

(Daniel: The Man God Uses #6) Life of Christ

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores how Daniel's life exemplifies the qualities of a person God uses, emphasizing commitment, integrity, and the importance of prayer.

Duration: 1:04:43

Scripture: Micah 5:7-8

Topics: "Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the dream of a great image and a little stone from the book of Daniel. The image represents the world system, while the little stone symbolizes Jesus coming from heaven to destroy the foundations of the kingdoms of this world. The speaker emphasizes that God uses men and women who choose Him and set their hearts on Him. The sermon also highlights the importance of manifesting Christ in one's life and being a testimony wherever one goes.

Transcript

Daniel, tape 6, chapter 6, Life of Christ. Again, in your precious word that you would write these truths in our hearts and give us clear eyes to see through unto the Lord himself. Deliver us from man's ideas and show us Christ in a clear way in order that we might be like him and changed.

Guide us, we pray. In Jesus' name we claim it. Amen.

Okay, I'll ask you to welcome to Daniel chapter 6, if you would. Daniel chapter 6. I'll remind you again that we're looking at the first six chapters of Daniel, but really we're not studying the book of Daniel. It would be an entirely different approach if we were looking at the message of the book itself.

But we're looking sort of biographically. We're looking at the man Daniel. In fact, the man Daniel and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

And to really understand God's heart in these six chapters, we need to remember that Daniel is a book of missions. Daniel is a book of evangelism. Daniel is a book on soon winning.

And in this book, God is making himself known. Making himself known to kings, to kingdoms, and to the ends of the earth. The book of Daniel sort of takes us into the secret councils of God's heart.

Because it tells us how God makes himself known. See, the book of Daniel covers the age of the Gentiles. It's a book of history.

And God gives us an object lesson picture. What God did once here, so we could see it, is what God does all the time. He's constantly making himself known.

And in God's revelation of how he makes himself known, the spotlight falls on these men. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And I've suggested to you that the first six chapters, in order, present the spiritual principles on what's involved in being a man of God, or a woman of God, or instruments of God.

These are the kind of men God uses. These are the kind of men God always uses. Now, we've looked at the first five chapters, and I don't want to spend a lot of time in review, but let me just mention the four principles that we've looked at, and then we'll try to clinch it tonight, as God graces us.

In the final analysis, when it's all over, we'll notice that it's really only one principle. But we break it down into four or five, just in order to be able to analyze it and handle it. The first chapter is illustrated in chapter 1a.

It says, Daniel purposed in his heart. And in the original language, it means he set his heart. The first principle we just said is choosing God.

These men set themselves. It's a direction. It's an attitude.

These men right at the beginning said, and how they came to that, God brought them to that somewhere. I don't know if it was their mother's training, or hard times, or whatever. Maybe they just stumbled on the truth.

But they came to the place, and they said, all we want to do is please Him. That's the beginning. We got to begin with a purpose.

And that was their purpose. And they said, from now on, we just live to please the Lord. We don't want to defile ourselves, no matter what else.

If God is happy, that's it. I just live for His joy. Live for His satisfaction.

Because they set their hearts in chapter 1, everything began to happen to these men. And they became God's instruments in His program of redemption to bring the knowledge of God to the earth. Chapter 2. Chapter 1 is choosing Jesus.

Chapter 2 is the revelation of Jesus. Remember, chapter 2 has to do with that dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The dream where there was an image, and a little song, and wind, and a great mountain.

The image was this world system. We call it the flesh, or self, the kingdom of man. And that was pictured with this great image, with a head of gold, and arms of silver, and thighs of brass, and legs of iron, and so on.

This huge creature. And then the Bible says, a little stone made without hands. Our Lord Jesus came from heaven, and struck at the foundation of the kingdoms of this world.

And as He struck at the foundations of the kingdoms of this world, they began to crumble. And as they crumbled, the wind came, and blew the trash away. And then the little stone became a rock, and the rock became a hill.

The hill became a mountain, and the mountain filled the earth. And the message of that is just this, that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to come into our lives, and break down the kingdom of this world. And as He breaks down the kingdom of this world, the Holy Spirit, the wind, is going to take the trash away, and blow it all away.

And then the Lord Jesus is going to grow and increase. And after a while, He's going to fill the whole landscape of your life. The kingdom of this world is replaced with Christ the King, and the kingdom of God.

And so, first you set your heart at this one, and please Him. Then God begins transforming you by the revelation of Christ. That's chapter 2. Then chapter 3, we call the Manifestation of Christ.

This is the three men in the fiery furnace. Now remember, the whole point of the book, God is revealing Himself. Missions.

God's making Himself known. And in the context, God's reaching down and striving with Nebuchadnezzar. Shadrach doesn't know that.

Meshach doesn't know that. Abednego doesn't know that. They're not trying to be missionaries.

They're not trying to be evangelists. They're just knowing God. They've set their hearts to please Him.

