

From Discouragement to Destiny

12 - The Art of Rest
Church on the Park | Sunday, 26 OCT 2014

Text: Daniel 6:23; Deuteronomy 31:8

Theme: If rightly understood, discouraging circumstances are like a womb, propelling us into God's destiny.

Intro: Last week we saw that the devil uses **false accusations** to **distort** people's view of God, one another and themselves. This week we'll look at another weapon in Satan's arsenal: **discouragement**. Discouragement blocks us from receiving God's hope and robs us from true rest.

One example of this is Exodus 6:9: "They did not listen to Moses on account of their discouragement and cruel bondage." Moses was bringing a message of hope to the Israelites from God himself. God had come down to deliver them, but they were so discouraged that they could not believe or receive what God was going to do. Discouragement blinds our eyes.

Last week I was discouraged about getting two stories in Daniel mixed up. But, all this week I felt God saying to me, "Read it again." When I read it again, I never expected to see everything I saw in that passage.

The heart of what I want to say to you this morning is in the story of **Daniel and the Lion's Den** (Daniel 6:1-28). I especially want us to see the similarities between **Daniel and Jesus**. Daniel's life is prophetic of Jesus' cross and resurrection. I also want us to see that God can take our most **discouraging** moments and turn it into our **deliverance**, bringing us higher than we had ever thought possible.

Part 1 (Daniel 6:1-9) - Daniel Falsely Accused

1) **Maintain your Integrity No Matter What the Enemy Incites Against You**

- Daniel is **innocent**, neither corrupt nor negligent, just like Jesus.
- Because his fellow coworkers are **jealous** and intimidated by Daniel's excellency, they seek to lodge a **false accusation** against him.
 - Remember, that the Pharisees handed over Jesus because of envy (Matt. 27:18, Mark 15:10).
- The leaders of the Kingdom devise a scheme to pull down Daniel: to make it **unlawful to pray** to anyone, but the King for a month, under penalty of the lion's den.
- In the same kind of way, the **Pharisees** tried to **trap Jesus** (Matt. 22:18; John 8:6)
- Our **application**: live with **integrity** and do **not** be **disheartened** when the enemy plots against you. (**Matt. 5:12-13**)

Part 2 (Daniel 6:10-15) - Daniel Lets Nothing Stop Him

2) **Let no Discouraging Situation Deter You from Devoted Prayer**

- Daniel doesn't allow their schemes to **deter** him. He **continues** to **pray**, with the window open, **three** times a day.
- How can you **escape** a trap, a discouraging situation?
 - Through **persistent prayer**
 - Let no scheme of men or devils deter you from prayer
 - **When discouraged, pray!**
 - Prayer welcomes the Kingdom of God into your situation
- What was **Jesus** doing when Judas **betrayed** him? (Matt. 26:36-46)
 - He was **praying!** Notice how Jesus prayed **three times** in **Gethsemane** and Daniel is recorded as praying three times a day (Matt. 26:44).
- Just like Jesus was arrested when praying, Daniel was arrested when praying.
 - Notice both stories bring out that they were **kneeling** while praying (Luke 22:41).
- Notice that the **King** is **distressed** just like **Pilate**, but cannot stop the plan (Matt. 27:18-26).

Part 3 (Daniel 6:16-23) - Daniel in the Lion's Den

3) God will Deliver You from Death and Give You Resurrection Life

- Daniel is thrown into the **lion's den**
 - There can be **no circumstance more discouraging**, and yet we do not see Daniel fretting.
 - This reminds us of Jesus going to the **cross**. The Bible describes Jesus cross as if he is being thrown to the **wild animals**. (**Psalm 22:12-18**)
- Notice the **stone** that was **sealed** in front of the lion's den
 - This reminds us of **Jesus' tomb**. The stone sealed in front so that there was no way of escape. (Matt. 27:66)
- The king **can't sleep**, just like **Pilate's wife** couldn't sleep (Matt. 27:18).
- Here's the amazing part: Daniel does **not die**. God sends an angel to stop the mouth of the lion.
- The king finds daily alive at the **first light of dawn**.
 - Again, reminding us of the **resurrection** (Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1)
- Here's what Daniel's friends said many years before to the King of Babylon (Daniel 3:16-18).
- **Even if** death seems to defeat us, it's only a doorway into God's **eternity**.

Part 4 (Daniel 6:24-28) - God Exalts Daniel and His Name

4) God Will Turn Your Tragedy into a Triumph

- It's important that we are **encouraged** about the **Good News** of our God. Otherwise, we won't **spread** the Good News and the Kingdom will not grow through us.
- Watch how God **turns** this situation around. At first, Daniel was put to death, but now all his accusers are put to death.
 - It reminds me of a **chess** game where a player has been constantly put in check, but in one counter move he puts his opponent into checkmate.
- Through the **cross**, Jesus **spoiled** principalities and powers and made a spectacle of them. The powers of darkness sent Jesus to the cross, but it was that very cross that defeated them. (Col 2:15)
 - This reminds us of **Pharaoh chasing Moses** through the Red Sea. At the Red Sea they planned to kill them, but instead Pharaoh was defeated.

- God has a way of turning your **tragedy** into **triumph**
- Notice that now the message of Israel's God as King goes to the **nations**.
 - This is also what happened after **Jesus' resurrection**—the **Gospel** went **everywhere** (Mark 16; Matt. 28; Acts)
- “So Daniel was taken up out of the den and **no injury** whatever was found on him, because he had **trusted** in his God” (Daniel 6:23).
- Daniel became **successful** under Darius.
- Could Darius be the Cyrus that gave the order to rebuild the temple? Could it be that it happened after this incident?

Conclusion: God is able to take our deepest discouragements and make them doorways into our destiny. Don't focus on the situation, focus on the Saviour!

END NOTES

Continually we see in God's word, God exhorted his leaders and people to not be discouraged. (Deu. 1:21, 31:8; Josh. 1:9, 8:1, 10:25, 1 Chron. 22:13, 28:20, 2 Chron. 20:15, 17, 32:17.

Discouragement causes us to lose our inner strength, keeping us from taking hold of our destiny (our destination in God).