

Standing fast by God's grace (Quality: Average)

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- [0 : 00] I'll just turn to Daniel, chapter 1, friends. I know we went through this about a four nights ago, just roughly running through one or two things concerning Daniel and his friends.
- But again this morning, we see some things that would help us and encourage us in the things of our God. But I think the first thing to notice is in, and we'll just look at these four things quickly, in verse 2 it tells us that the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand, that's into Nebuchadnezzar's hand.
- God gave. And then from verses 3 to 7, we find here is Nebuchadnezzar tries to erase Jehovah, God, out of the minds of these four princes.
- And it's good to notice this with these young men. And then from verse 8, we see again the Daniel purposes in his heart.
- And we read in verse 9, Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. So we see here again, God has worked faith in Daniel, and also we see God's favor upon them.
- [1 : 39] And then in verse 17, we find after all this instruction in the foreigner's household, he tells us, after these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.
- So we see there that God gave them into the end of the enemy, the enemy trying to remove God out of their minds and their lives.
- But God gave faith to Daniel and favored him. And in the end, even in the enemy's school rules, God increased their knowledge and helped them.
- It's amazing to think that God would give his people over into the hand of the enemy.
- But God had warned that judgment would come upon his people if they were disobedient. And here we find that they're given into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King Jehoiachin.
- [3 : 02] He was an evil king. He was the king, remember, who burnt the scroll that was brought to him, a barrow from Jeremiah.
- And he burnt it on the fire. He was so evil and corrupt in all his ways. Nebuchadnezzar doesn't take this king back to Babylon.
- He leaves him there as a puppet ruler in Jerusalem. For a roundabout to search in the scriptures, it seems to be about eight years.
- He's in that place. Until he rises up against Nebuchadnezzar, then he is dealt with accordingly. But meanwhile, Nebuchadnezzar has rather an unusual way of dealing with things.
- He's trying, isn't he, as the king of Babylon to conquer the world. That's the great process and purpose that is entirely in. And he knows that in taking these many lands and adding them to his kingdom, soon the numbers of the subjects in these other lands would outnumber his own subjects and his troops.
- [4 : 23] And so he goes another way about it. He works in this way. He takes from these different companies, these different countries, people to trade up in the ways of himself.

To teach them. So that they will in turn rule under him. And this is how he seems to deal with the situation. God has given him the victory and now he indeed takes these young men, not just these four, but others as well, into the place of instruction.

We read here in verses 3-7 of the main characters of the book. Verse 7 there.

Daniel, Ananiah, Shadrach, sorry, Daniel, Ananiah, Meshiel, and Azariah.

Notice that their names end with the word of God or the name of God. El or lam.

[5 : 49] Thinking of Jehovah God and thinking of El which means God. I've noticed that the names that are given to them are the names of the gods of the heathen.

Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego. It seems that even their very names could be part of the indoctrination of the heathen king and bringing them to be useful in his service.

It's really good to notice in this place that how mighty our God is that he is able to have these four young men put in the camp of the enemy.

is able even though they are to be indoctrinated in every way in heathenism yet our God is able to keep them in the enemy's camp.

It's a good thing to think about that to remember the power of our God and to remember also Moses who was nurtured in all the things of the Egyptians all the things concerning Pharaoh yet God as he put him into that camp as a lady lifted out of the waters and came to the floor by his mother himself he had him brought there to be taught for a purpose that he is known to God alone.

[7 : 19] God teaches spiritually but he uses in this way this education to teach. He tells us in that verse 4 children in whom was no blemish but well favored and skillful in all wisdom and coming in knowledge and understanding science and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace in whom they might teach the learning the tongue of the chaldeans here we have Daniel and his companions and there to be instructed pressure is to be put upon them to lose their identity warfare and there not knowably so it's pressure is put upon us you and I that we might lose the identity of God. We might lose the name of Christian. We might lose that effect of the stamp of the love and grace of God upon our hearts. That we who are a peculiar people, the world would indeed take us, and the world would indeed cause us to lose our identity. But we need to see here the grace that was given to these young men. God allowed it to be. All things are in his due restriction. Here we find them right in the midst. It couldn't have been any nearer in the midst that their very names were of the even gods, and they were even teaching them. But we find Daniel speaks, and he makes a request. It's good to notice that his request is refuted at first. But he persists. And as he persists with his request, it is granted. Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore he requested that the prince of the eunuchs, that he might not defile himself. What a spirit. Remember a young man, only fourteen and fifteen of the most. But there, standing against all the power of Babylon, against the king and all authority. Not in a, shall we say, a discourteous way. It was a courteous way that he broached the subject to the eunuchs prince that was in charge of him. And you know, it's lovely to see, isn't it, Daniel had purpose, but God had gone before.

