost of integrity. Why did the satraps, the officials here, then turn and want to kill Daniel?

[20:26] And we've already said it. It's because they looked at his honest, excellent work, and they were deeply, fiercely jealous of him. They hated him because of how well he worked and how much respect he had garnered from that.

They could find, we learn here, they could find no legitimate reason to accuse him. His justice was a shining light on their injustice. They hated that being exposed by his light as they walked in darkness.

And here in the passage, it's very implicit, but his honesty is being compared with their dishonesty throughout. And they hated him for it. There's a connection between Daniel 3 and Daniel 6. And we didn't read this far, but the very next verse, chapter 6, verse 24, where it says that the accusers of Daniel that tried to get him killed, they maliciously accused him.

The Aramaic text literally says, they ate up his pieces. The same exact phrase occurs in Daniel chapter 3 for the accusers that threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace.

They sought to eat his pieces. Meaning, it's a fierce, beastly image that they were the actual lions. They wanted to eat him up like a lion eats up the pieces.

[21:38] These are the accusers, and they hate him for his integrity. They hate him for his honesty. Now, this Daniel is an example, then, of something that occurs all throughout the Bible, also in the New Testament.

Listen to the way Paul calls the Christian to live in the new covenant world that we live in. Listen to what he says, 1 Timothy 5.

Give no opportunity for the adversary to speak reproachfully of you. Titus 2, 78. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, integrity, dignity, sound speech, that you could not be condemned so that any opponent that seeks to condemn you would be put to shame.

This is my favorite, 1 Peter 2. Live as exiles with honorable conduct amongst outsiders, non-Christians. And the word honorable conduct there is the Greek word beautiful.

So Peter's call is live a life of such character and integrity that it's fiercely beautiful life. So that if anyone seeks to destroy you because they're fiercely upset with your honesty and justice, they won't find any complaint to be had in you.

[22:53] It says they'll be ashamed. In other words, they'll be proven wrong, not able to find anything in the Christian that they can charge. That's exactly what we see in this example of Daniel.

And so the pattern we're given in this passage is live with such integrity that if anybody accuses you, seeks to destroy you, they're ashamed because there's nothing to find. Don't give colleagues, employers, neighbors, the boss that you work for a reason to speak negatively of you.

Now, if you read early church literature, I know we all love that. Early church literature, early church books, one of the real distinctive things you'll see is that they're constantly writing apologetics, arguments for belief in God.

And in the early church, one of the most constant arguments was this, look at the lives of the Christians in the city. It was one of the first arguments they always said, look at the distinctive life, the honesty, the integrity, the service, the willingness to give themselves away for other people.

Look at their lives. That was what's been called the first apologetic, the apologetic of love. Love as a Christian witness in the early church. And Daniel is modeling it for us here, and it's exactly picked up on in the New Testament.

[24:08] There's a great movie, A Man for All Seasons. It's about King Henry VIII and his many wives, his many divorces. And in that story, Cardinal Woolsey was the archbishop at the time.

And Cardinal Woolsey calls in Sir Thomas More to his office. And Thomas More is a just nobleman, a man of integrity, a devout Christian. And Woolsey says, Thomas, the king wants another divorce.

And we know from Henry VIII's story, these are very unjust reasons for divorce. And Cardinal Woolsey says, but the pope refused to grant it to him. And he says, Thomas, we've got to find a way.

We've got to do whatever we can do to make this happen. And Thomas More says, I cannot support this. And Cardinal Woolsey says, you constantly disappoint me, Thomas, if you would just learn to bend a little bit.

Woolsey, why do you have to be so, and this is the language, he says, why, Thomas, do you have to be so irreducible? That's the word. Why do you have to be so single-minded, so focused, so irreducible, unable to be broken, unable to be bent, unable to be fragmented?

[25:20] You see, Thomas More had this singular devotion to God's glory that wouldn't allow him to be bent. And so later on, Thomas is talking to his sister, Margaret, in the story. And this is what he says.

Meg, he calls her Meg. Meg, when a man takes an oath, he's holding his own self in his hands like water. And if he opens his fingers, he needn't hope to find himself again.

What is he saying? He's saying, when a man makes a promise to serve, a vow, a man, a woman, to serve the Lord, or any other vow in life, he's saying, all it takes is a little bit of an opening of the fingers and the water, of course, will slip out.

Meaning, integrity is so easily lost. It can slip away so quickly. Woolsey said, just, why won't you ever just bend a little?

And that would be like opening the fingers and the water just comes pouring out. How did Daniel never bend? And there's two marks here in the story of an integrated life, an irreducible life, a life so holistically focused on God's glory that he didn't break in the moment of persecution.

[26:31] And we learn, one, these guys can't crush him in any way except by criminalizing his religion. No dishonesty could be found in him. So they say, we've got to make the God he worships a criminal act.

So they say, for 30 days, if anybody bows down before anyone but Darius himself as a God, let them be cast into the lion's den. It's very obvious. It's very simple. It's the same thing that happens in Daniel chapter 3.

