

Pressures of Christianity 02 Daniel-Man Under Pressure

by Harry Deutchman

The sermon explores Daniel's unwavering faith and worship amidst the pressures and challenges of his time, offering lessons for modern believers.

Duration: 47:06

Scripture: Hebrews 4:14

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Faith Under Pressure"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the character of Daniel and his approach to prayer. The speaker references Colossians 4:2, which encourages believers to continue in prayer and watch with thanksgiving. The speaker highlights Daniel's consistency in prayer and his unwavering faith, contrasting it with the tendency of believers to falter in times of pressure. The speaker also discusses the concept of power and corruption, emphasizing that power does not corrupt but rather reveals the corruption that is already present. The sermon concludes by highlighting Daniel's refusal to worship diplomatically and contrasting it with the role of a diplomat like Kissinger.

Transcript

We are studying the Epistle to the Hebrews in the morning. Some of you are not able to come. There have been a little over 50, I was told.

And I trust that you who come will not be discouraged because of my taking a little extra time. You know, when one has the gift of tongues, it doesn't know when to stop. But I was presenting that blessed work of our Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

But I am sure, I'm convinced, that should you come tomorrow morning, we'll confine the whole study within the hour. Will you turn with me to Daniel, chapter 6. Daniel, chapter 6. Where we read, beginning with verse 1, It pleased the king that set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom, and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel was first, that the princes might give account unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king sought to serve him over the whole realm.

Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom. But they could not. They could find none occasion nor force.

For as much as he was faithful, neither was there any error or force in him. Then said these men, We shall not find an occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. Then these three presidents and princes assembled together to the king and said thus unto him, King Darius, live forever.

All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors and the princes, the counselors and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute to make a firm decree that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writings that it be not changed according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore, King Darius signed the writing of and the decree.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into the house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near and spake before the king concerning the king's decree.

Hath thou not signed a decree that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him.

And he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is that no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions.

Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lord, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and passed the night fasting.

Neither were instruments of music brought before him, and the sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel.

And the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me. For as much as before him innocency was found in me, and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

Then was the king exceeding glad for him and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no matter of hurt was found upon him because he believed in

his God. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives.

And the lions had the mastery over them and break all their bones and pieces wherever they came at the bottom of the den. Then King Darius wrote unto all the people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, he be multiplied unto you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

He delivereth and rescueth, he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Last night, no, Sunday night, I started a series on pressure or concerning pressure.

And it was a young man who was under pressure, and he grew in apprehension while under pressure. Now it's not a young man, it's an old man whom we find under pressure. The second world empire was inferior to the first, for in the vision that Daniel had it was of a man head of gold, arms and breastplate of silver, then thighs of brass, then legs of iron, and toes of clay.

And seeing that vision, we see that each succeeding world kingdom is inferior or goes down. They're inferior. So here we notice it is not seen only in the symbolic metal where it went under Nebuchadnezzar, gold.

He was the head thereof, but now under Darius there was a silver, an inferior metal. But also we see in the administration of the second kingdom that some power was lost. Nebuchadnezzar did whatsoever pleased him, and no one withstood him.

But here, Darius was in subjection to those who were round about him. We saw it in verses 5 through 9. And we saw that these men wanted to find an occasion against Daniel. Why against him? First of all, he was the king's favorite.

Secondly, he was a Jew. And therefore Kissinger, now this is not factual, but I personally believe in all those things that are taking place. Being Jewish, he will try to play both ends toward the middle.

And somehow or other because of the world's situation where Israel being the nerve center and affecting all the arteries of the world, he, Kissinger, will have to make a stand as to whether he's a Jew who believes in his God or whether he will deny his Judaism. Here they were going to concoct a scheme because they could find no error or fault in him except concerning the law of his God. So in verses 14 and 15 we notice that the king when he heard these words was sore displeased, but he had to give way to thee to force him by deception to sign that decree.

