

THE PROPHETIC WORD TODAY

How to Smile When the Lions Are Hungry

Text: Daniel 6

INTRODUCTION: I have given the message on Daniel 6 the title “How to smile when the lions are hungry” so I am sure you immediately recognized that this chapter gives to us the story often told to children of Daniel in the lions’ den.

At first glance we might think that this story is awfully far removed from our own lives, and thus does not yield easily to any modern application. But such a quick analysis would be wrong. It is wrong because the immediate context of Daniel 6 is about the impending martyrdom of one of God’s saints, and more people have been martyred for their faith in Christ in the last century than in the previous 1900 years.

But this passage is applicable to our lives in times other than when death is threatening. There are other things that want to eat your lunch, or worse still, eat you for lunch. Sometimes we face problems that are worse than death.

The question raised here, and the answer given in Daniel 6, is how to live in peace, confidence, and security in the midst of the worst threats the world has to offer us. That is what Daniel did, and chapter 6 tells us how. It tells us how he did it, and it tells us how we can do it also.

What allowed Daniel to smile when the world was out to get him? Daniel had

I. A REPUTATION WORTH REMEMBERING

Daniel 6:1–9

¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; ² and over these, three governors, of whom **Daniel was one**, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. ³ Then this **Daniel distinguished himself** above the governors and satraps, because **an excellent spirit was in him**; and the king gave thought to **setting him over the whole realm**. ⁴ So the governors and satraps sought to find *some* charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could **find no charge or fault**, because **he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him**. ⁵ Then these men said, “We shall **not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God**.”

⁶ So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.” ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

A. Reputation – what comes to people’s mind when they think of you?

What is your reputation among people right now? Bad temper, complainer, fault finder
Or do people think of you as loving, helpful, kind, considerate, supportive?

Proverbs 22:1 *A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold.*

B. Because of Daniel's good reputation, he could only be attacked with a lie.

Beware when you hear someone attacking another with grandiose claims of support.

⁷ **All the governors** of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute...

You can't even get all the Baptists in a church to agree on everything much of the time, how could you get all these leaders spread over thousands of miles and speaking 30 different languages to agree on this law.

When people try to sway you by making bold claims that everybody says this or all the people know that, it is a good time to check the facts.

These evil men lied by exaggeration and planted their lie in the fertile mind of the king by flattery.

Daniel also had

II. HABITS WORTH HAVING

Daniel 6:10–11

¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, **he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed** and **gave thanks** before his God, **as was his custom** since early days. ¹¹ Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and **making supplication** before his God.

A. Man of Prayer

3 times in one day! (I would too if I were being thrown to the lions)...as was his custom

His custom since early days – Train up a child in the way he should go...

Not just in time of crisis

Even in crisis his prayer is garnished with thanksgiving

Making supplication – asking God

Seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened, ask and it will be given

B. Man of the Word

Why did Daniel pray toward Jerusalem? Because he knew what the Scriptures said in recording the prayer of Solomon.

1 Kings 8:46–50

⁴⁶ "When they sin against You (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; ⁴⁷ *yet* when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness'; ⁴⁸ and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, **and pray to You toward their land which You**

gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: ⁴⁹ then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, ⁵⁰ and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them

Why did Daniel pray on his knees? Because the Word of God said that was how Solomon had prayed.

1 Kings 8:54–55 ⁵⁴ And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. ⁵⁵ Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying:

III. FAITH WORTH FOLLOWING

Daniel 6:12–17

¹² And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, 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 does not alter."

¹³ So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

¹⁴ And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly 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. ¹⁵ Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

¹⁶ So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast *him* into the den of lions. *But* the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." ¹⁷ Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

A. Everybody is worried except Daniel!

1. The wicked, lying leaders are afraid the king will back down.
2. The king is afraid that his vanity will bring about the death of a man of God.
3. Daniel is not worried about anything.
 - a. He just keeps on praying,
 - b. believing God's Word,
 - c. and trusting His Lord.

B. Daniel's faith is different than the faith of most people.

1. Some have faith the king would not sign a bad law.
2. Some have faith the law would be repealed.
3. Some have faith the king will find a way out of the dilemma.

4. Some have faith the lions would not be there.
5. But Daniel just had faith in God.
 - a. Not faith in a particular outcome.
 - b. Faith that God would handle it.
 - c. Faith that God would do what was right and best.
 - d. Even if that meant being eaten by the lions.

**Faith is not believing God will do what we want.
Faith is believing God will do what He says.**

IV. A VICTORY WORTH VALUING

Daniel 6:18–28 ¹⁸ Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. ¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”

²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! ²² My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.”

²³ Now the king was exceedingly 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 injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

²⁴ And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom *men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end.* ²⁷ He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

²⁸ So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

A. Deliverance

B. Destruction of God’s enemies

C. Glory for the Lord

D. Prospered

Conclusion: And thus shall be our victory in Christ Jesus our Lord, my friend, if we follow this faith demonstrated by the man called Daniel.