That's what we want to see, friends, the dovetailing of things in our lives. Daniel had purpose, but God had purpose, but God had purpose, but God had purpose, and God had purpose. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. So there we see this dovetailing concerning these things. But they made their stand. It was a no compromise stand. It was a standing fast.

thing that he was a no compromise stand. And think of it, friends. The Lord Jesus teaches in one place, that he who is faithful in a little will be trusted with much. That's in Luke's trust. That's a very important thought. And Daniel here is faithful in a little. And eventually, he will be entrusted with much. God is the keeper of his word and he fulfills indeed all his promises.

God is the keeper of mine. No compromise. No compromise. It's not, is it just, oh, well, we'll compromise on the little things and then we'll stand on the important big-looking things. No. It's a no compromise all the way through is a standing against the power of the enemy in a right and proper spirit.

That's what we see before us. A purposing in the heart by the grace given to him and the faith which God aggraced upon him to stand against all the power of the enemy.

[12 : 49] God was there at work. See, a friend, the lovely truth here is this, that whenever God would bring us into trying circumstances, into temptations and tribulation, then God is there and has also gone before us to make a way of escape.

That's the wonderful light and the power of our glorious and wonderful God. You can see, can't you, even in the rebelling of Jonah, he fled from the presence of the Lord.

He was cast out of the ship. He was swallowed by a great fish. But God had in all these things gone before him and worked in his soul and in his spirit to bring him to that place where he said, salvation is of the Lord.

And then he was spewed up upon the seashore. God's purposes worked out in and through the experience of his people.

God effectively working the perseverance friends of the saints in their life and their living and their service is not in the flesh.

[14 : 13] It's not in the power of man. It's not in man's abilities. It's in God, the Lord God Jehovah. That's why David said against Goliath, the battle is the Lord's.

And here we see these four young men, Daniel, Ananiah, Mishael and Azariah, we see them standing in the power of God, standing together against all the power of the enemy.

That's the great picture. And see how it takes place for us. They didn't want to drink the wine of the king.

They didn't want to eat his meat. It says they wanted to take the pulse, which really when it says in verse 12, let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink, it means really fruit and vegetables.

That's what it means, just water. That's what the picture is before us. And their countenance was so good in the sight of the eunuchs, whereas the others were not in the same condition.

[15 : 28] It tells us in verse 15, and at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion and the king's meat.

Think of it. Dare to be a Daniel, yeah, that's it, isn't it? Dare to trust God. Dare to do what you believe is right. And what does God do? God honors them that honor him.

That's the great truth that is before us. He that is faithful in little will be faithful in much. In the test and the trial God gives grace.

Daniel purposes in his heart and there indeed we find the victory. Well, what happens in verse 17? We find now that God gave the God who had given them into the end of the enemy.

Nebuchadnezzar who tried to drive out God. They trusted and believed in God who had given them faith and favor.

[16 : 36] Now we find in verse 17 as for these poor children God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

God honored them. That's the great picture. God had brought them through their experience with flying colors.

Just notice verse 17 he'd given them gifts to enable them in their work and their ministry.

Look at verse 18. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

A day of reckoning friends. Here was the day of reckoning they were to stand before the king. Now notice the examination not a paper one but an oral examination.

[17 : 52] And the king communed with them and among them all was found none like Daniel, Ananiah, Mishael, Azariah. Therefore stood they before the king.

The examination was direct, it was open, it was personal. He really knew how they reacted to his questions. there was no fiddling friends, no paper examination here.

This was an open encounter between the king and the four princes. And it tells us in verse 20, and notice this friends, and in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all Israel.

