

1) Ministry From Spring Harvest - Chapter 1

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's sovereignty and providence in our lives, using the story of Daniel as an example.

Duration: 59:26

Scripture: Daniel 1:8, Daniel 3:17

Topics: "Resolved"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of remembering four key words that represent divine principles and truth. He shares his personal struggle to be a spiritual Daniel in the face of Satan's attacks. The speaker warns the audience not to be surprised if they are tempted or face challenges even in a Christian gathering like Spring Harvest. He encourages the audience to purpose in their hearts and minds to live for God and not the devil, and emphasizes the significance of discipline and discipleship in following Christ.

Transcript

Well, it's a challenge to be back at Spring Harvest again. I think it seems almost a decade since I was first involved there in the north coast of Wales. I remember well because Alan Redpath was giving the Bible readings and it was just one week ago today that I was at the funeral of dear beloved brother Alan Redpath who has gone to be with the Lord.

In God's providence, and that's one of the great themes of the book of Daniel, Alan Redpath and myself found ourselves in Chicago back when he was a pastor at Moody Church and I was a student and it was under his ministry that great change took place in the life of my wife, the woman who became my wife. I was also greatly influenced by his ministry. Little did I dream at that time that I would end up someday being an immigrant to the British Isles where I've now been the last 26 years, still trying to learn the language.

I hope you don't have too much trouble. I've actually just come from Birmingham again as I had a previous commitment before getting involved here to speak at OM's Easter Evangelistic Trust in Birmingham. So I was involved in their prayer night last night where about three or four hundred are moving out in evangelism in Birmingham, especially among immigrants and people from Asia and I only got here at about two in the morning.

It was very quiet when we got here. Hard to believe that Tony Campalo had just blown through. I love to minister with Tony Campalo.

We were together at Urbana because I often get accused of saying extreme things and coming on too strong, being too American, being too loud, being wild. But whenever I minister together with Tony, people consider me very English. Perhaps you heard the story when Tony Campalo was speaking in that big Presbyterian church in the United States.

Did he tell you that last night? Unbelievable. Very dignified Presbyterians. The only group one up on the Anglicans.

The pastor is sitting there and Tony Campalo is going on and talking about the sinfulness of man, the weakness of man. He said, even your pastor, your pastor here, he's nothing but a sperm. And he went on to say, just one among thousands of sperms racing down the tube, somehow he won.

Here he is. You can just imagine these lovely state American Presbyterians. Tony doesn't always get invited back, but I understand I've already missed him.

I probably won't see him now until we meet at Love Europe over in Germany. It's going to be interesting to see how he handles Germany. When I think of Tony Campalo, I think of Daniel.

Because when he speaks, it's like sort of a lion being in a den of Daniels. People who know me would feel that I was ill this morning if I did not push some books. Because I believe that books are so important in building the Kingdom of God.

But I haven't been able to get over to the tremendous book display that I know they have here. And I'm sure you will visit that display, even if you're not a bookaholic. You may want to go and just pray that prayer, Lord, is there one book here that I should be feeding on even during this week? And as I think of a theme this week, I especially want to urge you to perhaps, if you can, get into the writings of A. W. Tozer.

Because this man, in my mind, speaks so strongly on the issues we're dealing with this week. And he deals a powerful blow to the kind of superficiality that so often is predominant in the present church scene. So I commend to you the writings of A. W. Tozer.

There are more than 20 different books that he has written. His basic theme is knowing God. And as we study just four of these chapters from the book of Daniel, this is no comprehensive course on the book of Daniel.

That will take you a lifetime. And the more commentaries I've read on Daniel, the more I realize how much I don't know and how deep and how complex this very unique apocalyptic book is. A. W. Tozer emphasizes knowing God.

The book of Daniel emphasizes knowing God. I wanted to mention just one other book. And that's called Kingdoms in Conflict by Charles Colson.

I just came back from Kathmandu, Nepal. And I was in the middle of this book on the flight from Kathmandu to the Arab Gulf, where I just had an evangelistic series. Quite amazing, in the little island of Bahrain.