And they're seeing Christ, and they're being changed. And because they're being changed, they're walking in liberty, freedom, and in fellowship with God. And God used that to turn Nebuchadnezzar's head.

And when Nebuchadnezzar saw them in the furnace free, not being bound, the ropes were the last hold this world had on them. And when Nebuchadnezzar saw them walking free and in fellowship with the fourth person, Christ became manifest. And Nebuchadnezzar started to see Christ.

Again, they didn't try to show them Christ. They're just walking in liberty. They're just walking in freedom.

They're just walking in fellowship with Christ. And Christ was manifest. Last time we looked at chapters 4 and 5 together.

We call that the fragrance of Christ. Chapter 4 is positive, and then chapter 5 is negative. First you choose Christ.

Then you see Christ in the Bible. Then Christ is manifest. And then the fragrance of Christ begins to be wafted abroad every place you go.

New Testament words it this way, for some it's a savor, a fragrance of life unto life, and others the same fragrance is from death to death. In chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar smelled their life, and he came to know the Lord. Chapter 5, Belshazzar smelled the same life, and instead of coming to know the Lord, he found death.

Now to clinch, to wrap up that last principle, I'm going to ask you to turn to one passage, and then we'll go into our new material. I'm going to ask you to turn to the book of Micah, please. Micah, chapter 5. It's the

same truth, but just another way to express it.

Micah, chapter 5. See, I had my bookmark in there. I lost it, and I'll never find that. There it is.

Micah, chapter 5. I'd like to read a couple of verses. Verse 7, it says, Then the remnant of Jacob will be among many peoples like dew from the Lord, like showers on vegetation which do not wait for man or delay for the sons of man. Isn't that a precious verse on our ministry, our influence? The remnant will be like dew from the Lord.

We refresh people. We bless people. We satisfy.

But then look at verse 8. And the remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, among many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, which, if he passes through, tramples down and tears, and there is none to rescue. Usually when we think about being used by the Lord, in our hearts we're thinking, I want to be used by the Lord as dew. In other words, I want to bring a blessing.

Well, here's the next verse. The remnant is also like a lion that tears apart. Sometimes your ministry is negative.

And sometimes the same remnant is going to be used to bring judgment. And that's all part of the fragrance of Christ. Again, Daniel and his friends had no idea that God was using them in order to make him known.

They were just knowing God, pleasing God, living in the Lord. And as they lived in the Lord, sometimes they were dew. Sometimes they were lions.

But they just knew God. They didn't try to be dew and they didn't try to be lions. I'll encourage you folks, don't try to be a blessing.

I tell you, I tried many times to be a blessing and I tried to be dew. I remember when I first came to know the Savior, my poor family. A lot of my family is unsaved.

And I'd go home for Christmas vacation or something like that. And I just determined I was going to be dew. And I'm going to bless them all.

But it didn't work. You know, just man trying to do it. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, they just knew God and God used them in these ways.

Alright, that brings us then to our new material. I'll ask you to turn to chapter 6. If I'm knowing Jesus, I've set my heart, chapter 1. I'm seeing him in the book, chapter 2. Christ is being manifest in my life, chapter 3. The fragrance of Christ is in every place I go, for good and for bad, chapter 4 and 5. What follows the fragrance of Christ? What's next? What could possibly be after that? The principle is in chapter 6. Probably one of the most famous chapters. You know, the furnace is famous and then this lion's den is famous.

I'm going to ask you to follow along as we read together chapter 6. In fact, there's a number of us. Why don't we all take, or as many as want to, several verses. Somebody read and then when you stop somebody else will read and so on until we get through chapter 6. Okay, those are the facts.

Now let me just fill in a little to get a clear picture and then we'll look at some of the great principles. Glance again if you would at verse 1. It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 set traps over the kingdom. The king is now Darius.

The point is this, that it's been a long time since chapter 1. That's what God's illustrating. You see, when the chapter 1 begins, Daniel is about 14 years old. He's just a teenager.

When chapter 1 begins, Jehoiakim in the kingdom of Judah was the king. And then you remember Babylon came and Nebuchadnezzar became the king. And then it's not clear whether there were two or three kings after him, but we know his kingdom lasted 70 years.

And then after him Persia came and Darius, that's who we're talking about now. And then look at the last verse. So Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Silas, the Persian.

Then God's calling attention to this. The book starts with Daniel about 14 years old, and he's gone through this king and that king, this kingdom and that kingdom, and now he's in his third kingdom. Daniel is in his upper 80s or his early 90s by now.

He's an old man. And you're not going to understand the spiritual principle of this chapter unless you understand this is the chapter on Daniel the elder. Daniel the mature.

Daniel the man of God who is now in his 90s probably. We'll call him 90 just as an average. Whatever this man's been doing, he's been doing it for 90 years.

This is not some upstart we're going to look at tonight. This is not just some little principle. God's wrapping it up.

God's saying I showed you what it was like when a teenager sets his heart to know God. And I showed you how through the revelation of Christ he's changed. And I showed you how Christ then is manifest through him.

