

Sermon Followed by Service

June 2, 2024

Dan

I'm a little nervous. Last week I preached on the voice of the LORD, thunder and lightning, storms with tornado power all around. And do you remember what we heard last Sunday night? Thunder rumbling and rolling with tornado sirens sounding all around. This week I preach on something that sounds worse. Not just thunder and lightning and storms all around, but God giving his people over into the hands of the enemy. And part of me wonders: "When? When will it be my turn?" That's not something we want to think about, is it? But then we would miss out on some of our favorite lessons, like the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace and Daniel in the Lion's Den.

*What do you look forward to hearing about in our series
"Daniel in the Lion's World"?*

So what do you do? What do you do when your world falls apart? What do you do when your world is against you? What do you do?

What do you do?

That was the question facing Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It's 605 BC, six hundred years before Jesus was born, and it looked like he would never be born. It looked like God would never send the Forever King he promised to David and

Solomon and to you. If you're Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, or Abednego, your king doesn't care about God; some days he might pretend, but he doesn't really care about God and the Christ, his promised Forever King Jesus. All he cares about is doing his own thing - living the life of the world. And he's leading more and more people to think the same way. Now God has had enough. Through Jeremiah, he's given his warning in words: "Repent or else!" He's given his warning in action: when the northern ten tribes of Israel didn't listen, God handed them over to the Assyrians never to return. But Judah and Jerusalem wouldn't listen, so God handed them over to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.

What warnings has the LORD given us?

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were among those God gave over to the Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. What do you do if you're them? One day, you're a somebody in Judah and Jerusalem; you're part of the royal family. And then the enemy that has laid waste to so much of your countryside takes you captive, hostage, and drags you from your homeland 900 hundred some miles to the home of your enemy. Your old life is over, gone; your new world is against you and most everything you stand for. What do you do?

Imagine yourself a teenager taken from your home, taken to (the capital of your enemy). What goes through your mind?

You can do what so many others were doing. You can blame God and his prophets. You can lie and deny. You can

look for a strong man who says what you want to hear to save you. That's what so many people were doing back home in Judah and Jerusalem. Or you can hang your head in defeat, sit and weep, and call on God to strike down and crush the Babylonians and their babies. That's what we hear so many of Daniel's fellow captives doing in Psalm 137.

What does Psalm 137 teach us about facing disaster / disappointment? What about disaster/disappointment brought about by an enemy?

Or we can do the American patriot thing; we can think ourselves right and fight to the end. We can do what comes naturally; we can play the victim; we can play the hero; we can pick at our hurts and get angry and fight and hate and fight some more. I can imagine myself doing most all of those things.

Which of those responses to disaster / disappointment come naturally to you?

Or we can do what Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did. When Daniel writes about his predicament, he doesn't whine and complain; he doesn't lie and deny; he doesn't make himself out to be the victim of some great injustice. He doesn't blame God. Read chapter 9. Daniel confesses that with

Judah and Jerusalem he deserved God's judgment. So when Daniel writes that the Lord "gave" Judah's king into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel wasn't blaming God; Daniel was giving credit to God. Daniel wasn't in captivity because of Nebuchadnezzar; Daniel was in captivity because God gave him over to captivity. So Daniel didn't seek to subvert Nebuchadnezzar and the government that God put over him; Daniel set out to serve the government that God put over him - even though they were the enemy of his people, even though they were against him and his way of life and his beliefs. Why would Daniel serve such a government, a government opposed to his Lord? Because God had made it clear to the exiles that they weren't in Babylon to fight the Babylonians, but they were there to serve the government that God had chosen to rule over them.

*Why would God want his people to serve the enemy?
What might that mean for us?*

I imagine some might have thought Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be traitors. But Daniel wasn't hung up on national pride; he knew how ungodly his people could be; he knew how wrong his people could be. Instead, Daniel knew he had a greater King and kingdom. And in allegiance to that greater King and kingdom, Daniel was determined - no matter how his old life was in ruins, no matter how his new world was set against him - Daniel was determined to dedicate his life - not to reliving the past, and not to fighting the present, but - to showing the greater glory of his Lord and King.

*Where do we see that same attitude in our country today?
(Trick ?)*

Now, please don't get the idea that Daniel just rolled over and played Babylonian. Nebuchadnezzar tried to turn Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into Babylonians. He tried to buy their allegiance with the best of foods and the best of wines. He set them up with new names pointing to the Babylonian gods. But Daniel couldn't be so easily bought or turned away from God. He set his mind to remain true to the Word and ways of God - even if it meant sacrifice and danger.