But the first way is that no matter what Daniel says, I will be committed to worship of the true God. It's more important to me than anything else in my life. It's a simple call, friends.

But Daniel's testimony is a singular focus that I will worship the real God only in my life, no matter what, even if it costs me everything. The second way we see here throughout the passage is that as soon as he hears about this command, that if he were to worship anything else but Darius, he's going to be cast into the lion's den.

We learn in verse 10, he immediately, immediately went to the house where he lived. His windows were open. He got down on his knees three times a day. He prayed and he gave thanks for all that God had done for him.

- [27 : 43] And the real key to an excellent spirit or walking in step with the spirit that produces an excellent spirit is a commitment to prayer without ceasing.

What we learn here, this is one little example in the Old Testament and New Testament of the consistency of praying throughout the day, of praying morning and noon and evening.

This is a practice that we as modern Christians have had less focus on, but that is very present throughout the Bible. And you can read a place like Psalm 55 where the writer says, morning, noon, and night, I cried out to the Lord.

That was the pattern, morning, noon, and night. Jesus' own testimony of going out in the early morning away from everyone else to seek prayer. How do you walk in step with the Holy Spirit and grow into a person of excellent spirit?

And the testimony is simple in Daniel. It's a resolute commitment to say, no matter what I'm asked to do, I will only worship the real God and my heart will be, I will not give my heart away.

- [28 : 45] That was Daniel 1 and 2. I will not give my heart away. And then here, and the way I protect that is because I commune with God in friendship without ceasing. Do you have a prayer life that is throughout the day?

That's the biblical testimony, the biblical call, the way to protect your heart, the way to commune with the living God. You know, that communion with God as friend is the great point of Christianity.

It's the essence of really what it's all about. Prayer is the highest pinnacle in this life until we see him face to face of real relationship with the living God. Do you pray morning, noon, and evening?

Try it. It's witness to here. It's the way of walking in step with the Spirit that we learn here. Now, lastly, briefly, hope in the man of integrity.

What happens here is that this singular devotion is going to cost Daniel everything. He's going to be cast into the den of lions. One of the things we see here is while the satraps and the officials sought to divide, compartmentalize, fragment Daniel's life, Daniel absolutely refused that.

- [29 : 58] So one of the things here is we see the satraps seek in Daniel's life a sacred, secular divide. Daniel, you can be a Christian. You can be a believer in the Lord in private, at home, but do not come out in public, right?

But Daniel, there is no such thing as the sacred, secular divide. Daniel refuses to worship anything in public. He has a public faith. The satraps wanted to separate work Daniel from worship Daniel, and they couldn't do it.

And that's a calling and an invitation to us. And so they manipulate Darius. One of the things they do in verse 7 is they go to Darius and say, all of the officials agreed about this law that anybody who worships anything but you should be thrown into the lion's den.

But of course Daniel didn't agree to that. They're manipulating, they're lying, they're carrying him along. And it's an invitation to ask as we bring this sermon to a climax, this passage to a climax.

The invitation is this. Think about this. Do I, do we, do you fragment your life, compartmentalize your life? Do you have a singular-minded devotion for the glory of God in every sphere of your existence?

- [31 : 09] Or is there fragmentation in your life? Now here's how it plays out. He gets thrown in. He gets thrown into the lion's den. It cost him everything.

And if you were around for Daniel chapter 3, you may remember that the fiery furnace, a literal furnace that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego got thrown into, also stood for more than just the furnace.

The furnace is an image across the whole Bible for suffering. And so the question there was, will you count the cost? Will you be faithful to the point of even entering the furnace? In other words, is there any hope for deliverance in the midst of your suffering in this life?

The lion's den is very similar, but it does have a slightly more precise point as well. The furnace was all about suffering. What is the lion's den pointing us to? And if you look at the details of the lion's den, you can see they put him down into a pit.

They sealed that pit with a stone. The king came and stuck his signet ring against the stone, sealing the stone with the image, the emblem of the king.

[32 : 18] What is this? The lion's den. This is a tomb. It's been sealed shut. It was sealed with the signet ring, meaning there was some type of wax seal or something put around it so that it couldn't be broken.

This is a tomb. This is calling us to the point of seeing death being wrought by the enemies of God in this passage. The ultimate cost of integrity in this story is Daniel is being brought to the point of death.

He's being put into a tomb for his faithfulness. And the hard reality that I think this story is calling us to ask or see is this.

There is loss in this life because of faithfulness that this earthly life may never heal. If you are a singularly devoted believer in the Lord that is striving to walk in decompartmentalized, holistic, a life of integrity in every sphere, there will be pressure in your life, losses in your life, that eventually will be things that this earthly life will never heal.

That only something beyond death could possibly heal. It may not be. The Nigerian Christians this week, 29 of them were murdered during worship, some of them.

[33 : 41] They entered into the lion's den. And there was a commitment to God in their lives this week that cost them everything. They entered the lion's den. It was a tomb. And there are things in this life that faithfulness to God will cost you that this earthly life cannot fix, cannot heal.