Not only were they better, they were ten times better. It was observed by the king that there was a great difference between these four and the others.

And what was the great difference friend? I wonder if the king would say, ah, these are better men. But where would Daniel and his friends be looking?

[19 : 15] Ah, God has made the difference. God has given us the ability. God has given us the gifts. God has enabled us, and will yet enable us.

It's God who has promised, who has kept his word. How many times have found that thing? When God has given us a service, a calling, God has never sent us out on our own charge, but God has provided for us.

God has made a way in the wilderness. God has given us the words to speak. God has directed our thoughts and our minds.

God has delivered us out of all temptation. God has been effective. And notice, you know, we sang that hymn, the great single, speaks indeed there about our office.

of course, the office really there is of a Christian waiting for the coming of the Lord. But still, notice the words, ye servants of the Lord, each in his office wait, observant of his heavenly word, and watchful at his gate.

[20 : 45] Let all your lamps be bright, and trim the golden flame. Gird up your loins as in his side, for awful is his name.

And notice that verse 21, of Daniel, and Daniel continued, even unto the first year of King Cyrus.

It's a continuing thing. It's a continuing account. You can tune in any Sunday morning to Radio Shepard. you can hear there a man who was supposedly converted at the same, or around the same time as I was at the Baptist Chapel.

He is now a man of the world. Temperance is materially minded and worldly things with things of the church and the Bible.

And tragically, a man who set up well, oh, he set up well. He did run well in the beginning. God seemed to open up a way for him, and he was indeed brought into the ministry.

[22 : 11] God blessed him in that ministry. But yet, sadly now, he that ran well did not continue. Beware things.

Not of him that willeth, it's not of him that run, but of God's assuredness. You need to know, indeed in our calling, that this is the calling of God.

And if it be the calling of God, it will be like Daniel. there will be a continuous, there will be an endurance, even unto the end.

That's the great truth. Why? Because there is God's part in it, and God's part is the main part. Once we lean over to our own knowledge, even if Daniel and his friends had relied upon these gifts, and these blessings that God had, if they relied upon them, they would have been bereft of the blessing of God himself.

Our God has to often teach us not to rely upon our abilities, upon our blessings, upon the way God has mercifully dealt with us. Oh, we can learn from them, but never rely upon them.

[23 : 31] We have to constantly rely upon Christ. If we be saved by grace, we cannot indeed rely upon that salvation, but we must ever rely upon him to save us, because he saves us day by day, and we'll save us on that great, an awful day.

We need to be noticeable in these things. Now, friends, just one or two things I'd like to draw about this, if we can. First of all, history is in God's help.

I suppose this week has been, maybe not to us all in one way, but in some way, a week of changes. My son-in-law was saying to me yesterday, this week, God passed, has seen some of the biggest changes I've known.

He says, tell me. He says, first of all, he says, in South Africa, we've got a different kind of government and a different settlement, completely.

It'll never be the same anymore. What it will be, we don't know, but it'll never be the same anymore. He says, in politics, John Smith is dying.

[25 : 03] And it won't be the same. It can't be the same. There will be politics going on and other leaders raised up, but that's finished. He says, I went down the other day to London to a funeral and the young lady, 24 years old, gone.

The family will never be the same. The friendship will never be the same. Praise God, she's gathered unto the Lord, amen, but still, these things will never be the same. He says, into our household, we've been born a little baby girl.

We're glad, but things will never be the same. And they won't, friend. And we are a people of change and alteration. And we need to be ready, because sometimes we think, don't we, we're always going to live here.

It's always going to be the same, but it's not. He will change and change and change. And we need to have Daniel's God, friend. We need this God who knows no change, the God who's in control of all.

And if this be our God, then what blessings and what hope we've got. See what he did with Daniel. See how he helped Daniel. And is it not so that he went out his people?

[26 : 22] Yes, change has come. God is sovereign. He'll never do the same. But with God, our fellowship is always rich and the same.

But he's the same yesterday, today, ever. And the other thing is this, honoring God. Honoring God.

God is a God who is not one where we honor that he might twist the arm of God to get something from it.

But the great truth of scripture is this, we're God's people, honor and respect God, then God blesses us. He honors them. I couldn't just remember the name of the new man for this long time at all.

