

FACING THE LIONS

What do you think people mean when they speak of 'facing the lions'?

Has there been a time in your life when you were 'facing the lions' that someone else caused?

Has there been a time when you created your own lion's den?

I pray that we are deepening in relationships, building trust, learning to be vulnerable enough to share the times when life was difficult or painful or challenging.

LISTENING TO GOD IN HIS WORD

Throughout the previous chapters, God preserved His servants as they trusted in Him. Each servant faced a challenge that required the living God to intervene. Chapter six continues this motif as Daniel faces the lions.

Let's read this famous story with open eyes to what we learn about God and His ways.

Read chapter six and consider these questions.

At this point, Daniel is in his eighties. What do we learn about his faith, character, and reputation?

Daniel had a stellar reputation, even into his eighties when many people no longer regard people as significant. Notice that . . .

- People knew he was a transplant from Judah and yet high up in leadership in Babylon/Medo-Persia
- People knew that they could not catch him doing anything illegal, etc.
- People knew he was a man of faith who prayed regularly
- People knew he would not lie
- People knew he had abilities / gifts from God

How would you describe king Darius and his response to the request from the other officials?

It was prideful to think that people should pray to him. He quickly agreed to it.

He did not learn humility from his grandfather or father or anyone in the previous kingdom.

What do you observe about the relationship between the king and Daniel? From the king's responses and statements, what do you think Daniel might have taught the king?

Notice the king's response when he was told that it was Daniel who prayed to someone other than himself – "he has greatly distressed and determined to rescue Daniel."

Daniel had probably shared about his God, the "living God." He had, perhaps, shared how God had worked in his life with other kings and situations.

What do we learn about God in this story?

While we often think of Daniel as being the lead in this story, all of his power, courage, and ability came from God. It was God who had matured Daniel into the man he was. It was God who gave him words, love, actions, and even forgiveness. And, it was God who rescued Daniel.

What principles can we learn from Daniel?

Like his three friends, who faced the furnace, Daniel fully trusted God to rescue him from the lions, through the lions, or by the lions. His faith was strong and God used it to teach kings and his fellow captives/refugees.

Daniel's prayer life is an inspiration to us all.

Daniel's courage and integrity -his willingness to pray even though he would be killed, reminds us of what Jesus said: We will face opposition, even death as His followers. But we do not need to fear for He is with us and will even give us the words we need to say.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What impresses you about Daniel in this chapter?

This should be a good conversation.

We often think of peer pressure as something young students encounter. Yet, we all face it every day. Why is the tug to conform to the crowd so strong? What is the appeal?

This question has haunted me for much of my life. Why do I care so much about what other people think of me, my decisions, my abilities, etc.??

It was later in life when I began to realize that I was allowing people, even God's people, to shape how I felt or my opinion of God's design in my life.

The appeal for people to like us has become epidemic in America. It was always a problem (e.g. in my Junior High days), but now much more so.

I hope this is a good question to consider.

When is it difficult for you to navigate peer pressure? What helps you? How would you want us to pray for you?

This is a very personal question. I pray that we can listen well, encourage when needed, learn from each other, and pray that God helps us learn to live before Him who created and loves us.

What can we learn about following God in our culture from Daniel 6?

Opposition is real and will pop up when the devil gets opportunity. Daniel's peers saw opportunity to ruin him (kill him) and didn't hesitate. Jesus said this would happen (John 15-16).

We see that Jesus lived in a culture very determined to control him, limit him, and discredit him when opportunity came.

Ours is the same – telling us how to think, act, look, spend, etc.

APPLY IT THIS WEEK

We all have places where our culture has molded us. Romans 12:1-2 reminds us that we don't have to follow their lead. Instead, we can surrender to God and He will transform our minds and we can follow Him. Are there areas where culture has shaped you and you need God to reshape? Begin by confessing, ask God's Spirit to empower you to change, and ask a friend to pray.

PLEASE PRAY

Please join in prayer with us as we join in with the world in "GATHER25." See our website for more information.

- Pray for the 80+ students who were at camp last weekend.
- Pray for our Elders and Pastor Doug as we renew our plans to make disciples who make disciples.
- Pray for Emma Osterberg de Rodas as she leads the Micah House team.

I love our partnership in the gospel. Please continue to pray for our Trinity family, that we will be unified in the Spirit, and motivated to love and cherish God and one another. Steve