It very likely won't be like that for us. Instead, there very probably is somebody in this room, and we may face, all of us could face this at some point, where you will not climb the professional ladder that you always dreamed about because you will not comply to the pressure of the culture of the corporate entity that you work for because you simply won't gossip.

And you know how much climbing the ladder requires casting other people back down it. And that is the faithfulness. That's the pressure. You may never get that promotion because of your faithfulness.

It's entering the lion's den. There are relationships, jobs, even death itself, things that we have to face in this life because of faithfulness that this earthly life can never heal.

And that's what it means to enter into the tomb. That's Daniel's story. Even the king, you know, the king, Darius, was desperate to fix the situation. He didn't want Daniel to die, and he couldn't do it because of the law of the Medes and Persians.

[34 : 52] Not even the king of power, the man they were supposed to be worshiping, could fix the situation. There is law sometimes in this life that cannot be fixed in this life because of our faithfulness to God.

And so what happens? In Daniel chapter 3, you remember when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace? They were commanded to worship a man. They didn't.

In Daniel 6, Daniel was commanded to worship a man. He didn't. In Daniel 3, because they refused, they were cast into a tomb, into death. In Daniel 6, because he refused, he was cast into a tomb, into death.

And in Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar said, but I saw a fourth, an angel, one like the son of the gods. And in Daniel 6, Darius wakes up the next morning, and he says, Daniel, have you been delivered?

And Daniel says, yes, there was an angel. The angel. Who is this angel? This angel is the son of God.

[35 : 55] The son of God condescended in the Old Testament before he took on flesh as Jesus Christ. And he came and he saved Daniel. And the tomb, the stone, what did they lay over the seal?

The stone. And we see the stone was rolled away. Daniel walked out. How? Because the son of God came and delivered him. Jesus Christ alone can deliver us from everything.

Look, there are things in this life that you will lose because of faithfulness to Jesus. But Jesus Christ is the deliverer. He can deliver you. What is this story pointing us to?

It's asking us to see that the resurrection. What does Daniel do? He walks into a burial chamber, a tomb. It's sealed with a stone. And the next morning, as the sun rose, he walks out again.

The stone was rolled away. All because of the son of God, Jesus Christ with him. This is calling you to hope in the resurrection. To say, there are things in this life that I will lose because of faithfulness to Jesus.

[36 : 55] And only the resurrection can satisfy me. Only the resurrection can get me up out of the tomb of death. That this life may bring to me in all sorts of ways. Let me close with this.

It's not, this passage is not just saying that we can look at ourselves and say, we're like Daniel. We can be faithful to the point of great cost. And the angel of Yahweh, the true son of God, he will deliver us in resurrection.

There's one more thing that it's saying. Maybe you've thought about this already. You could say today, boy, I want to be like Daniel. I want to be a person of integrity.

But when I look at my life, I know that I'm a little bit more like the satraps than Daniel. That I opened my fingers and the water came out. You know, who among us can say, I have lost my integrity?

I've not always been an excellent worker, honest. And it's not just that Daniel is an example. In this story, Daniel is also a type. He is also a symbol.

[38 : 04] He is also pointing to something bigger than himself. Just think about it for a second. The famous commentators, the church fathers of old, they all say it. The burial of Daniel looks like the burial of Jesus himself.

It's not just that Daniel is an example. He's also a type. Daniel was cast into the pit of death. So was Jesus. The stone was sealed in the entrance. So it was for Jesus's tomb.

He came up out of death, just like Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. The stone was rolled away. Daniel, it says here that he came out of the tomb unharmed.

The gospel of John goes out of his way to say that Jesus' bones were not broken. He rose from the dead unharmed. And then why? Verse 22. It says, because God delivered him.

Because he was found blameless. Was Daniel sinless? No. He's pointing to something bigger. He was found blameless. Jesus Christ, the blameless one who entered into the tomb of death in our place and rose again on the third day.

[39 : 06] What is that all about? What is the resurrection all about? Listen, I can say it in one minute. The resurrection says that Jesus Christ died in your place for your lack of integrity.

And that every bit of injustice in your life died with him. And that in the moment of his resurrection, he rose from the dead. Why? Because he was blameless.

He deserved it. He couldn't stay dead. He paid the price for our sin. And he had to come up from the grave. Why? Because he didn't deserve to be kept down. He was blameless. He was just.

In that, in Jesus's justification, you find your justification. In the pronouncement that Jesus is blameless, you find the pronouncement you're blameless. And that means that the resurrection grounds the possibility for all of us to go from this place today and live lives of integrity.

We can look and say, I've not always been a person of integrity. But today, you can go and be like Daniel. Why? Because Jesus Christ's resurrection is your justification.

[40 : 08] So go from here and live a life of integrity all because you have hope in the resurrection that is yours because it is his.

Let us pray. Father, we ask that you would give us resurrection hope this morning. And that's our longing. That's our desire. We want to see how big, how important, how foundational the resurrection is for our lives.

So give us hope today in that whatever losses we may be facing this morning, we ask for that help and hope. In Christ's name, amen.