The believers prayed. And the believers in Bahrain have the Daniel kind of vision. And they've got some people in high places.

And they got official permission in this Muslim country. These are mainly Indians. To get the biggest auditorium, one of the biggest auditoriums in Bahrain for these evangelistic meetings.

Unheard of in the history of the country. I ended up having tea with the ambassador of India, who then, as a Hindu, came to the evangelistic meetings that night with 2,000 people. God is still working in our day, as we see Him working here in the book of Daniel.

Anyway, on that trip I finished this brilliant book by Charles Colson, who was with Nixon in the Watergate scandal. He then went to prison. Through that and through the writings of C.S. Lewis, another author I strongly recommend, Charles Colson gave his life to Jesus Christ.

He's written some of the most brilliant books I've ever read. Loving God, Life Sentence. Benito Aquino, before he was assassinated in the Philippines, came to Jesus Christ in prison reading Charles Colson's book Loving God.

The power of the printed page. And his wife, in some ways, became a modern-day Daniel in the Philippines. An incredible story.

It's explained in this book, Kingdom in Conflict. Open now your Bibles to chapter 1 in the book of Daniel. We are very limited in time.

We're going to skip. I hope you don't mind a lot of introductory material about this book. Who wrote it? We could be all morning just on who wrote Daniel.

It is a controversy. After reading a lot about it, I accept the traditional view that Daniel wrote Daniel. Forgive me.

Whether Daniel wrote it or not, it is still inspired by God. And I think it's important to understand that we believe the Bible is the Word of God. In God's sovereign purposes, Daniel is included in Old Testament canon, even though it is very distinct from all other Old Testament books.

The most similar book to Daniel actually is the book of Revelation. Though Daniel is considered a prophet, even in the New Testament, in fact, he is not a typical prophet. I don't know if that's possible to be a typical prophet.

And his book is actually considered in the Old Testament canon among not the prophetic books, but the writings. Before, however, we read this passage, and I think we should read the whole of the chapter, because the Word of God speaks for itself. During these four mornings, we will mainly be dealing with chapter 1, chapter 3, chapter 5, and chapter 6. I would be greatly encouraged if you could read those four chapters.

In fact, I recommend you read the whole book of Daniel, if you can, during this week, but at least, if you can, the first six chapters. That would so help us in this study together. Let us read chapter 1. I'm reading from the New International Version, though I have also my authorized version to refer to as we go along.

Hear ye the word of the Lord. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and besieged it, captured it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim, king of

Judah, God's people, God's backslidden people, into his hands, along with some of the articles from the temple of God.

These he carried forth to the temple of his God, small g, in Babylonia, and put it in the treasure house of his God. Then the king ordered Ashkenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility, young men, without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, and well informed, quick to understand, qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.

The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, three-year training program, a bit like OM. After that, they were to enter the king's service.

Among these were some from Judah, Daniel, Ananiah, Mishael, Azariah. The chief official gave them new names. To Daniel, the name Belteshazzar.

To Ananiah, Shadrach. To Mishael, Meshach. And to Azariah, Abednego.

But Daniel resolved. That's the key verse for this morning. How many of you mark your Bible with a pen or colored pencil? You mark your Bible.

Raise your hand. Amazing, only half of you. When I was a young baby Christian, converted in a Billy Graham meeting in New York City from a non-Christian, nominal Christian home, when I started to mark my Bible and make notes in my Bible, revolutionized my Bible study.

Maybe you could start out and just mark that one verse. I know you're very conservative. You don't want to mark your new 25-pound sterling leather Bible.

But just mark that key verse. In the authorized version, it says, But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with a portion of the king's food, nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore he requested of the prince, of the eunuchs, that he might not defile himself.

Back to the NIV. But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine. And he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself in this way.

Now God had caused the official to show favor. Let me read that again. So important to see that.

Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel. But the official told Daniel, I am afraid of my lord, the king, who is to sign your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men of your age? The king would then have my head because of you.

