

Faith while in the Lions' Den – Daniel 6:1-28

I. Introduction:

- A. Do you ever feel like you're in a lion's den?
1. I mean, it's dark, and you can't see more than a step ahead, despite your flash light.
 - a. But you hear the ominous of some kind of creature near you.
 - b. And then as the beam flits around in front of you, the teeth of various problems flash back at you.
 2. Health problems, financial problems, political problems, family problems – sin problems.
 3. As a Christian, you know the Lord is with you in that lion's den, but it's still really frightening.
- B. The problem, although to varying degrees, is the same with all of us.
1. How do we face the problems of life?
 2. We are prone to defend or attack in the flesh – maybe yelling at the lions, trying to scare them off, or threatening to use the flash light in our hands like a club.
 3. But look at this scripture.
 4. Daniel didn't have a club or stick; he didn't have bear spray, friends or any other weapons.
 5. All he had was the Lord, and his trust was in Him.
- C. This chapter gives us the opportunity for a study of faith – in several ways – far more ways than we have time.
1. It involves the faith of three different people or groups.
 2. We can see **genuine** faith, **weak** faith, **false** faith and **practical** faith.
 3. And we **faith under stress**, **false** faith, **borrowed** and therefore useless faith, and **secular** useless faith.
- D. Let's begin at the most unlikely spot – **verse 4** – *“Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was **FAITHFUL**, neither was there any error or fault found in him.”*
1. Have you ever considered the origin of the word *“faithful”*?
 2. *“Faithfulness”* is defined as *“worthy of trust or belief,”* and that is the meaning of the Aramaic word *“am-AN.”*
 3. Daniel could be believed; he was trustworthy.
 4. But if we split our English word apart into its two major components, it should mean *“full of faith.”*
 5. Daniel was a trustworthy man, and why?
 6. Because he had placed his trust in the God who is faithful and true, becoming more and more like Him.
 7. And as a result of his faith, the presidents and princes of Persia had faith in what Daniel would do under the circumstances they were creating for him.
- E. The second point in our message this evening could have been about **God's faithfulness** toward His consistent servant.
1. **Deuteronomy 7:9** – *“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the **faithful** God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.”*
 2. *“God is **faithful**, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
 3. *“**Faithful** is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”*
 4. *“The Lord is **faithful**, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.”*
 5. Even if *“we believe not, yet he abideth **faithful**: he cannot deny himself.”*
- F. But to be precise, **faithfulness** is not our subject; it is **faith**.

II. Let's begin with a negative.

- A. The two presidents and most of the 120 princes hated Daniel – he stood in their way up the political ladder.
1. For some of them, they wanted the position he held, but there was no room as long as Daniel was there.
 - a. And then for others, Daniel was keeping them from their embezzlement, graft and other forms of corruption – common to big governments everywhere.
 - b. Mutually it was decided to get rid of this honest, consistent, faithful Jew.

2. So they concocted the plan of which I hope you are sufficiently aware.
 3. Their trap worked perfectly, as they knew that it would, **because** Daniel was an extremely **faithful** man.
 4. Once they had the evidence they wanted, some of those people came storming unto the king, demanding the execution of their victim.
 5. Darius fought tooth and nail to save his most faithful servant, but he had tied his own hands.
 6. So with the gleeful enemy watching every move, Darius ordered that Daniel be cast into the den of lions.
- B. Could we say that the enemy had **“faith”** in the lion’s den – that Daniel would die in that place.
1. They knew the nature of lions – they can be blood-thirsty man-killers.
 2. Perhaps these particular lions had been mistreated and taught to attack their two-legged masters.
 3. And perhaps they were being starved, so there was even more likelihood of a vicious attack.
 4. These men had **“faith”** in the lions, to carry out their nefarious plans.
- C. But no matter how **sure** something may appear to be, there is nothing worth our absolute faith but Jehovah.
1. How many people have gone into the hospital for minor or routine surgery and never walked out again?
 - a. It doesn’t matter how skilled the physician, or how well trained the technicians are.
 - b. What is paramount is the blessing of the Lord.
 2. We hear that air is the safest way to travel, but that doesn’t stop the periodic plane from falling from the sky
 3. Every year, the automobile companies tell us their cars are safer than ever before, but people still die in car wrecks every week.
 4. Secular people, like these presidents and leading men, can be trusted to put their trust in the wrong place.
 5. And in this case, God told the lions to keep their mouths shut and only to grin at those presidents.
- D. But then, those **same** men were cast into the **same** den with the **same** lions.
1. Do you suppose at that point, they trusted the lions to leave them alone, just as they had left Daniel alone?
 2. Probably not, but if they had, it would have been another false faith.
 3. How many meals were the lions fed that day? One hundred and twenty-two? Unlikely.
 - a. The scripture says that those who had accused Daniel the day before were executed by lion.
 - b. Maybe it was just the other two presidents and their families.
 4. Whatever the number of victims, the scripture says that the lions made short work of their lives, **“and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.”**
- E. Point #1 is this: nothing in this world is worthy of our absolute trust – not lions, not governments, not hatred.
1. Only faith in the Lord is worthy faith.
 2. Only the Lord is perfectly faithful and worthy of our faith.

