

June 16, 2002  
AM Service (Father's Day)  
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“Courage and Its Consequences”  
Dan 6 (NLT)

(Illustration – now that is courage and commitment. That is courage in spite of consequences). Daniel was a man of courage and in our text we read of courage and its consequences:

I. Courage to be faithful (v1-11)

v3 Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

1. Daniel was faithful to his tasks and to his employer. In whatever he did, he worked at it whole-heartedly. As it says in Col 3:23 -Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.

You can be a carpenter and serve the Lord; you can be an accountant and serve the Lord; you can be a waiter and serve the Lord. In whatever you do, remember, it is the Lord that you are serving. And even if your employer or supervisor does not acknowledge or appreciate your hard work, it 's ok you are not working to please him but God and God knows even what you do in secret.

So don't just try to please your boss when his or her “eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.” (Col 3: 22b)

Daniel's diligence paid off. He proved himself and because of that he was getting a promotion. That is usually the case. But even if he did not get that promotion he would not have become bitter or slacked off on his work because he was working for the Lord, not men. Be faithful to your employer

v4 At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.

2. Daniel was faithful in his conduct and responsibilities

a. Daniel lived in a corrupt society but he was not corrupt. He was trustworthy and honest not just in his occupation but in all aspects of his life. It does not take courage to be corrupt. It takes selfishness, and laziness and stupidity but not courage. We need men who will have the courage to not be molded by the world and the corruption of the world but will make a stand for what is right and be trustworthy.

The beginning of escaping the corruption of the world is to know Jesus Christ as your Savior and your Lord. The Bible tells us this in 2 Peter 2:20a - ...they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...

But having put our faith in Jesus we must not go back to old ways, for the complete verses says (2 Peter 2:20) - If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.

Be vigilant to remain honest and trustworthy.

b. Daniel was not negligent in his responsibilities. A man's ego does not want to look foolish or appear that he does not know what he is doing. Unfortunately, many times this causes him to do nothing when he needs to do something. His thought is, "I don't know what to do but I don't want to appear as if I don't know what I'm doing so I'll do nothing." Daniel was not negligent in his responsibilities. He may not have always known what to do but he prayed for wisdom and tried to do what was right from a pure heart. We (men / Fathers) may not know exactly what to do in every circumstance – pray for wisdom and do something. Make sure your motive is love and righteousness and get moving. Adam made the mistake of being silent when his wife was making a wrong choice. Don't be guilty of the same sin. Make a stand for what is right and don't neglect your responsibilities. When you do you put added pressure on your wife, your children and others.

Do not avoid responsibility

v5 Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

3. Daniel was faithful to God (and it was obvious to others). There was no basis for any charges against Daniel. He had a good reputation. And so they attacked his religious beliefs. That's what people will do. Jesus said rejoice when you are persecuted because of Him. Matt 5:11-12a - "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven..."

v10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

v11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.

4. Daniel was faithful to prayer

Because Daniel was faithful to God, he was faithful in prayer. His prayer was courageous. Even when Daniel knew he would be persecuted for his faith he prayed just as he had always done before. He was not shoving it in their faces, he wasn't parading his religion before them, he prayed in private for it says, "he went home to his upstairs room..." Daniel just did what was right. Daniel was faithful in prayer and we can learn from him what we need to know to about prayer: His prayer was in *faith* (obedient to pray as God had commanded), it was based on the *atonement made with blood* (he faced Jerusalem and the temple where blood had atoned for his sins and the sins of his people), it consisted of *worship* (toward Jerusalem - on his knees), *thanksgiving* (giving thanks), *petition* (he prayed-asking God for help), it was done with *consistency* (just as he had done before), *regularly* (three times a day) and in *humility* (on his knees).

Daniel had the courage to be faithful. Let us be as courageous in our faithfulness to God and to others. Let us be as faithful to a godly character and to our responsibilities.

## II. Courage tested (v12-17)

12 So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?"

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

13 Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." 14 When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

15 Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed."

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

17 A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed.

The older king (probably 62 years of age at the time) had to get glory – he may have felt it was now or never, even if he had to do it through pagan ways. So he issued a decree that all should pray to him only. Yet Daniel, who was even older than the king (probably in his late 80's), received glory through holy living (his glory was to live a life that would bring glory to God). Daniel's integrity made him a target. Faithfulness and honesty is disturbing to the disreputable. Sometimes doing what is right can land you in a lion's den. That is why it takes courage to be faithful.

## III. Courage vindicated (v18-24)

18 Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

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

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

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

When you suffer for doing right your courage will be vindicated. The testing will only prove your innocence. God will show favor toward you. He will protect and deliver you. He can shut the mouths of lions. For there is no more fitting an occasion for Divine

intervention them when a good man is in danger. "No wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God."

1 Peter 2:11-12

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

1 Peter 3:13-17

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

24 At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.  
(This was the law. This is how that culture understood justice. Even today in certain parts of the world where there is civil war and a man is wanted a relative could be killed just for being related to the fugitive. Men your sin can cause persecution and heart ache for your wife and children as well.)

IV. God's Kingdom advanced (v25-27)

25 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land:

"May you prosper greatly!

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

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

Daniel's faith inspired the King to believe also. The King issued a decree that all should pray to him thus discrediting the God of Daniel. Now he issues a decree that all must have reverence for the God of Daniel, for He is the living God who endures forever. His Kingdom will not be destroyed, His dominion will never end.

Through your courage to be faithful, even if it means persecution; being faithful through testing, not only will you be vindicated but it will result in the advance of God's kingdom to the glory of God.