And in the midst of that inferior kingdom, God had a shining light. And beloved, there are some of you here who are along in years, but unless in your Christian life the spirit of God was able to conform you to the image of the Son of God, and if you walk consistently whatever the pressures that are yet to come upon us, you and also the sisters who are along in years, if it has been a consistent life, there will be light in the midst of darkness while under pressure. Youth has no monopoly on God, neither has old age a monopoly on God.

The only ones who have a monopoly on him, so to speak, are those who are yielded to a spirit by obeying his mind and walking in his way. Being consistent therein, they will not have that weakness that when the

nitty-gritty comes to pass and they are attacked along the lines of their faith, they, not having done it in the past by God's grace, will be so used to walking in constant fellowship with him that when the time comes that individual will not go under. The prophet is now over 80 years of age.

He's along in years, and he is envied by the president and the princes. And as they envy him, they did so because they love darkness rather than light. The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness would not apprehend it or take hold of the light as we read in John.

Why? Because their deeds are evil. And here they had a demonstration of a consistent life. He was not, he did not come short in his administration or in faithfulness to the king.

Nothing could be found against him except the fact that he was consistent in his worship of God. And that is what Satan does. If he cannot keep an individual from coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, he will attack that individual who reaches out to take hold of him, to follow him, to be like him, even unto death.

And we see it here. They knew the high regard that Darius had for Daniel. They knew that the king loved him, and because of jealousy they concocted a scheme that was both false and very flattering.

That is why, beloved, you and I should not, should not lean on the arm of flesh, even the arm of another believer. As I've said on previous occasions, thank God when they are a help, a comfort, a strength. But we are to lean only on the everlasting arm.

The reason for it is, each of us has a sin nature that is subject to flattery. And so it was with Darius. The falseness of their scheme, they said, all the presidents.

It does not go into detail that all the presidents gave their view. It may have been a large majority, but perhaps some of them were not with the majority. Secondly, it was very flattering.

No one should appeal to God or to man, but only to thyself. Therefore, what they were doing, they were lifting them up on a level, so to speak, with God and the highest of men in the fact that He is being catapulted into a high position where He is to be looked to. And no one else.

So it was very flattering indeed. And it flatters the king. That's why he listens to it.

And in the midst of the flattery, he forgot all about Daniel. He forgot the love that he had toward him. He forgot the faithfulness of this administrator who was given the highest position.

He forgot, for flattery is mental suicide. And that's exactly what happened in the Garden of Eden. Why did Eve listen? Because she was being flattered.

She was being flattered. Why didn't she draw away in horror? Because she, the serpent in whom Satan entered, was so sympathetic with her viewpoint that she began to see the logic of what was being conveyed. She was flattered.

And might I say amongst the Lord's people, you and I have not yet escaped because we are still in this body. Therefore, we are to love one another. We are to encourage one another.

We are to be of help to one another. We are to bear one another's burdens, but we are not to lean on one another, because we are subject to flattery. I don't know about you, but there were cases in my Christian

life where I was foiled, and I fell because I believed in what was told me.

She listened to the serpent. Why did she listen? Why didn't she say to herself, Adam speaks, I speak, and we communicate. God speaks, and He communicates with us, and we communicate with Him.

But this serpent, how can He speak? Therefore, as soon as she was flattered, as soon as someone sympathized with her, as soon as someone was on her side, she was ready to listen. That is why in the time of tribulation, this image that will be set up, the image will speak, and the peoples of the world will not question as to how an image can speak, because what that image would say would be flattering and sympathetic to the nature of those people who are living at that time. So, we notice here they were prejudiced against Daniel.

As we know, beloved, prejudice produces its own logic, and whenever you are prejudiced in some aspect of the word, or something in or about the speaker, or about one another, immediately, immediately in your very being, a logic will arise that will justify that prejudice. And so, we notice they were prejudiced, and they said to themselves that the ego is vulnerable, and the ego, when flattered, will yield and will fall, and their flattery found a nest in place. Where did it nest? Right in the ego, right in the affection of the king.