Nobody wants to lose their head. Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Please test your servants for ten days. Give us nothing but vegetables to eat, water to drink.

Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food and treat your servants in accordance with what you see. So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days they looked healthier.

Vegetarians really love this passage. At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who had ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food, the wine

they were to drink, and gave them vegetables instead.

To these four young men God gave knowledge, understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. At the end of the time, set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar.

The king talked with them, and he found none to equal Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the king's service. In every manner of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus. Let's just pray once again for a moment. Living God, you have spoken to us from your Holy Word, even as we have read these divinely inspired verses.

And we believe that you will reveal to us from this passage divine truth that can be converted into reality in our own lives, that we may have this kind of reality, that we would be able to stand when this kind of difficulty and pressure and temptation comes upon us. We pray, O God, that we would not be hearers of the Word only or note-takers, but that we would be doers, that we would be your men, that we would be your women, that we would go where you want us to go and do what you want us to do. For we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior.

Amen. There are four words that I want you to remember from this chapter in Daniel. A few weeks from now, with all the spiritual input you receive, even right here at Spring Harvest, you will not be able to remember very much.

I'm amazed at how much I forget. And I hope that as you look back at this particular meeting, maybe three years from now, maybe four years from now, whenever, that you will be able to remember these four words. These four words represent divine principles, they represent divine truth, they represent the call of God to every believer, they represent four areas where I have struggled as a learner for thirty-four years since my conversion to somehow be some kind of a spiritual Daniel in God's great arena of lions.

The Bible says, thinking of lions, that Satan, as a roaring lion, seeketh whom he may devour. Don't be surprised if even right here at Spring Harvest, Satan tries to devour you. I was speaking at a meeting very similar to this, a little more intensive in the area of music, Christian Rock Festival in Chicago, touched on the subject of immorality.

A young man came to me the next day and mentioned that he had been in immorality even while this great Christian music festival was taking place. Seems incredible. Satan, as a roaring lion, seeketh whom he may devour.

We are not here to gather up intellectual and theological tidbits to put into your notebook and be forgotten. We are here to meet with God, and if we don't meet with God, we miss the whole purpose and the whole significance of Spring Harvest, I'm sure we already know that. Four words that jump out of the whole book of Daniel, and by the time we're through these four chapters, we will have sixteen words.

So if you don't like to take notes, and I don't have my notebook, at least write down these four words. I wrote them right down in my number one study Bible, which I've had now ever since I left Lagos one day in Bombay and lost my other Bible. Lagos was a ship which also eventually got lost, though it's still sitting on a rock off the coast of South America.

Whenever I speak of Lagos, I like to thank God's people in Britain who so stood with us at that time of crisis when we lost that ship which was once my home after seventeen years of ministry. And I think you know in answer to your prayers, Daniel-type prayers, as we're going to see in chapter six, God has given us Lagos II, which is just across the water. If you're really feeling up to it, you can swim over and visit in Amsterdam.

You might need to rest in the middle. I think it's a little further than down by Dover if you take this route. What a powerful message we have in this book.

So I wrote my words, four words right here, and you can do that. The first word that jumps from chapter one is the word sovereignty. Sovereignty.

Not a very popular word. Perhaps you want a substitute word. How about divine providence? That's also not very popular.

Some of the great covenanters who gave their lives for what they believed, Daniel-type Scotsmen, who would not sacrifice truth, not far from here north of the border, were known for their emphasis on providence. When I first came to Britain, and even not so long ago, I used to go to Scotland for days of prayer, getting more expensive to travel that far when you live in London, as I do now. So sometimes I'd just go out into the woods of Kent.

And I remember once traveling back from the north of Scotland into the station in Glasgow, and I was reading one of these old Puritan books on divine providence and what an impact that book made. Already in my Christian pilgrimage as O.M. had been born, as O.M. had become three times bigger than I ever expected, there were many questions in my mind. There were many doubts.

Why this happened and not that? Why we hadn't had the breakthrough yet in Turkey? Why we had not yet penetrated and seen the breakthrough in Afghanistan? Other questions were in my mind that morning as I read that book. I was tired, and as I went to enter the station in Glasgow, I went to the wrong door. A simple little thing.