Because there's all the thickness in the sport today. Thickleness that I cannot understand. But this young man was insisting that he would not run a train on the Lord's day.

[27 : 39] Yet he felt he should use his physical power, message, strength to run the race in the Olympics.

You might remember quite a while ago when he refused. Many tried to persuade him. Even the Prince of Wales at that time tried to persuade him.

But he could not be persuaded. He would not run on the Lord's day. So he had to run in another race at a different distance. Now if you know anything about athletics in this sort of stage, it's different to just ordinary running.

And one tries to run especially at that distance. But he had to go into another race, not on the Lord's day. when he went to the starting, someone pressed a piece of paper into his hand.

They went on and I were on the man. And he won the race. And he won the race. Faithful.

[29 : 00] He was God. That's our God. In this day, it's tragic to see Christians. Well, they say they're Christians.

No am I to do this. One minute they say, is it the triple jumper? I am not jumping or running on the Lord's day.

It does not glorify God. But as soon as they put all the triple jumper, whatever it is, on the Lord's day, then he changes his mind and says, oh, well, I need to glorify God in my jumping, even if it's on the Lord's day.

It seems that there's a fickleness in the principles that set before. Friends, we need to honor God. Honor God in everything, all the way through.

And then as we see here, he will honor his people. Now, another thing, and I'm not a wonderful person on this, as you know, by my speech and my going on words.

[30 : 11] Education. Education, friends, is something we must not despise. We must utilize education.

But we must not idolize education. Just get out of this. we must not despise it. We must utilize it.

But we must not idolize it. That's what happened with these friends here. With Daniel and his group. They utilized it for the glory of God.

But they didn't idolize it. They didn't get lost in it. They used it for its end. What is education that we might be instructed?

Yes, I'm talking materially and physically now, as well as spiritually, that we might be useful. What is it, teacher, that he should try to bring down deep and dark and serious things that we might understand them and learn them and take them in?

[31 : 22] Here we see education in his right place. That's the people that is close. What reason do it?

Just get it, degrees, education, going on crosses, just for the sake. That's a tragedy. That is a tragedy.

Friends, it should be for the usefulness, for the purpose. You know, even in his position, Daniel, neither did he do that, nor did he desire high positions.

He just continued in the way he was, and God saw that he got the right position at the right time. altar to Trescar.

Notice this. Daniel wasn't even at this time saying, if I was there, or if I got that position, or if I got major's position, I'd do this or that.

[32 : 51] He never said that. he just got on with what he had to do where he was. He was faithful where he was.

That's the truth, friends. And we need to beware. Beware of any enticements that might take us, any promptings of the enemy of our souls that might try to move us.

we need to be sure we're in the place where God wants us to be, like Daniel was, and stay in that place where God had put him.

Mind you, you have a job to get out of it, but still, he condescended to his situation to learn in it, and to trust his God.

Friends, we see before us here, these four young men, they were men of God, trusted God.

[33 : 56] And you couldn't have had a more difficult situation than theirs. Oh, but my situation, oh, the modern world, oh, today, friends, there's nothing different.

There's nothing different. There's nothing different in the hearts and the minds of men, the pressures of the devil. Or it might be an electronic age, but still, the main principles, the lusts, the desires, all these things are all the same.

When we look at the spiritual, so may God give us grace that we might be able to learn from this scripture.

Daniel chapter 1, the Lord gave Jehovah, Oricum, King of Judah, into his hand. That's Nebuchadnezzar.

God is sovereign. And then secondly, when those round about us would try to remove from us that which is our desire of God, let them try.

[35 : 14] Here we see them trying to drive God out of these for your men. But we read, God gave faith and God gave favor.

Daniel purposed, verse 8. Verse 9, God has brought Daniel into favor and tender love. God goes before. God enables to stand.

This is faith. What is faith? Faith is that which is tested and tried. And finally, God gave in verse 17.

And then in verse 24, we read of the continuance. God got the glory friends. Because God was in this issue from the beginning to the end.

May God give us grace to know our God all the way through. Amen. Our closing hymn is number 772.

[36 : 30] Christ is the keeper of his saints. He guards them by his power, subdues their numerous complaints in every gloomy hour.

772. Amen.