III. There can be little doubt that Daniel was a man of **GENUINE** faith.

- A. Look and listen to him in prayer.
1. He wasn’t addressing some hunk of stone or even an intricately fashioned piece of gold or silver.
 2. The idols of the Babylonians or the Medes and Persians may have had eyes, but they couldn’t see.
 3. They may have been fashioned with ears, but they couldn’t hear the prayers of their devotees.
 4. Some of them might have had hands, but there was no way for any of them to be of help to anyone.
- B. Daniel was addressing Jehovah, the Creator of the universe and of lions.
1. He was praying to the One who sustains all things according to His power in Heaven.
 2. Daniel was praying to the God who had proven himself to thousands of Daniel’s ancestors.
 3. And Daniel had experienced miraculous answers to prayer himself.
 4. I have no doubt that he was sending his supplications to the Lord with as much confidence as he was sending his praise for Lord previous answers.

- C. I should spend more time on Daniel's faith, but I hope that as Christians you can see it and understand it.
1. Since there is nothing specifically mentioned about Daniel's faith in regard to his prayers, let's move on.
 2. There are pointed lessons in some of the other people of this chapter.

IV. Was DARIUS a man of faith?

- A. My heart wants to say that this man is in the presence of our Saviour today, but I don't have a lot of confidence
1. However there are things here which give me a little bit of hope.
 2. For example, why was Daniel made to be one of his three presidents?
 3. Apparently this man had previous knowledge of Daniel; perhaps he knew of his relationship to Nebuchadnezzar.
 4. I want to believe that Nebuchadnezzar was a child of God by faith, through the evangelism of Daniel and the spectacular ministry the Holy Spirit.
 5. If Darius knew enough about Daniel to promote him within his new regime, then perhaps he had earlier come under Daniel's testimony of the Lord.
 6. Of course, I have no evidence to that effect.
- B. But then there are some of the statements that Darius makes elsewhere in this chapter.
1. What lay behind what he said in **verse 16** –
 2. *"The king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he WILL deliver thee."*
 3. Was this the language of someone who, knowing that his friend has a fatal wound, simply says what his foolish heart desires? Was he only trying to be a little comforting?
 4. Or does he really believe what he is saying? *"Your God IS sufficiently powerful to deliver you."*
 5. Do I hear just a tiny hint of faith in the omnipotence of Jehovah?
 6. If I do, then I also hear an echo – *"Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief."*
- C. We are told that Darius spent a sleepless night following his execution of the law's demand.
1. *"Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him."*
 2. Does this mean that he felt **so guilty** that his **conscience** kept him awake?
 3. If he was awake, and he wasn't listening to music, and he wasn't watching TV, then what was he doing?
 4. Is there any likelihood that the man spent that night in prayer for the deliverance of his friend?
 5. And if he did, to Whom did he pray?
 6. My heart wants to say that if the man had the slightest respect for Daniel's testimony,
 - a. and if he had the slightest faith in the true and living God,
 - b. then he would have been **praying** to Daniel's God – **because** he was Daniel's God.
- D. Early the next morning – very early the next morning – Darius was up and rushing toward the lion's den.
1. Now, if **you** were the king, and you believed that the lions had done their worst, would you have personally gone to the zoo that morning?
 2. If I thought that my friend's blood was going to be all over the muzzles of those beasts, then I would have sent someone else to learn the truth.
 3. But Darius went to the mouth of that den because he had **hope**, perhaps a hope built upon a modicum of faith, that Daniel was still alive.
 4. Then he called down into that early morning darkness with a lamenting voice, a **lugubrious** voice...
 - a. *"O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" "Daniel I believe, answer thou mine unbelief."*
 5. And of course Daniel answered.
- E. Let's say for the sake of argument, that Darius had been listening to Daniel's testimony about the Lord.
1. He knew the stories of Nebuchadnezzar – about the dreams, and about the insanity and the cure.
 2. He had heard about Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah and their deliverance from the burning fiery furnace.