But I was irritated. I wrestled with irritation all my life. Irritation had been such a problem for me that after I became a Christian, I almost completely turned away from the Christian faith because I felt I wasn't getting the victory that surely I should have as a child of God.

That morning I was irritated. The door wasn't open. There were other problems.

I went around to the other side of the station. Eventually I got in. It was very early.

I had to sit and wait for the train. And so I sat down. I've always, since conversion, been a bit of neurotic about redeeming the time.

So I sat down and read this book about Providence. And, of course, as usual when I read Christian books, I'm a soft touch. I start repenting even when I read the title.

I picked up Erwin Lutzer's book, *Failure, the Back Door to Success*. What a brilliant book. I've never read it.

Just the title, *Failure, the Back Door to Success*. Hallelujah! Glory to God! That's the kind of book characters like me need. But God drove into my mind that morning the importance of understanding

Providence, the importance of understanding sovereignty.

Humanly speaking, we open this great book with a disastrous situation. The people of God are being judged. And judgment will be one of our key words on another morning, though we find it right through the entire book of Daniel.

In fact, Daniel's name means, God is my judge. I was so challenged by the book of Daniel as a young Christian, so challenged by the life of Daniel as a young Christian, that it was one of the factors in me deciding to name my second son. My first one is Benjamin.

He has just made me a grandfather. I was wondering how I was going to fit that in to this message. But, yeah, go ahead, go ahead, go ahead.

I get an extra minute for that, please. And I named my second son Daniel. God is my judge.

But we're going to talk about judgment in another morning. God's people were being judged. And though I'm sure they were praying, praying for deliverance, praying against the enemy, you find ample indication of that throughout the Old Testament, God in His sovereignty allowed His people to be carried away to captivity.

He allowed Jerusalem, beautiful Jerusalem, the place of the temple and all the vessels of the temple that are referred to in verse 2, He allowed Jerusalem to be besieged. And Daniel and these other young men who are mentioned were carried away to a strange land. And so Daniel finds himself in Babylon.

He didn't want to be there. Are there any of you that don't want to be where you are right now? I'm not thinking of Spring Harvest. Probably you want to be here.

Maybe not. Maybe your girlfriend dragged you along here. Or your boyfriend.

Maybe somebody just gave you a free ticket and you thought it was an early Butlin's Holiday Bazaar. And you've had a few surprises ever since. Probably you're not in this tent at this time, if that's your case.

Often we find ourselves in life in places we don't want to be. That is part of life. The sooner we begin to understand this, the greater possibility for fulfillment and reality and happiness in this world.

And happiness is not our goal in any case. It is the byproduct of the life that's lived to please God. Wherever that may be.

I am sure the Spring Harvest leaders, and I was only brought into this last minute, but I'm sure the Spring Harvest leaders and committee prayed and sought the face of God concerning what we should be speaking on here at this Bible reading. There was some talk of my being at Spring Harvest this year, but after not hearing anything, I decided to go to Spain and speak to the entire staff of Youth With A Mission. In fact, I wrote the letter to Lynn Green the day before Clive Calver phoned me, which wasn't so long ago, and said, look, we really would like you to come to Stegness and take the Bible readings.

I didn't know what to do. I called Lynn Green of Youth With A Mission, who is often here, they are very committed to Spring Harvest, and said, what do you think I should do? Is it Spain with all your staff from all over Europe, or is it Spring Harvest? And he understood and felt that it should be Spring Harvest. But even this morning I thought, Lord, am I in the right place? When I heard that R.T. Kendall handled this subject last week, I thought, oh no.

I thought, maybe I better get the tapes, because this is a complex book. It is a difficult book. It is not a book that I have the knowledge to be able to expound if we went past Chapter 6. Even Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 would be difficult.

What divine insight the leaders of Spring Harvest have to ask me to speak on Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. Hallelujah. That's called providence. My being here, which may be a disappointment to some, is called providence.