*What does the "Ruler of the Kingdom of the Air" use to
distract you from your allegiance to the Lord and his
Kingdom?*

And what happened? God blessed! In a world set against God's Word and God's ways, God gave Daniel strength and courage to stand up for God's Word and ways. And we don't want to miss this - with courage and strength, God also gave Daniel the wisdom to speak with gentleness and respect. Instead of looking for a fight, Daniel looked to be faithful. And God blessed. God blessed Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in their giving up for God; he blessed them on their vegetable and water diet to be healthier than those indulging on the king's diet. At the same time, God blessed them as they

studied to serve Nebuchadnezzar; after three years of training to serve the king, the king found them ten times better than all his magicians and spell casters.

We might wonder: “Nice story, but what does that have to do with us.” Again and again in our lesson, Daniel tells us: “God gave.” When life goes bad, when our world is against us - what is so easy to think? How we are missing out; how God is holding back from us; how God is taking from us. Daniel teaches us to look for how God is giving. Even when life goes bad, even when our world is against us, we get to know we have a God who is giving to us and giving for us. I said it last week; I’ll say it again this week: **“He sets a table before us even in the presence of our enemies.”** Even in our trouble, even when it seems our world is against us, God is giving all things to work for our good.

When Daniel wrote our lesson, Daniel already knew how God was working all things, not only for his good, but for our good. But when Daniel was living our lesson, he didn’t yet know how God would give and work his good. In the same way, when life goes bad for us, when it seems our world is against us, we might not yet know how God will give and work his good. But we do know this - we have a God who - in the midst of trouble, when life seems to be going wrong, when our world seems to be against us - we have a God who gives and works his good.

How do you know you have a God who gives and works his good even in trouble?

How do we know that? We know how God gave and worked his blessing in the life of Daniel. And better, we know how God gave and worked his blessing in the life of Jesus. In a world that had gone wrong, in a world that had turned against him, God so loved the world that he gave - **“he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”** We’ll hear from Daniel about that Son in later chapters. But I don’t want to steal Daniel’s thunder. So let me tell you this - For the times we have chosen the life of the world instead of God’s life, for the times God could give us over to judgment, God gave us Jesus to take our place, to take our sin, to take the judgment we deserve. Why? To give. To give us his forgiveness and peace. But God doesn’t just give us forgiveness and leave us to fend for ourselves. For the times our life has gone bad, God is giving us Jesus with his promise of life made right. For the times our world seems to be against us, God is giving us Jesus ruling for us. Why? Not just to give us comfort and convenience; not just to set us up for the good life out there. But to give us what we need for a far better life, to set us up as his people shining his light, working his blessing - in here and out there - like Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Amen.

How is God setting you up to be like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

June 1 & 2, 2024

THE SERVICE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we experience an environment that can be so hostile to God and his people.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we begin a sermon series (Daniel in the Lion's World) and see how the Lord worked in and through Daniel in an environment hostile to God and his people.

OPENING HYMN

"God of Grace and God of Glory"

Hymn 770

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your pow'r;
crown your ancient Church's story, bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us scorn the Christ, assail his ways.
From the fears that long have bound us free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY (SUNG)

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST (SUNG)

CW 176

Refrain: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. *Refrain*

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. *Refrain*

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen. Amen. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord our God, so govern the nations on earth and direct the affairs of this world that your church may worship you in peace and joy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Daniel 1

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service 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, well informed, quick to understand, and 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, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

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

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 and 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 and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

To these four young men God gave knowledge and 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 into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar.

The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter 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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 97A

1 God reigns! Let earth re - joice! Let o - ceans
 2 God's fire ig - nites the clouds with judg - ment
 3 False i - dols rise to claim the weak - ness
 4 The ra - diance of God's light beams joy in -

shout God's might! Borne up by truth and
 swift and just; the e - vil find their
 of our pride, but can - not touch the
 to our days; now filled with God's own

right - eous - ness, God's throne is our de - light.
 deeds in vain; God's foes are brought to dust.
 faith - ful ones, for God stands at our side.
 peace and love, our hearts re - sound with praise.

Refrain

Re - joice! Re - joice! God reigns! Let earth re - joice!

SECOND READING

1 Peter 2:11-17

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

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.