And I showed you how the fragrance of Christ is rafted through the world through him. Now God says I want to show you what he looks like in maturity. I want to show you the final picture of the kind of a person I used.

I want to wrap the whole thing up. And when you get this chapter and the principle of this chapter, you have the whole picture. That's the end.

That's the kind of a man God uses. Who sets his heart, who sees Christ, who manifests Christ, who Christ is the fragrance and whatever the principle is in chapter 6. So understand then this is Daniel the elder. This is Daniel in his maturity.

Now rather than just state the principle, let me play with it a little and try to pull it out. The occasion of this principle was this promotion of Daniel to become one of the top dogs in the whole kingdom. It was for the purpose of governing and for the purpose of taxation that the Persians divided up the kingdom into provinces.

And according to Daniel chapter 6, Persia was divided into 120 provinces. When you read the book of Esther you're a little deeper into the same time period. And 120 weren't enough so they divided it a little more into 127 provinces.

But it's the same nation, Persia. Now over each province there was a ruler called a satrap. So you had 120 provinces, 120 satraps.

And then over the satraps, you don't get this in Daniel, but we find out from Esther there were seven princes. So the satraps had to answer to the prince and then the prince had to answer to the commissioner. And you find that there were three commissioners.

So you've got the satraps over the 120 provinces, over them you've got seven princes, and over them you've got three commissioners. Daniel, you'll notice, is one of the three commissioners. And the whole story has to do with this.

He's about to be promoted to the chief commissioner. In other words, second to the king. He is really going to be exalted to a high position in this nation.

And chapter 6, verse 3, Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. Since the principle that we're going to hone in on revolves around Daniel's testimony as an old saint, I want to spend a couple of minutes looking at this testimony. You know, just as a summary statement, he says in verse 3, Daniel distinguished himself, he possessed an extraordinary spirit.

But that expressed itself. You notice that in this chapter Daniel is hated. And you almost wonder why he's hated.

On the surface you say, well that's obvious. Jealousy. Envy.

This promotion caused great jealousy. Well that's true, but that's off the surface. It's a little bit deeper than that.

This isn't just one man being selected for a job and bumping off the others. Beating the next fellow out of the job. Their hatred was deeper than Daniel just being exalted.

They hated Daniel for the same reason that the Pharisees hated the Lord Jesus. The Bible says in John, because he left no cloak for their sin. What does that mean? He left no cloak for their sin.

I don't want to take all the time to prove it, but you'll see as the principle develops. They hated Daniel because Daniel was holy. They hated Daniel because Daniel was pure.

They hated Daniel because Daniel was like Jesus. He was conformed to Jesus. He was righteous.

And anytime you get someone that's righteous living among someone that's not righteous, you're going to get hated because your life condemns theirs. And the more they see you, the more they feel self-condemned. Through the years God's people have been amazed to read verse 4. They began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs.

But they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption in as much as he was faithful. And no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. Now just think about that for a moment.

What a verse. In politics? Don't forget this man's a politician. And he's clean.

That's amazing. No malversation. Malversation is fraudulent practices in public places.

He was pure. No inattention to public duties. No payoffs.

No impartiality. No prejudice. No cutting corners.

No misappropriation of public funds. No sinful affairs on the side. It's amazing testimony.

Now wouldn't you think a man with this kind of a testimony, wouldn't you think he'd be universally loved? What a tremendous guy. To be so wise to be able to conduct the affairs of a nation that big. To be so pure that no error is imputed to him.

That you can't even find a flaw in his conduct. He's strong. And you'd think he'd be loved.

But the opposite's true. He's hated because he's so holy. Now there was something about Daniel which is sort of the principle and his secret.

How do you live so pure? How do you live so faithful? So consistent? So holy? You gotta remember these guys are not only looking at his life, they're digging. They're not looking for skeletons in the closet. They're digging in his life.

Seems so different today. You know these folks that call themselves men of God, you don't even have to dig to find inappropriate behavior. It's right on the top.

Why was Daniel different? What was it about him? But his testimony's even greater than that. His testimony is not only we can't find anything that this man has done wrong, his testimony's great because they concluded it's useless to dig. Not only did we not find anything wrong, we never will.

That was the testimony. Imagine that. We'll never find anything against this man to defile himself.

You see, Daniel's testimony was not so great because they didn't discover sin, but because they knew he wouldn't sin in the future. That's the point of verse 5. We'll not find any ground of accusation against Daniel unless we find it against him in regard to the law of his God. In other words, they said this man's pleading God.

And there's no way he's going to defile himself not to please God, even if he's pulled by it, even if he loses. This man's not going to enlarge his bank account and displease God. This man said, I'm pleasing God.

And we can't find anything. All he wants to do is please God. He's not going to barge, even if his skin is at stake.

That's quite a testimony. They knew he was so attached to the Lord that he wouldn't sin. Daniel was so faithful and so consistent and so true that his enemies counted on his faithfulness in order to entrap him.