My not being with my wife this week is something that she has learned to live with, called providence. This is the end of Side 1. Please turn over now for the continuation on Side 2. And maybe where you are working right now, maybe the church you are in, where you may not be completely happy, maybe some other situation in employment, or even living in England at this time, which is providential in my life. I never planned to live here.

I lived in Spain. I learned Spanish. I then lived in Belgium and tried that.

I then lived in my father's native country, the Netherlands, and tried that. I then went to India. And due to my own stupidity, I was arrested in India, put in jail.

A number of things went wrong. I refused to pay bribes. And I was given persona non grata credentials for India.

And I've never been able to legally go back for 20 years. I know something about the exile experience because India is my first love. I go to Kathmandu and the leaders of our work, 300 men and women in India, the leaders come to Kathmandu, Nepal.

They don't need a visa. I get a visa at the airport in Nepal. It's a separate country.

And we've been meeting regularly there for many, many years. Divine providence. I had to leave India.

And in God's providence, I decided I would settle in the second best. And for me, that was Great Britain. Do you have an understanding of providence and sovereignty in your life? Do you know how to get into a situation that you don't want to? It's not your first choice.

But in that situation, you will believe God. You will be God's man. You will be God's woman as Daniel.

The second word I share with you is discipline. If you miss that, you miss everything. Chapter 9, I mean verse 8 and verse 9, chapter 1, says Daniel purposed in his heart.

He purposed in his heart. In the NIV, we read, Now God, now Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food. Resolved not.

This morning I was reading the Living Bible. That had different terminology. Don't want to lose my watch.

I'm known as the longest speaker in Europe. How I'm to speak for 50 minutes, many people are wondering. But I'm going to do it because I have to start again after a little while.

But we'll just flow into tomorrow. I remember once, some of you know the story. I was in Germany.

I was going on about an hour and a half. People were just taking it in like blotters in the desert. One little man in the back held up his watch trying to get me to stop.

I saw that watch. I was preaching about discipleship, forsaking all, following Christ. I saw that watch go up.

I said, praise the Lord. Here's a man donating his watch to world missionary work. Often, wherever I go, I speak on the subject of revival.

That may not fit into this morning's lecture. But I believe that discipline, purposing in our hearts, purposing in our minds, deciding in advance, deciding in advance, what we are going to do when the pressure comes, when the problems come, will determine whether we live for God or we live for the devil. If you have come to Spring Harvest thinking, you can get a great blessing here.

And that blessing will carry you through the weeks and months to come. You are making an awesome mistake. I believe God can bless you here.

Many already made a deeper commitment of their lives to Jesus Christ last night. The missionary exhibition was packed as much as ever in the history of Spring Harvest last night. Hallelujah! But if that crisis is not followed by God's process, you'll become one more abscess in the kingdom of God.

For 27 years, approximately, I have lived in this land. I have loved this country more than my own country. I have preached in almost every part of Britain, in literally thousands of churches, and I've seen thousands of people have the crisis experience, at Filey, at Keswick, on OM, in a George Farrer meeting, and yet fail, fail to follow that up, fail to purpose in their heart, in advance, that they will stand when things get rough, when things get tough, when the disappointments come, when the Dear John letters come, when the unemployment comes, when your church divides, when things go wrong in the home, when one of your children backslides, when your wife suddenly disappears from cancer.

You will stand! That's what the book of Daniel is all about. That's what the Word of God is all about. That's why we're here, dealing with this subject, this book, this chapter, at this moment in history.

I would ask you to make that decision this morning, to purpose in your heart, to follow God, wherever, whatever, understanding God's providence, the reality of Romans 8, 28, that God will work things out according to His purposes for those who love Him. Do you know that verse? One of my favorite verses, Romans 8, 28. Daniel was in captivity.

Daniel was under pressure. He soon would have his name changed. And I had some lovely little notes about these name changes and what they mean.

But there's not time to give you those little notes. You can read about it in any commentary. Here's one on Daniel.