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

1 Peter 2:9

Alleluia! But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:13–16

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Brothers, Sisters, Let Us Gladly”

Hymn 748

Brothers, sisters, let us gladly give to God our all, our best:
service hearty, thorough, honest, with a living love impressed.
All our duty, all our striving, all our time to him belong;
praise him, then, with true devotion, come before him with a song.

By his mercy, by his bounty, by the gift of Christ, his Son,
what great goodness he has shown us, what high marvels he has done!
Let us to him promptly, freely, yield our bodies and our souls,
thankful that his love protects us, that his wisdom all controls.

Gracious Lord, accept our service for the sake of Christ, your Son;
lo, our hope abides now only in the righteousness he won.
Bless and save us, help and guide us, watch to comfort and restore,
till in heav'n we rest rejoicing, praising you forevermore.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray, brothers and sisters, for the holy Church of God throughout the world, that God the almighty Father gather and guide it so that we may worship him in peace and tranquility:

Almighty and eternal God, you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ. Guide the work of the Church. Help it to persevere in faith, proclaim your Word, and bring salvation to people everywhere. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our pastors and teachers and all leaders of the Church, and for all the people of God:

Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the Church and makes it holy. Strengthen and uphold all who serve you and your people. Keep them in health and safety for the good of the Church. Help each of us to do faithfully the work to which you have called us. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who do not believe in Christ, that the light of the Holy Spirit may show them the way to salvation:

Almighty and eternal god, enable those who do not acknowledge Christ to receive the truth of the gospel. Help us, your Church, to grow in love for you and for one another, so that we become more perfect witnesses of your love for all people. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who serve in public office, that God may guide their minds and hearts, so that all of us may live in true peace and freedom:

Almighty and eternal God, graciously direct those who have been set in positions of authority among us, so that people everywhere may enjoy justice, peace, freedom, and a share in the goodness of your creation. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray that God, the almighty and merciful Father, may heal the sick, comfort the dying, give safety to travelers, and free those unjustly deprived of liberty:

Almighty and eternal God, you give strength to the weary and new courage to those who have lost heart. In your mercy hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble, that they may have the joy of receiving your help in their need. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

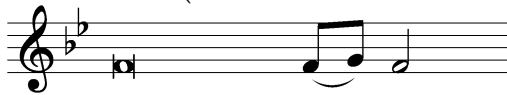
LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)



The Lord be with you.



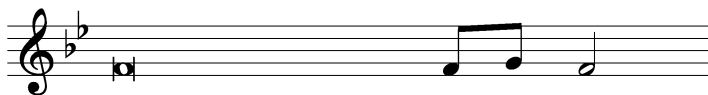
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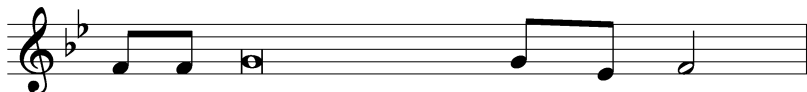
Lift up your hearts.



We lift them up to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (SUNG)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

JESUS, LAMB OF GOD (SUNG)

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us"

Hymn 767

Lord of glory, you have bought us with your lifeblood as the price,
never grudging for the lost ones that tremendous sacrifice;
and with that have freely given blessings countless as the sand
to the unthankful and the evil with your own unsparing hand.

Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give you gladly, freely, of your own.
With the sunshine of your goodness melt our thankless hearts of stone
till our cold and selfish natures, warmed by you, at length believe
that more happy and more blessed 'tis to give than to receive.

Wondrous honor you have given to our humblest charity
in your own mysterious sentence, "You have done it all for me."
Can it be, O gracious Master, that you need what we can do,
saying by your poor and needy, "Give as I have given to you"?

Lord of glory, you have bought us with your lifeblood as the price,
never grudging for the lost ones that tremendous sacrifice.
Give us faith to trust you boldly, hope, to stay our souls on you;
but, oh, best of all your graces, with your love our love renew.

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

"Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways"

Hymn 705

Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his statutes still!

Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!

Order my footsteps by your Word, and make my heart sincere;
let sin have no dominion, Lord, but keep my conscience clear.

Assist my soul, too apt to stray, a stricter watch to keep,
and should I e'er forget your way, restore your wand'ring sheep.

Make me to walk in your commands— 'tis a delightful road—
nor let my head or heart or hands offend against my God.

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