



Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

Faithful Witnesses in Fateful Days

Nov. 1st, 2020: Reformation

Daniel 6:10-12, 16-23

¹⁰ Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. ¹¹ Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. ¹² So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions' den?"

The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

¹⁶ So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. ¹⁸ Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

¹⁹ At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. ²⁰ When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

²¹ Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! ²² My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."

²³ The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

1. Daniel was carried off to captivity in Babylon in 605 B.C. when Jerusalem was first captured. The year was now 538 B.C. and Darius the Mede was king in Babylon. Daniel had continually been made a high official even as world powers changed hands. Glance at Daniel 6:3. What encouragement for your role or job in life does Daniel's example give?

After more than 6 decades of service to a foreign, ungodly government, who wouldn't be tempted to give the least possible effort and slide into a long overdue retirement? But Daniel continued to carry out his vocation faithfully, glorify God, and make use of the opportunities that God gave him to proclaim the true God.

2. 1 Peter 2:12 says "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." Daniel certainly lived a good life among the pagans. Why did it have the opposite effect?

God has given us good work to do, that it might be a testimony to those around us about the true God. But Jesus' warning also remains true, "I am sending you like sheep among wolves. You will be handed over on my account" (Matt. 10:16-18) There will always be evil people who hate what is good, and we carry out God's work in spite of them.

3. Both Daniel and Martin Luther faced first commandment tests with life or death consequences. Though our tests might not be so physically drastic, they are spiritual significant! What are the first commandment tests we face on a daily basis?

Our daily spiritual tests can mean spiritual life or death for us. Do we give in and sin against our conscience, though we know it's wrong? Do we meander through the day in spiritual complacency or neglect? What rules our time and hearts? Our job? Our phone? Netflix? The kids?

extracurriculars? Our hearts are worship machines! They cannot not worship. But are they worshipping God or idols?

4. Even when forbidden to pray, Daniel carried on his custom of kneeling to pray and give thanks toward Jerusalem three times per day. What lessons might we learn from his example for our daily spiritual life?

I may technically be able to claim praying three times a day, but what good does an absent minded, thankless “common table prayer” before meals do if that is all it is. Daniel has specific times of day. He had a specific place. He had a routine and he distinguished his prayer time by physically kneeling down. He returned thanks along with his requests, not just incessant asking. When the day of temptation came, his pattern was so engrained in him, there was no chance of abandoning it.

5. What is amazing about the way Daniel continues to address his ruler, even from the lion’s den? How might this inform the way you will speak about your government officials in this coming election week?

Daniel’s politeness to the king who just unjustly condemned him is amazing! Who of us wouldn’t have given King Darius a piece of mind after surviving the night in the lions’ den? The president will be elected this week. If it’s not the one you want, how will you speak about him? With scorn? What will you post about him? We owe honor and respect to God’s representatives in our government.

6. Check out Daniel 6:20,26. What do Daniel’s faithful actions and witness cause his king to learn about his God?

King Darius, the polytheistic pagan, calls Daniel’s God the living God.

“I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

“For he is the living God
and he endures forever;
his kingdom will not be destroyed,
his dominion will never end.
²⁷ He rescues and he saves;
he performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth.
He has rescued Daniel
from the power of the lions.”

We by no means consider King Darius to have become a believer in the true God alone, but he at least recognizes something true about him. Our faithful witness is not without effect. Notice that even when a king decrees that people should reverence Daniel’s God, this can’t produce true faith.

7. Kings and rulers cannot save! For what reasons does our faithful witness in our own fateful days become all the more important?

Jesus commanded us to make disciples by baptizing and teaching. Only those means of using the Gospel can make more disciples of Christ. Legislation or Rulers cannot work in the hearts of people. Kings and Rulers have been given the sword and laws to manage people for an orderly society. The work of the Church is to faithfully witness to the truth of the only God who saves. Our world is hearing incessant babbling and worthless, godless voices from everyone. We have the one voice that can make a difference. “We believe, therefore we speak!”