I'm sure they're in the bookshop. He then was under pressure, sudden pressure, to eat the king's food. And there's a lot of comments, a lot of discussion, as to why they accepted the name change, but they refused to eat of the king's food.

We can't go into detail about this, but this is such a beautiful picture of what life is like. As you enter into a strange culture, as Britain has become extremely pagan in itself, and living for Jesus Christ produces scenarios like we saw in our drama, we will have to have discernment. If you want an extra word this morning, I think we'll get to that one later on as well, you might put in the word discernment.

A.W. Tozer said, the greatest need in the church today is for discernment. There are some things you can do as a Christian. It's no problem.

Other Christians may condemn those things. I'm just reading a new book about dancing. And when I was first converted, I was taught that dancing, any kind of ballroom dancing, you know, that was from the devil.

I was a baby Christian. I didn't believe it. I didn't accept it.

I used to witness to my girlfriend dancing around, even to rock around the clock, if you want to know what era I come from. There are areas where we're never all going to agree when it comes to adapting to culture. People now condemn you if you put sugar in your tea.

Really, it's very hard for me in England these days. I'm a two teaspoon heaping sugar in my tea. Where am I going to keep my energy level up when I don't eat much? And I've had people look at me, especially in America.

Americans always go extreme. I wouldn't know anything about that myself, of course. And someone was looking at me with sort of a guilty look as I was putting sugar in my tea.

And I said, Hey, look, look. You're looking at a person that is a total miracle. A total miracle.

I'm not a drug addict, a drunkard, a murderer, and a pornoholic. You're going to rob me of my two teaspoons of sugar? Get out of my life! The third word I want to give you in my final five minutes. Where's the five minute sign? Isn't that coming? I'm not there yet.

Hallelujah! The third word is holiness. Right there in the same verse. No, there's indication of this through the whole chapter.

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with a portion of the king's food. For this and for this group of men, whether we understand it or not, one commentator said that he felt in the king's food in that day, I listened to this tape yesterday morning, there was some kind of drugs. And he went on to say, Do you think we in the 20th century are the first ones to get into drugs? History shows that all kinds of drugs have been used for thousands of years.

So maybe there was some kind of drugs. Someone else on the Temperance Society says, Well, it's because of the wine. And we get into the teetotaling moderation controversy, which we don't want to do with so many Anglicans present.

We don't actually know why they ask permission. They went about it in quite a low profile way, didn't they? We don't have to always have head-on collisions with our culture. You don't have to go into your office the first day you're working at a particular business in London and put your little, you know, praise the Lord sign on your desk.

The low profile approach in evangelism, in my feeble view, with only 34 years of experience, the low profile approach is often the most effective. And the approach we saw in this drama is often the most ineffective. But God leads different people in different ways.

Holiness is something we will have to wrestle with. But one thing we know, God is calling us to holiness. Read the Word of God.

Read great Christian books. And then make the decision on the different areas. And may God give you the discernment to know between that issue where you have to take a specific stand, as they did with the food, and that issue where you can adjust, you can adapt, which we are doing even in trying to win Muslims to Jesus Christ in Bangladesh.

And we're being criticized for our more contextualized, sensitive cultural approach to reaching Muslims in their own culture. But we're going to do it anyway. And I believe that to reach contemporary Britain with the Word of God, we need almost as much as we need in Bangladesh, we need a contextualized, sensitive, culturally acceptable method of witnessing.

It will still be an offense because ultimately the proclamation of the Gospel is an offense. It is a stumbling block, but we don't have to make it more of a stumbling block through our own stubbornness, through our own artifacts of ancient evangelicalism or charismania or omisms or any other traditions. Different people reach different people in different ways.

If you want the basics on holiness so you don't get caught up in a tangent or majoring on minors, what about the, let's see, what about the Ten Commandments? That's a good place to start. Are you keeping all the Ten Commandments? Quite difficult actually for a character like me with such a big mouth. When I was ten, I was going to produce a dictionary of curses and swear words and dirty stories.