He had to be that faithful. You know, first when I read verse 10, when Daniel knew the document was signed, he entered into the house. Now the roof chamber had windows open toward Jerusalem.

And he continued kneeling down three times a day, praying and giving thanks to God as he had done previously. I'll be honest with you, when I read that, I thought that was a little ostentatious at first. And I thought, great day.

You know, that smacks of religion a little bit, rather than relationship with God. How is that different from the Pharisees? Pray out in the streets so they'll be seen of men. Isn't that what he's doing? Praying in an

open window to be seen of men? How is that different from the Mohammedans who face Mecca when they pray? That religious capital of Saudi Arabia? Why did he make this public show? Couldn't Daniel have reasoned, you know, all I want to do is please God and it doesn't matter to the Lord.

If I'm out here where everybody can see me, I can pray in my heart. I can pray in my closet. I don't have to lose my relationship with God.

I'll just go in secret and pray. They can't stop me there. They can make a law, I can't pray.

But in my heart I can still pray. Couldn't he have said that? Or couldn't he have reasoned this way? I don't want to throw away a great opportunity. You see, I have an influential position.

I'm way up here in the government. And I have pull. I have ropes I can pull.

I'd probably be more valuable to the people of God alive in the palace than dead in a lion's den. And so maybe just to keep my opportunity, I'll just pray in private. Wasn't it a little bit reckless for him to get up there when he knew the consequences? You've got to remember Daniel's heart if you're going to understand this.

You see, Daniel was just set on honoring God. He just wanted to please God. He wasn't thinking about anything else.

He wasn't trying to save his life. And he wasn't trying to be a witness. That's not why he did that.

He just wanted to honor God. Live for God's happiness. And in Daniel's heart, God's honor was at stake now.

He wouldn't please God if he didn't do that. Because if Daniel had changed his behavior, it says that he was continually doing this. And if he had changed his behavior, his enemies would have gotten the idea that their gods triumphed.

And they wouldn't have seen that God is better than life. That's one of the revelations that Daniel showed. That he wasn't afraid of anything.

That his God and relationship to his God was better than life. And he wanted to honor God and so he did that. In this connection, do you realize that any opportunity you ever lose because you have to dishonor God, or compromise in some way, was not an opportunity in the first place? You see how that's so? It's not an opportunity if you have to dishonor God.

He's only ever called you to live unto him and to live unto his heart. Daniel's act looks like religion to me. I look at verse 10 and I say, ooh, that just sort of makes me recoil.

And I say, why does he do that? It didn't look like religion to them. You know, when you read the record, it didn't look like religion to them. They not only could see him, they could hear him.

And I'll bet if I were those sack traps and those commissioners, and I was listening in, and he started to pray, I didn't know what he'd be praying. He said, oh Lord, a decree's been signed against me. And I'm asking for your help.

And here I am, and I'm scared, and I'm praying, and they're looking, and I just pray for grace. That's how I pray. And that's how I think a lot of Christians would pray.

You know what he was doing? It says he was giving thanks. He was praising God. For what? He was praising God.

That's what he was doing. He wasn't even thinking about the situation. He's living unto the Lord.

That was a praise meeting. That was a praise guy. He was rejoicing and giving thanks unto God.

And then when the king later on was ready to throw him in a lion's den, he didn't think it was religion. This verse sheds a lot of light on Christian service. Chapter 6, verse 16.

Before we read that, I don't know what Daniel's duties were. I couldn't find any place that listed the duties of satraps. I have a lot of books, but my books didn't tell me the duties of satraps.

I don't know what his day was like. Did he start at 7 o'clock? And then did he open the mail and read the mail? And what does a satrap do? Does he read all the reports from the princes and then all the reports from the other satraps? What does a commissioner of satraps do? I don't know what he does, but I have an idea. That he was pretty much involved in politics through the day.

Would you agree with that? I mean, many hours in politics. Whatever the business was, I don't think he had much time to do what you and I would call Christian service. He didn't have much time for that.

Pretty busy man. He's involved in politics from morning till night. He's way up there.

And yet, look what the king says. The king spoke and said to Daniel, You're a God whom you constantly serve. Then, there's no time to serve God.

There's no time to do what we would think of as Christian service. He's busy in politics all day long. And then after his own death, he said it again in verse 20.

Daniel, servant of the living God, Has your God whom you constantly serve been able to deliver you from the lion's den? You see, I come and I look at verse 10 and I go, Ah, religion. That's just religion. That's a form.

It's getting down on your knees and praying out loud in front of the window so everybody can see you. That sounds like religion. That's to me thousands of years later.

Not to them. Oh, that king looked at him and he said, Oh, this man's serving the living God. Daniel, the God that you constantly serve, that wasn't form.

Not to them. That wasn't religion. When they heard that man giving thanks and praise to God in that situation, that was life.

That wasn't religion. That wasn't form. That was life.