3. He knew about the divine writing on the wall and the fall of Babylon.
4. He was on the verge of throwing aside the religion of his parents and his youth, but he hadn't done it yet.
5. What is the likelihood that Daniel's deliverance from sure death would have ignited the little faith that he had into a conflagration of trust in Jehovah?
6. I would like to believe that here is another servant-king in Heaven because of the testimony of Daniel.
7. When we display the faith which is available to us, unexpected and peripheral things might take place.

V. There is an interesting additional comment made by the Holy Spirit.

- A. Notice **verse 23** – *“Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, **BECAUSE he believed in his God.**”*
1. We can conclude from this comment that Daniel went into this deadly trial **fully trusting in the Lord**.
 2. Did he expect to be **delivered UNHARMED**? I can't say that for sure.
 3. Did he expect the blessing of the Lord no matter what the lions were going to do? **Absolutely**.
 4. Daniel might have gone into the lion's den thinking, *“Tonight I'm going to get as much sleep as I did last night and on this day last week, because the Lord's rod and staff they comfort me.”*
- B. When he was going to prayer during those days after Darius had signed the decree, we can be reasonably sure that he was praying for strength to face the possible circumstances.
1. At first he may not have known what was going to happen.
 2. The Lord could have protected him so that he wasn't detected and wasn't arrested by the police.
 3. Or he could have been arrested, and the Lord somehow delivered him prior to the execution.
 4. Or God could have given him a painless death either at the claws of the lions or in some other way.
 5. Or Daniel could have trusted the Lord to bring him through the night with those lions.
 6. Other than the growling stomachs of the beasts, they might have made nice pillows for the prophet.
 7. He could have slept better than Jacob who only had stones for his bolster.
- C. When it became obvious that he was going to be cast into the lions' den, Daniel's faith in the Lord flourished.
1. The Holy Spirit says that he was *“taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, **BECAUSE he believed in his God.**”*
 2. This is not a definitive statement that Daniel believed that he would be delivered.
 3. We are only told that he believed in his God. He believed and trusted the Lord to do what is best.
 4. And in answer to his faith the Lord delivered him.
 5. *He is able, he is able to deliver thee....*

VI. There is one other thing and then I'll close.

- A. The first time that I sailed through this chapter with this theme in my mind,
1. I concluded that Darius eventually **commanded** his people **to believe** on Jehovah as Daniel did.
 2. Then I reread, just a little more slowly **verses 25 to 27**.
 3. *“Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.*
 - a. *I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.*
 - b. *He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”*
- B. Initially, I thought that Darius destroyed what little hope that I had of his genuine faith.
1. No man can command the faith of others.
 2. That is Catholic doctrine; that is Muslim doctrine; but it is completely opposed to Baptist doctrine.

3. But I was wrong about Darius.
 4. He didn't **command** people **to believe**, but only **to consider** and to have **respect** for the God of Daniel.
- C. As he said, *"Jehovah is the living God – the only living God."*
1. That sounds like true faith on Darius' part.
 2. He reached the same conclusion as Nebuchadnezzar – *"Israel's God is the true God, and His is the only eternal kingdom."*
 3. Darius' reference to *"dominion"* suggests **sovereignty over all men**.
 4. The God of Daniel has the **ability to deliver** and rescue from the most dire and dangerous circumstances.
 5. He works signs wonder, and miracles in Heaven and on earth.
 6. Just look at what He has done with Daniel.
- D. And that means that no matter what kind of lion's den we are in this evening, those monsters have no power against us except the Lord permit them.
1. We can spend the night in prayer or in sleep. We can spend the night in praise.
 2. In the way that **David** in his **Psalms** exhorts us to worship the King, Darius does the same thing with a little less finesse and a lot of spiritual immaturity.
 3. There is the possibility that David, Daniel and Darius have formed a trio in Heaven, singing praise to the King of Kings.
 4. And one of these days we may be permitted to join them in the chorus – *"Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."*