When I was converted, there was deliverance, but the deliverance was followed by the struggles and the battles and sometimes the failure, especially in the area of driving. Maybe you are the spirit-filled driver, wonderful, the totally spirit-controlled driver. I've always wanted to meet such people.

In fact, you can come and autograph the back of my Bible. It says right here, hypocrite, sign below. But I find driving difficult.

Maybe when someone bumps you from behind and they cut you off and then they're parked right next to you at the red light, you just roll the window down and you say, God bless you this morning. And I'll tell you, there's many a time I've rolled my window down and the words that came to go out the window are not found in the book of Daniel. And I've had to repent.

Generally, I choke them off before they come out because I don't want to get punched. And in France, I heard a man in an automobile accident, the man jumped out of the car and shot the guy on the spot. I'm not into that.

We are called unto holiness. It's a tough issue. Christians don't agree.

There are brilliant books on the subject, but we must not, in the midst of the controversy, lose the basic thrust. Moral purity. What we think about.

What we said. The Ten Commandments. The Sermon on the Mount.

The basic teachings of the New Testament. About justice. About love.

About brokenness. About humility. Surely, this should be the passion of every believer.

And my fourth word that I leave with you in closing is perseverance. You wondered if we were going to get through the whole chapter. Of course we are.

Turn to verse twenty. Twenty-one. Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus.

In my study, this shows sixty or seventy years. That challenges me. Many of you are young people.

Praise the Lord. But let me say something that a man of God once said to me. It's not how you start, but it's how you finish.

Daniel started in crisis and difficulty. Being sent from a land he loved. From a temple he loved.

He ended up, as we'll see later, in the lion's den. A lot of things went wrong. He faced impossible situations.

He saw unbelievable suffering. He started well. Because of his faith in God.

His commitment to holiness. His understanding of God's sovereignty. But he also finished well.

Last week I wept at the funeral of Alan Redpath. I wept with joy and mixed emotion as we often do at funerals. Only a few months ago I was at the funeral of my own mother.

I wept because he finished well. He ran well. Alan Redpath also must have lived for Christ somewhere around sixty years.

How are you doing? Perseverance. Isn't that the missing miracle of contemporary Christianity? People have their crisis experiences. They have their great blessings.

Some of them even write books. Many of our authors are now backslidden and away from God. In the age of superficiality there are many who start.

A few who finish. We're having another leader every week. Every week which would be a generalization because it would be more than that.

Just in England alone. Knocked out. Just alone through the fiery dark of immorality.

Of course, it's a big country. There are a lot of Christians. So that isn't as bad as it may sound.

Brothers and sisters, we will see from this book that we are in intensive spiritual conflict just as Daniel and his fellow workers. We also are going to face fiery furnaces in our lives. We are also going to find ourselves in the lion's den in our employment and in this nation in the months and weeks to come.

And we must decide. We must dare, by God's grace, to be a Daniel. A man who accepted and believed the sovereignty of God.

God overruling the folly and the sin and the horror and the wickedness of this world. God weaving his pattern through this broken planet to bring glory to his name and fulfill his purposes in the world. To dare to be a Daniel in this area of discipline.

Following in the steps of the apostle Paul who said, I buffet my body, I buffet my body and bring it into subjection. Thus, after preaching to others, I become the castaway. Following in the steps of Daniel in a commitment to holiness.

If endowed, perhaps it's best to do without. At least until you can pray and seek counsel and find a balanced, sensible, biblical position in that area of struggle that you are wrestling with. Dare to be a Daniel in determining that you are going to run the race right to the end.

Right to the finish. Maybe next week, two of my closest friends, the founders, together with me, of the work in England. Those two men were killed in their twenties simultaneously when they went to Poland to reach that unreached nation for Christ.

Their lives fell into the ground in Poland in their twenties. But from that we've seen fruit in Poland and back here from those who were influenced at the funeral. One of them being a young man from Carlisle named Peter Maiden who later became the director of OMUK and the associate director of all OM International preaching at this moment at Spring Harvest in England.

I pray that this will not be a gathering of academic information but that this will be a time of commitment to be the kind of men that we're reading about in this great chapter. I predict rough roads ahead. And even if revival comes, which we are all praying for, that does not mean it will be any easier.