Verse 10. When Daniel knew the document was signed, he entered his house and he just blessed the Lord. It wasn't form at all.

See, that's the beauty of Daniel's life. The simplicity of the whole thing. They knew he didn't sin.

They knew he wouldn't sin. They saw a relationship with the living God. There's a man that probably, as far as we look at Christian service, never had a chance to do anything.

Maybe exactly right. It serves a lot of right on what real service is. Serves God all day long, even in the midst of his duties.

I wish God would help me communicate to you the wonder of this man's life. He's walking with the living God. He's not trying to witness.

You know, we're studying a book on missions. And we're now in the last section where God's going to wrap up. God makes himself known through a man like this.

And Daniel is the kind of a man that God's using as a missionary. And honestly, he doesn't even know it. I don't want to cut Daniel down in any way.

But I think sometimes when we read these things, we've heard so much that we slap on our own ideas or something we've heard. And we slap on more than is in the record. I don't want to be more biblical than the Bible.

I don't want to take anything from Daniel. But I don't want to slap on any misconceptions either. In order to illustrate this, picture with me, I'm a reporter for the Jerusalem Times.

And I'm going to interview this man, Daniel. And so I go up to him and I say, you're quite an elderly man. He said, yeah, I've walked with God through the years.

90 years old. I said, boy, Daniel, you've got quite a reputation. Your name encourages me, Daniel.

Someday I'm going to name my son after you. And I did. Tell me, Daniel, you're 90 years old now and I'm writing a report.

What do you think your contribution to the history of redemption has been? Come on, Daniel, what's your life's work? Tell me exactly your ministry. Tell me your life's work, your service. What are your accomplishments? What monuments have you left out of your wonderful life? And this 90-year-old man would go back, I think, and he'd say, let me think now.

Oh, I remember, I interpreted two dreams. Let me think. I ate vegetables.

I interpreted two dreams. I ate vegetables. I praised God three times a day.

Oh, yeah, once I interpreted some off-the-wall words. I don't know. That's about it.

That's all I did. And I'd be writing a report. I'd say, wait a minute, 90 years, Daniel, it was a man of God, Daniel, look at the record.

What did he do? Tell me, what did he do? He interpreted dreams. He ate vegetables. He didn't even make tapes.

He didn't even speak at a conference. He didn't teach at a Bible school. This guy wasn't even ordained.

What did Daniel do? Well, you come right down to it. What did he do? He said, well, he read a book. Well, that's true.

We're studying the book. And in the book, we find out that he interpreted two dreams. That he ate vegetables.

He prayed three times a day. He interpreted four words off-the-wall. And that's his whole ministry.

We don't think of that as Christian service. When you think of a man as Christian service, he starts a ministry. He's into some kind of a great work.

You see, Daniel wasn't trying to do anything for God. You've got to understand that. Because he saw that God had no needs.

God didn't need Daniel. God didn't need Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego. He didn't need us.

He saw that God was self-sufficient. I pray God will give us a vision of God as self-sufficient. Because you can't know God as all-sufficient until you know him as self-sufficient.

Until you see that God has no needs. And that he's the source and father of everything. He's self-sufficient.

As soon as you see that, then you begin to know him as all-sufficient. And he begins to pour himself out in his all-sufficiency. Now, that's what Daniel's testimony was.

And they were scratching their heads. They said, there's something about this guy. He didn't sin.

He's not going to sin. He's never going to sin. There's something about him that's driving us crazy.

And here's what it was. They knew he didn't sin. They knew he wouldn't sin.

But they didn't know why. They didn't understand the secret of his life. And it seems like the principle of this chapter revolves around that heart question.

And that's why people are hated. When they're hating you and persecuting you, in their hearts, they're trying to understand you. They're trying to see through to God.

They're trying to understand what makes a Christian tick. Let me put it this way, in order to enter into the truth of this. Before Daniel was thrown in the lion's den, physically, he was already in the lion's den.

He just couldn't see it. Before the lion's den, they knew he didn't sin and wouldn't sin, but they didn't know why. After the lion's den, they also knew why.

Why wasn't Daniel torn to shreds? Why wasn't Daniel ripped to pieces? I'll tell you folks, politics is a lion's den. Long before he got to the lion's den, he was in the lion's den. Secular education is a lion's den.

The factory is a lion's den. Military service is a lion's den. Living in some families is a lion's den.

Churches are a lion's den. Life is a lion's den. And that's what was bothering these people.

How come this man's not torn to shreds? How can this man survive? How come all the people are falling away and this man's not falling? Ninety years old, he's still true. Ninety years old, he's still faithful. He's still consistent.

He can't be bribed. What is there that bothers him? He torn to shreds like everybody else? That was the nagging question in their hearts. God's going to bring him now to the revelation of Christ.

If God wants to teach you something, He's going to put you in a difficult place. That's how God teaches you. If He's going to reveal Himself, He's going to put you in an impossible place.