It happened, as I said, in the Garden of Eden, it happened also in the time of Daniel, and it also was used in the wilderness where Satan flattered him when he said, All the kingdoms and the power and the glory will I give unto thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. And in this model prayer that our Lord gave to the disciples when they said, Teach us to pray, he ended the prayer with, Did Satan say, All the kingdoms and the power and the glory is his? I say unto you that when you pray, say, For thine is the kingdom, thine is the power, thine is the glory. He was able to overcome flattery.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was temptable, not temptable within, for there was no sin in him, but he was temptable from without thought. Immediately, he cut down the thing that stood in the way, that is the temptation. Most likely, Darius heard what happened at Belshazzar's feet.

He heard and had the account how the enemy came in underground. The river was dried up and they were able to come underground, come in and overthrow the head of gold that first worldwide kingdom. And although he knew that, he forgot it when he was flattered.

It didn't prevail for long, and we also notice this, that the same propensity of pride that was in both Nebuchadnezzar and in Belshazzar, he didn't realize that that same propensity of pride was in him. One of the reasons why I believe the Lord does not take us immediately into his presence after he saves us, is that we might see who and what we are, and in the light of that, being exposed, we say to ourselves, why should God have saved me? Why should Christ have died for me? And we realize the fact that it's by the grace of God that we are what we are. And before he takes us home, he takes us through a process that when he's through with us, we acknowledge the fact and we bow the knee and we confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

That we have nothing to stand on but his pure grace. Then I want you to notice, when you turn with me to 1 Corinthians, hold your place here, and I want you to notice 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 12. And in 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 12 we read, There hath no temptation taken you, but that which is coming to man.

But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it. It does not mean he will take you out of the cauldron, but if he allows you to remain in the cauldron of affliction, he will make a way of escape where you do not fall under the pressure. But within the cauldron, within the pot, you will be bubbling with joy as the heat is increased constantly.

And so with regard to the warning in the sin nature that is dwelling in us, this is seen in the evolution of human rebellion as pictured by the various monarchs. First of all, there was Nebuchadnezzar. What about him? Nebuchadnezzar associated God with idols, and where do we see that? Look at chapter 3 of Daniel and verse 5. And in Daniel 3 and verse 5, here is what we read in verse 5, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackcloth, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kind of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar, the king, hath set up.

So here in the evolution of the revolution of these various kings, we notice Nebuchadnezzar associates idols with God. Then in Belshazzar, he substituted idols for God, and where do we see that? In the fifth chapter and verse 4. And in the fifth chapter verse 4, it says, they drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and stone. Then when it comes to Darius, he did not oppose them, setting him up as God, and we have already read the scriptures.

But how different from Daniel, from the genesis of his life into the captivity, and during the captivity, and finally the exodus, exodus of his life, nothing and no one was able to corrupt Daniel. They could not do it. How different from these kings.

Then we also notice, there was no loose strands in the tapestry of his life, and the reason why I and you, in the time of pressure, seem to falter, and then we wonder where money will come from, we wonder where openings will come from, we wonder how the doctor, doctor's bill would be, and we wonder who would take care of us in our old age. All these are loose strands, and they are due to the fact of a faltering faith in the process of our Christian walk. Well, are we perfect? No, we are not perfect, but the thing is, when God deals with us in our inconsistencies, once he brings us out and blesses us, we forget the process to which we were put, and then we go on in the same way as before.

We find that in Psalm 107, and it's the Psalm of Christ. They cried, the Lord delivered them. They soon forgot his works, down they went.

Then they cried again, the Lord delivered them. They went down again, and they cried unto the Lord, and again he delivered them. It seems they could not learn that particular lesson once for all, and all the blessedness of a consistent life.

Daniel was not tested as a prophet. Daniel was not tested as a statesman. He was tested as a worshipper of Jehovah, and so in our country, I don't know what may come to pass.

It may be that in the presence of God, there may be a pressure and persecution of God's people, and it will not be because you have not been a good citizen, you have not been consistent with your neighbor, or paid your taxes. It will be in the matter of the worshiping of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, we notice it right here.

His circumstances never, never did his circumstances alter his worship, never. I am sure, and I don't mean to be funny, when I am here, it's a matter of life and death, but I am sure that he must have had aches and

pains in his body. He must have had pressure, but it never, never entered in or altered his worship.