And if you think revival leads to an easy road, you have never studied revival and you probably haven't got into your Bible much either. For revival will lead to advanced courses in enduring hardship of Jesus Christ. Revival will lead to more fiery furnaces.

Revival will lead to more Daniels in lion's dens. And I pray that we will not be deceived. Take verses about blessing out of context and leave the verses about responsibility and suffering and commitment and enduring hardship and fighting the good fight somehow on the side.

We need the whole counsel of God. And even this great book, if you don't allow what we study in the book of Daniel to be balanced out by 1 Corinthians 13, to be balanced out by the Psalms, to be balanced out by Proverbs, you could end up some kind of phony would-be Daniel going down the road in some kind of extremism, building a fiery furnace in the woods and entering into it after you had light the fire, believing that because God is with you, you surely will be delivered. And it will be front lines in the British press that one more religious extremist, one more nutcase, thought he was God or thought he was above the laws of gravity and has gone to eternity.

It happens. Some people in Switzerland attempting to get the demons out of a person, according to the Swiss press, killed the person in the process. Yes, I love the book of Daniel.

I want to learn these basic lessons. But I know that I am not to try to copy this man. I am George Ferguson.

I have more struggles than he had, it seems, than what I can do. I live in a different time in history with different kinds of pressures, different kinds of problems. Government's quite distinct in many ways from what he faced, yet there are similarities and much to be learned.

So I'm not going to try to be Daniel. I'm just going to be me. I come to you.

I might as well tell you at the beginning of the evening. A lot of struggles. A lot of areas of need.

A lot of failures. Oh, not the big things are going to write my name up front page in the Gospel Gazette. George Berwer is found with Secretary in Motel in Skagness.

No, not the big things. Thanks be to the prayers of God's people and His grace, and perhaps a few lessons I've learned from the great book. And I was so glad for that because last year when I was traveling with my daughter in Australia, she came to me after reading about all these people falling in adultery, these Christian leaders, and it's getting harder and harder for characters like me and some of us in ourselves.

We just want to run away on a desert island with our Bible and live there the rest of our life because we don't want publicity. And she came up to me in the middle of this little time together and she said, Dad, I want to know something. I want to know if you have been faithful to Mother every day for these 28 years.

Quite straightforward. My daughter, I don't know where she got that from. Yes, by God's grace.

Because God is able to deliver from the lion's den and even the lioness' den, that's more my problem, I was able to say to my daughter, yes, I've been faithful. There are many things that don't get publicity on earth that make big publicity with God. The wrong attitudes I've had at times towards my wife.

The hurt I've inflicted on my own wife in moments of irritability or when we disagreed. The lust that has flowed through my mind when I sat down on British Rail and there was a piece of pornography just there and it just caught me as a former pornoholic before somehow I could get hold of my wits and deal with it. So, as I come and share from this book, I know I'm not a dandy.

I'm not sure how much pressure I can take. But I know one thing, God can keep a weak, struggling character like me for 34 years. And He can keep you.

He can keep you. Don't give up. Don't be intimidated by your sins and by your failures.

God's grace is sufficient. Rise up. Rise up.

Trust His Word. Develop biblical strategy for spiritual warfare. And stand firm when the pressure comes, and the failures, and the difficulties.

You will be following in the footsteps of Daniel. Let us pray. Our God and Father, we come to You with a realization that we are needy people.

With a realization that we need to be filled afresh with Your Holy Spirit. For in ourselves, we cannot live this way. In ourselves, we cannot go forward into the lion's den or into the pressures and the struggles and the difficulties of the day and age in which we live.

But, O God, by Your grace, by Your power, by Your forgiveness, we can stand. We can persevere. We can experience holiness.

We can develop discipline. We can experience the glory of Your providence and Your sovereignty working out through our lives, not in the absence of struggle and heartache and failure, but in the midst of it, because You are God. And we worship You with heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/1-ministry-from-spring-harvest-chapter-1/>

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