And so you always know if God's just trying to teach you something or show Himself. Because the Bible teaches if He's just going to teach you some truth, it's just a difficult place. But if He's going to reveal Himself, He puts you in an impossible place.

And in order to wrap up the message of Daniel's life, He puts him into this impossible place. Let me state the principle. I see Christ, chapter 1. Christ is revealed and unchanged, chapter 2. Christ is manifest, chapter 3. The fragrance of Christ is wafted abroad, chapter 4 and 5. Now chapter 6. May God give us light on this.

Here's the Apostle's way of stating it. Philippians 3.10. You know that? That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, be made conformable to His death. You realize that Paul was 30 years old in Christ when he wrote that? After 30 years, what's a Christian, Paul? What's Esai? 30 years! That I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, be made conformable to His death.

There's something about the way Daniel 6 is written that is not an accident. There's a picture here that is intended by the Holy Spirit. I'm not surprised to see that God's going to wrap this all up and talk about lions.

You know how the Bible uses the word lions? 1 Peter 5.8, you know that verse? Satan is a roaring lion, seeking that we may devour. As you may know, Psalm 22 is a Calvary Psalm. It's a Psalm about the cross.

In fact, the first verse, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And all through Psalm 22, you see the cries of the cross. And that Psalm you read, that it was prophesied that they'd pass by the cross and hiss at the Savior and mock Him. It's in Psalm 22 that we read His bones will be out of joint.

And we read about His thirst and that they pierce His hands and His feet. And that they part His garments with lots. In that Psalm that describes the cross, we read these words.

Then open wide their mouth at me as a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, save me from the lion's mouth. When Jesus was on the cross, He prayed, save me from the lion's mouth.

I'm not surprised to read about lions. And I'm not surprised to read about the law that cannot be broken. It's not an accident that God engineered all of this situation at a time when the Medes and the Persians had this strange law.

Once the King made a law and sealed it, He couldn't veto it. It couldn't be changed. It couldn't be altered.

No one could break it. It's the law that no one could get out of. It's not a surprise to me that Daniel had to be thrown to the lions.

And it's not a surprise to me that Daniel had to be thrown to the lions into an inviolable law. What a picture of death. The law that can't be changed or broken.

And Daniel was just thrown into death. It's not only coincidence that after he was thrown, here he is thrown to the lions into a law that can't be changed or broken. Chapter 617, what did they do then? They rolled a great stone over the pit.

That's not an accident. There's a picture here. And then what did they do after they rolled the stone over the pit? Chapter 617, they sealed it with the official seal.

Does that sound like anything in the New Testament? The Lord Jesus thrown to the lions into a law that cannot be broken. A stone rolled in front of it, sealed with a seal, the official government seal. God is painting a picture.

And Daniel is being conformed to the death of Christ here. Because he's going to come out of this pit in resurrection life. That's the message of this chapter.

Matthew 27, 66 describes how they put the rock over his tomb and sealed it and so on. God in this chapter, you look to Jesus, you seek Christ, you manifest Christ, the fragrance of Christ. You've got to end up with this.

The life of Christ. That's what it's all about. The life of Christ.

And Daniel as an old man was living now in the resurrection power. By the life of God himself. That's the final stage.

Daniel lived by the life of God. That's as far as you can go. That's maturity.

That's the end. Daniel is now conformed to the death of Christ. And he's living this supernatural life.

He's victorious in the midst of everything. Now there's a doctrine in the Bible, a very precious doctrine. Which is called the perseverance of the saints.

Have you ever heard of that? Perseverance of the saints. You almost have to look at that now because Daniel is 90 years old. The man has persevered.

I mean here he is, 90 years old and he's still going strong. What it means is this. That true saints are going to continue to the end.

They're going to make it. They're going to persevere to the end. One of the beauties of this chapter is that Daniel, the old saint, has persevered to the end.

What you saw in Daniel as a young man, you saw in him as a middle-aged man. And what you saw as a middle-aged man, you're now seeing as an old man. The years didn't change him.

The changes didn't change him. He's persevered. Now I love that doctrine, but I honestly believe it's misnamed.

The Bible doesn't call it perseverance of the saints and it shouldn't be perseverance of the saints. My apologies to John Knox and John Owen and John Calvin and Charles Spurgeon and all the other giants that have expounded on this perseverance of the saints. I recognize the doctrine, but perseverance of the saints, that sounds too much like work.

Perseverance. When I hear somebody say persevere, I don't know what registers in your mind, but I picture this athlete sweating and his veins popping out and the ribbons in view and he's straining down the field and somebody's yelling, Persevere! Persevere! That's the perseverance of the saints. And that's where Daniel sheds light on this truth.

Now they threw Daniel in the lion's den because he was holy. They didn't exactly know in their deep hearts the secret of his life, the secret of his resurrection, his conformity, his rest. All they knew was Daniel was different.