He worshipped in favorable circumstances, and when the circumstances were unfavorable, what did he do? He prayed. He worshipped. And that's what we notice.

He worshipped his God. For we read in verse 10, Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being opened in his chamber, told Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees. He could have been very quiet.

He could have stood there. He could have prayed in his heart. He need not have opened his windows, and they would not have been the wiser enough for it.

But as soon as he opened the windows, as soon as he kneeled, bringing himself in subjection, as soon as that was done immediately, that's what happened. They took hold of him. They had him, and they wanted to do away with him.

Not only was he upon his knees in verse 10, but it was three times a day. Daniel, could you not have circumvented? Could you not have acted like a politician? Daniel, you have the highest place in the kingdom, and one can only hold that position unless he's a good politician. But know, says Daniel, I was taught from Solomon's time on that if anyone would open their windows facing toward the east and praying toward the temple, God would hear their petitions.

So he opened the windows, but of what good would the windows be if the windows of his heart were shut? And he got down on his knees, of what good would his spending be if there was not truly a humility there? Of what good would it be? Perhaps Daniel had fear as to the consequences that would come to pass. But know, the word says he knelt three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did a fourth time. For years after I was saved, I was afraid of death.

I was afraid of it. But as the years went on, I began to think of the worst things that could happen to me. I read concerning our people, and it's well documented, as in Josephus as well as other writers of Jewish history.

When they slaughtered the Jewish people and they ripped the women open, I began to realize that perfect love casts out fear. And I knew my love was not perfect toward him. I also knew then that it was his love that was perfect toward me.

And I knew that I would be able to do all things to Christ which dreamt of me. No one can put you to death if you have already died with them. Don't get that child of God.

And so we notice it. His circumstances, whether favorable or unfavorable, the first tense tells us, they thanked before his God as he did a fourth time. How beautiful! He knew his circumstances could change.

Now what gave him the audacity of faith to act the way he did? And although he knew that his circumstances would change, he knew that his lawyers would change, he also knew that his God was unchangeable. How marvelous that is! Then we notice he clung to reality and he did not trust the transitory. He did not lean heavily on his position.

He was not flattered by it. And as you sit here, and I'm standing here, what we think we are at this very moment, what we think we are, we only are through testing. Don't get that.

We never know ourselves until we are tested. And I thank God for every testing that has come past, for it has depleted me, and the only way to succeed is self-confidence to be broken. That is, succeed with him.

And that's what testing does. Now we never know what we are until we are tested. And he was tested.

A man in captivity when highly favored and honored will soon be engrossed in his good fortune. But not Daniel. He did not forget God or his purpose.

I want you to turn to 1 Kings, 1 Kings 8, and in 1 Kings 8, I want you to notice something very significant there. 1 Kings 8 verses 47 through 50. And in verse 47, "Yet if they shall besink themselves in the land whither they were carried captive," and Solomon is praying here, dedicating himself in the temple.

And he says, "When they shall besink themselves in the place where they were carried captive, and repent and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captive, saying, "We have sinned and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness, and so we turn unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies which led them away captive, and pray unto thee towards their land which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name, then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven, thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carry them captive, that they may have compassion on them." Therefore, therefore, what he was doing there was not forgetting God and his purpose. He knew by Jeremiah's scrolls that the 70 years of captivity was coming to an end. He showed the scrolls to Cyrus.

He even showed him where Cyrus' name is mentioned. And Cyrus was used of God to cause the Jewish people to go back to their land. Well, Daniel was not concerned as to what would happen to him as much as what was going to happen to his people.

And he knew that if he would pray unto his God, that the Lord's God would listen, because there was a representative for the whole nation in captivity, and the Lord answered that prayer. And so, we notice in Daniel 6.10, what did he do there? He turned toward Jerusalem, kneeled down, prayed, gave thanks as he did all the time. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

If you would turn at your leisure to Philippians, the fourth chapter verses 4-6, you will see there in Philippians 4, 4-6, all the ingredients in Daniel's prayer that are mentioned in Philippians, the fourth chapter of verses 4-6. Power does not corrupt. I don't believe that power corrupts at all.

