

Daniel 6:16-23 | *We Will Declare the Wonderful Works of God*

Opening Thought: When a football team recently faced an insurmountable challenge, when it seemed they could not possibly win the game, a series of events happened in just the right way to give them an improbable victory. Afterwards some of the players proclaimed how much they had believed in themselves. They never doubted their victory. They never doubted their power to overcome. Believing in themselves gave them the power to do the impossible.

Many people face adversity in just such a way. “Believe in yourself,” they say, and you can overcome anything. However, a child of God has a different perspective. When we face adversity we quickly realize that we cannot believe in ourselves. We despair of our own efforts. We must look to the only One who can rescue us, our gracious God. In that way God takes us through testing to bring us closer to him, not closer to ourselves. Examine Daniel 6:16-23 with this in mind. How did this experience bring Daniel closer to his Savior God?

Read Daniel 6:16-23

¹⁶ So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!”

¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel’s situation might not be changed. ¹⁸ Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

¹⁹ At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den. ²⁰ When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?”

²¹ Daniel answered, “May the king live forever! ²² My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.”

²³ The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Martin Luther had his share of troubles in life. His enemies threatened his life. He could understand Daniel’s experience. In fact, the account of Daniel in the lion’s den is one of the assigned readings for Reformation Sunday. Luther wrote, “*If you want fire, you must endure the smoke. If you are a Christian, you are called under the cross. Therefore the prophet says, ‘We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.’*” Passing through problems and persecution in life should not surprise us. Daniel 6 and many other Scriptures give us this perspective.

Agree or Disagree: Christians should welcome troubles in life as God’s way to bless us.

1. **Vs 16-18** Dr. Rick Sacra is a family doctor from Massachusetts. Six years ago he was delivering babies at ELWA hospital in Monrovia, Liberia, helping Ebola victims. What makes this unusual? Dr. Sacra nearly died of Ebola. When death looked imminent, he said, “I was just focusing on the Lord. I tell you I hung on to the Lord’s Prayer like a

drowning man. I prayed through that prayer many times a day and just wept through it most of the time." His wife said, "You just learn to trust God more deeply. You just learn to trust that He's in control and that He's really good."

When problems and pains bring us to the lowest point, to the place where we cannot save ourselves, we more urgently look up to our Savior. How did this work for Daniel?

2. **Vs 19-20** When a child of God passes through suffering and pain he may first consider, "What will God teach me? How will he bless me? How will he strengthen me to handle this?" Yet the LORD may use problems in life to influence or direct other people along with the person experiencing the difficulty. Consider how Daniel's situation had a powerful effect on King Darius and others. Daniel's situation greatly troubled Darius because his own actions had caused it. Darius invoked the name of God and recognized Daniel's service and devotion to God. Later Darius compelled the entire empire to honor "the God of Daniel" (v 26).

Demonstrate how your acceptance of suffering could bless an unbelieving acquaintance of yours.

3. **Vs 21-23** How did the LORD rescue Daniel? He sent his angel to shut the mouths of the lions. He proved to Darius that Daniel had done nothing wrong and should not suffer any further punishment. From that day on "*Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian*" (v 28). When God allows his child to pass through trials and tribulations he also provides "*a way out so that we can stand up under it*" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God's holy angels were with Daniel. Can you find three promises God makes in His Word regarding the angels' ministry to believers? Can you think of a life experience in which you *believe* God sent his angel to rescue you?

Note how Daniel uses his experience to declare his innocence before the king. List three reasons for Daniel establishing his innocence. Relate how this will help you bear up under someone's false accusation.

Prayer: LORD God, Refuge of your people, bless us in the times of testing you send in to our lives. Help us to handle the pressure and remain steadfast. Keep us calm in the midst of trouble. Give us confidence when we fear what others might do to us. Strengthen us in your love so that we will not falter. Give us courage so that we do not fall apart. Guide us to the goal that you have set for us when we face our troubles. Amen.