After the lion's den, they're going to know the secret. Now I think the artist has done damage to this chapter. I love when people paint Bible pictures, but boy, I got something I don't appreciate when it's not true to the Bible.

And usually you see this picture, you see a young man standing in a lion's den with about two or three lions and so on. It's not that way at all. First of all, it wasn't a young man.

Daniel was an old man. Ninety or more than that. So whatever painting you're going to make, make him bald or gray-headed or something like that.

Show that he's an old man. And I doubt he was standing. I don't know, you throw a 90-year-old man in a hole, I don't think he's going to be standing there.

Maybe he will if he's rugged enough. We were not lions. I don't think he'd be standing there if you threw him in a pit.

And there weren't two or three lions. Look at chapter 6, verse 1. How many sack traps were there? See, according to this, there were 120 sack traps. How many commissioners? Verse 2. Three commissioners.

That's 123. But you've got to subtract Daniel because he wasn't involved in that. So 122.

Who agreed to throw Daniel in the lion's den? And the answer is verse 7. All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects, the sack traps, the high officials, the governors, have consulted together. That's at least 150 people. 150 people.

And then after Daniel was delivered, what did the king do? Look at verse 24. The king gave orders and they brought those men that had maliciously accused Daniel. That's 150 men, at least.

And cast them and their children and their wives into the lion's den. Folks, we're talking at least 300 people. At least 300 people.

And what do we read? Look at verse 24. They had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered and crushed all their bones. You follow what I'm saying? 300 people were thrown into the den and these lions got them all before they hit bottom.

That's not three busy lions. You can't throw in 300 people and have only three lions eat them before they hit bottom. You've got at least 300 lions or more than that.

You've got to picture this, Dan. This is an old man and he's thrown into, not three or four lions, three or four hundred lions. Recently I saw on the National Geographic, they did a special on a pride of lions.

Did you see that? And it was a big pride, they said, 30 lions. That's a big pride. And my, you should have seen the meat.

In their eating frenzy? It was worse than a shark frenzy. I don't know how you all feel about the fact that I saw Joss, and some of you might be upset about that, but when I saw that shark eating frenzy, that was nothing compared to what these lions did. Great deal.

They threw that meat in there. When that thing was all over, they were licking each other's wounds. They were tearing each other apart.

You've got to, if you're going to understand the great principle here, you've got to get the accurate picture. And what a graphic picture it is. Can you picture this old saint, man of God, 90 year old man, being thrown in with three or four hundred lions? What chance does he have? What's going to keep him from being torn to shreds, ripped to pieces? Now let me ask you this.

Would you call that the perseverance of the saints? Throwing this old man in among the lions, and look at him persevere. Right there, he got persevered. Samson persevered with the jawbone of the donkey.

That's perseverance. Well this man wasn't persevering. It's the preservation of the saints.

Not the perseverance of the saints. That's the whole point of this. Before, in life, in politics, in business, in everyday conduct, this man would have been torn apart, but they didn't know why.

How can this man live this way? Then they throw him in the lions' den and suddenly God pulls the veil apart and they see spiritual things. And they begin to understand. And what do they see? Somebody's keeping him.

That was his secret. Somebody's keeping him. That's why he wasn't torn apart all those years.

Because somebody was there. There was another one. Somebody was keeping him.

Verse 22. My God sent his angel. Shut the lions' mouths.

Verse 26. He's the living God who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. God is showing this great secret of this man's life.

Here's a man now. Ninety years old. He's in the last chapter of his life.

And God unfurls the great reality. You set your heart to please God. You begin to see him and you're transformed by the revelation of Christ.

Christ is manifest. You walk in liberty and fellowship with him. The testimony is wafted abroad.

And what are you now? Forty? Fifty? Six? How old are you? Don't answer. Just think. Ninety? You gonna make it? Sure you are.

Somebody's keeping you. Say perseverance. No, no.

Preservation. It's the preservation of the saints. This is one of the great chapters on the keeping power of God.

God is watching over us and God's keeping us. Hebrews 11.33 says, By faith he shut the mouths of the lions. But Daniel 6 says, The angel of the Lord shut the mouth of the lions.

Well, which is it? Was it faith? Or was it God? Exactly right. Exactly right. Yes, both.

By faith Daniel trusted God to keep him. That's the whole point. Daniel was living by the life of God.

He just rested in God. I get a kick out of verse 18. It says that the king spent the night fasting and sleep.

Fled from him. The king didn't get much rest that night. The man of God did.

The man of God did. Daniel was resting. Here's a foretaste of the lion laying down with the lamb.

This man of God just laid down with those lions. Maybe used one of them for a pillow. Who knows? Daniel was resting in God.

Daniel didn't try to witness. Daniel didn't try to minister. Daniel didn't try to rest.

Daniel didn't try to get delivered. Daniel just committed himself to the Lord. And the Lord took care of him.

You look at this chapter and you say, What's the great revelation of Christ? First you look at it and you say, He's the lion tamer. He's the one that can hold Satan and evil and tame the lion. That's true as far as it goes.