And I heard it said that power corrupts, and great power brings forth greater corruption. But what it does really is not corrupt, but it merely brings out the corruption that is already there. That's what power does.

But with Daniel, power lost its power to corrupt. The man was not corruptible. He could not be corrupted there.

Daniel did not worship diplomatically. And what is a diplomat? Who is a diplomat? Kissinger is a diplomat. Why do I say he's a diplomat? For a diplomat is one who can manage the securing of advantages without causing hostility.

And so as a diplomat he goes both to Egypt and goes to Israel. And as a diplomat, he tries to manage the securing of advantages without causing hostility. King Daniel was not a diplomat in that sense of the word.

In Colossians 4:2, we find that it was true of Daniel. And in Colossians the fourth chapter and verse 2, we read this verse of Scripture. Colossians 4:2 tells us right here, continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Continue in prayer. Why continue in prayer and watch watch in the same with thanksgiving? Because the world has many opiates. And even in prayer if we allow our minds to wander and rest on these opiates, we can be drunk and fall asleep and go in the way of all flesh, even though it is believing flesh.

And so we notice with him it was true of him. For we read in Daniel verse 10 of chapter 6 as I've just read it, he was consistent as he prayed before time, he prays now. And also on verses 21 and 22 we read here Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever.

My God hath sent his angels, shut the lion's mouth, that they have not hurt me. For as much as before him innocence he was found in me, and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. You know in the matter of prayer, a consistent prayer life, we often read resist the devil and he will flee from you.

And Daniel could have resisted and resisted and resisted and resisted and the devil would not have fled from him and he could have fallen. And the same thing is true in your life and in my life. Why? Because we forget another part of Scripture where it says, Submit yourself unto God.

For in submitting yourself unto God, you have already resisted the devil and he will flee from you. And if there is no submission to God consistently, the devil will not flee but we will find him going around like a roaring lion whom he may devour. So we see right here, while under pressure because of a consistent life, a man over 80 years of age worships even to the point of being thrown into the lion's den.

And we notice that God was Daniel's alpha and omega and his in-between. What the law of the king did to Daniel and what the love of the king could not do for Daniel, Christ did for us. And not only that, it was another love and it was another law.

It was the law of grace. It was the law of love. And the king could not do anything for Daniel, either to save him or enter in to such an extent that this should not have happened to him.

Was Daniel cast in the lion's den? So was he. For in Psalm 22 we read about the lion being before him and gnashing at him. Although it was a figure of speech, we find the parallel there.

Was the tomb sealed with a great stone? So was his. Daniel was also to be honored by royal decree, and we notice that at the end of the chapter. As it happened to Daniel, so it happened to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He was honored by divine decree. Wherefore God hath highly lifted him and raised him from the dead and given him a name above every other name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, whether in heaven, earth, or under the earth. So we see as he was cast, Daniel, in the lion's den, so was Christ.

As the tomb was sealed with a stone, so was his. As the stone was rolled away, so was his. As he was honored by royal decree, that is Daniel, so was he.

And beloved, one of these days, even though under pressure, you may be 80 or reaching there past 80, might I say, if the Lord Jesus Christ is your all and all, under pressure you will rise and glorify him, and all

the forces of darkness will see how they could not have kept the soul under, whose only aim, whose only object, whose only being, is the Lord Jesus Christ. And may the Lord help us in these days in which we are living. Shall we pray? Our heavenly Father, we thank thee for thy words, and what thy servant was not able to convey, may thy blessed faithful spirit show.

Whether the times were well, or whether the times were at birth, it never altered Daniel's worship. Daniel's God is our God, to a higher degree, because the Spirit dwells within us, and enable us. And may thy grace, may thy mercy, envelop thy people here, and give them courage to realize that as a young man, stood under pressure, and glorified the Lord Jesus, so in old age we can stand under pressure, and still glorify him.

We ask it, our Father, in the name and for the sake of thy dear Son, our Savior. Amen.

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