But that's not the point here. God is revealed as the life of Daniel. That was his life.

Daniel was dead. You can't give any more dead than Daniel was dead. They threw him in a pit.

And he was locked in by a law that can't be broken. Except it was broken. Because he lived by the power of God.

He lived by the keeping power. He came out of that place. He lived a resurrection life.

Well, that's the complete picture. That's the man God uses. And that's his story if he lives to be a hundred.

It never changes. In every age, every generation, it's the same. The world is really moved.

By those who choose Jesus. Just want to please Him. Who are seeing Christ in the book.

Who are walking in liberty and in fellowship with God. Whose lives are a testimony. Who understand what it means.

It's committed unto Him. He's going to keep me. That impresses people.

That's mission. Nothing else is. That's missions.

That's evangelism. That's how God wins the world. He finds people like this.

Who will just go after Him. Nothing else. And he uses them to make himself known to the ends of the earth.

I remember one time having a friend who was. Oh, I can't say he's not saved. Because I didn't peek in the book of life.

I don't know. But it seemed like he was far from God. And he was at a place where there were many who were just rejoicing in the Lord.

You know how comfortable, how uncomfortable it is. For someone not looking to the Lord to be in a group. Where people are looking to the Lord.

They just can't wait to get out. It's reversed too. Sometimes Christians can't wait to get out of the other kind of circle.

They're always in with the unsaved. Well, how stuffy in here. Let's get among Christians.

But it works the other way too. And this professing Christian. I don't know if he had him in his heart or not.

But after it was all over he made this comment to me. He says, I felt like a lion in a den of Daniels. Just think of that.

Felt like a lion in a den of Daniels. There's testimony when you're living by the life of God. And the unsaved do feel like a lion in a den of Daniels.

They're helpless. But that is the way God ministers and uses that kind of a life. That's the effectiveness.

Well, you look around. Don't judge. Just think.

You look around. You have to ask the question. Where's Daniel today? Where's Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego? God's still making himself known.

In every place there are those obscure, those quiet. They're at the dish pan. They're obscure somewhere.

Some housewife. And they're just ministering unto the Lord. When the story's finally told.

And when church history's finally written. I've got books downstairs on church history that would choke a horse. So many.

But honestly, I don't believe that's really church history. I think church history is written in the secret places. And someday when God unfolds it.

We're going to see these quiet little people who think they have no ministry. They're the ones that God is mightily using in his program of redemption. Making himself known on the earth.

You look around and your heart bleeds. And you say, where's Daniel? Where are those who just want to know him? You say, well, maybe they fell in chapter 4 and 5. They just stopped spreading the fragrance. Nobody falls in chapter 4 and 5. You say, well, maybe they fell in chapter 3. And they stopped manifesting Christ because they stopped walking in liberty.

And in fellowship with God. Nobody falls in Daniel chapter 3. Not one man of God has ever fallen in chapter 3. You say, well, maybe he fell in chapter 2. He stopped seeing Jesus in the book. Nobody's ever fallen from chapter 2. There's only one way to fall.

That's chapter 1. And that's why I said, it sounds like five principles. There's not five principles. There's one principle.

Chapter 1. Your purpose in your heart. I just want to honor him. That's the only principle.

Anybody who's ever fallen has departed from that principle. Anybody who ever is restored comes back to that principle. It's always that principle.

I set my heart to know him. If I do that, he will use me. If I don't, he won't.

Notwithstanding whatever ministry I get involved in. Notwithstanding however many programs I support. If my heart is centered on Christ, I'll be used.

If it's not, I won't. I choose him. I see him.

I manifest him. He's waited. And I live by the life of God.

The power of God. The life of God. Well, that's the introduction to a series that we're going to be doing on the prophets.

And I wanted you to understand before we started what a prophet was. That's a prophet. Now we're going to look at a series that we're doing called the prophets.

And I just pray that as we unfold that, you'll be able to see how each prophet fits in its place. I hope God will really give us a view of his revelation, his heart, through this study. So pray for me as I prepare.

Comments or questions about the first six chapters of Daniel? As you did every day, you gave thanks. I thank God so much. Father, thank you so much for this record of your children, your instruments, your channel through whom you make yourself known.

And Lord, we would ask you to work these principles in our hearts that we also might set our hearts to please you. That we might be changed by the revelation of Christ. And walk in such liberty and fellowship that Christ is manifest.

That wherever we go, we might become that testimony. Become a blessing. And also bring judgment.

Teach us what it means to rest as Daniel rested. To know you and the power of your resurrection being made conformable to your death. Help us live by your life.

Thank you that you work this in us. And we would just pray you prepare our hearts for the coming ministry of the prophets. And now Lord, we thank you for the fellowship we can enjoy and the refreshments that you've provided.

We would ask you to nourish our bodies with them. We thank you for those that have prepared them and brought them. And we just pray for your blessing upon them.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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