

Introduction: I don't think about this often (usually when I see someone with sad eyes), but I believe one thing that gives great sadness to God's heart is people who do not have a strong, vital and intimate relationship with Him. God desires a relationship with people more than knowing large portions of the Bible, more than spending an hour a day in prayer with God, and more than doing good works in obedience of the faith of Jesus. *** It IS being aware God is with me moment-by-moment and thanking Him in my heart often for His presence with me. It IS silently asking for His guidance, wisdom and love to help me every time I have an activity transition, and even when I take five minutes to a half hour to pray or to read His Word. It IS trusting He loves me and will always give me grace so all I do, say, feel and think will be pleasing to Him and give Him glory. This is a short outline of an intimate relationship with God. *** We can learn much from our story. It has human jealousy and favoritism. It shows how a pious man lives his life before God and men with courageous faith. *** But the heart of the story is never explicitly stated. It motivated Daniel to do all he did, both at eighty years of age put in a den of lions under Darius and his courage to live by God's dietary code at fourteen years old under Nebuchadnezzar who wanted him to eat Babylonian food.

I. The highest priority for Daniel (God is my judge) is always his relationship with God. (Daniel 6:6-27)

A. The Medo Persian rulers under Darius are jealous because a Jew has the highest standing. (Verses 6-9)

1. All the governors and leaders under Darius assembled together before him and said, 'All of us consulted together to establish a royal decree that whoever petitions any God or man for thirty days, except you, shall be cast in a den of lions. (Verses 6-7)

Not Daniel: Daniel was not in the consultation.

Jealousy: The other leaders were jealous of Daniel because Darius had planned to set him above all the rest (verse 3). So, he blocked their ambition in addition to being a Jew (verse 13).

Decree: The decree was crafted so Daniel is the only one who could break it. 'Assembled together' means this assembly was tumultuous because they were angry at Daniel.

2. They asked him to sign the decree under the code of the Medes and Persians and he did. (Verses 8-9)

Not changed: Under their legal system once a king signed a decree it could not be changed.

B. When Daniel knew of the decree, he chose to continue in his close communion with God. (Verses 10-15)

1. When Daniel knew the writing was signed, he went to his house with windows open to Jerusalem, and kneeling three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God as before; then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. (Verses 10-11)

Prayer: Continuing communion in prayer with God was more important to Daniel than obeying the new civil law and going along with the ways of people not knowing THE God.

Thanksgiving: Prayers of people with hearts fully open to God usually start with thanksgiving.

Petition: But Daniel also made requests of his God asking for grace and mercy.

Tumult: Again they assembled in tumult because Daniel stood firm in his faithful love for his God. Let us ask God to show us the areas in our lives where we 'go along' with the ways our nation contradicts His will. Besides life and morality, what are we doing for the poor, widow, orphan and alien to defend them as He has commanded His people? (Jeremiah 22:15-16)

2. They go to the king and ask him about the details his recent decree and he affirms them. (Verse 12)

3. Then they inform the king that Daniel, an exile from Judah, has no respect for the king or his decree, but instead petitions his God three times a day. (Verse 13)

Trap sprung: So, they got their desire for Daniel. The king must now cast him in a den of lions.

4. Hearing, the king was greatly distressed, set his heart on delivering Daniel, and labored to sunset to rescue him. (Verse 14)

Deliverance: The king's love and respect for Daniel motivated him to try to deliver Daniel from the lions, even though the legal system made success impossible.

5. By agreement, the leaders told Darius what he knew: by law, he can't change his decree. (Verse 15)

Forced hand: For the third time these jealous men came to the king in tumult and forced his hand

C. Darius keeps his decree, says Daniel's God will deliver him, and fasts that night; then he goes to Daniel, cries out in pain concerning his fate and hears God sent His angel to protect Daniel. (Verses 16-24)

1. Then the king had Daniel cast in the lions' den but said, 'Your God, whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you'; then, they sealed him in so nothing may be changed. (Verses 16-17)

Word of faith: The words Darius spoke to Daniel indicate Daniel's strong relationship with God is leading a pagan king to faith in THE God Daniel knew intimately.

Sealed: Consistent with the laws of the Medes and Persians Daniel is sealed securely in the lions' den.

2. That night in the palace the king fasted, allowed no diversions, and sleep fled from him. (Verse 18)

Fasting: The only thing on his mind was Daniel and his deliverance. The diversions included music and dancing women. In poetic words the narrator describes how the king's concern drove sleep away.

3. He rose at dawn, hurried to the lions' den and he cried out in a pained voice, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you always serve delivered you?' (Verses 19-20)

Dawn-in haste: As soon as the night was over the king rushed to find out if Daniel was safe.

Call in pain: He called in sympathetic pain for Daniel. His words indicate he had hope that God, with whom Daniel had a close relationship, had delivered him. We should have an ongoing awareness of God present in us. If we don't, may we repent and cry to Him to have this awareness.

4. Daniel spoke to the king and said His God had sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths, and he was not harmed because he was found innocent before God. (Verses 21-22)

Testimony: What a testimony Daniel had! God found him innocent. He should motivate us to always put God and His ways above any civic law that would harm our close relationship with God.

5. Then the king was exceedingly glad and gave orders to take Daniel up out of the den, and no injury at all was found on him because he trusted in His God. (*Verse 23*)

Glad: King Darius was very glad that his favorite administrator was totally unharmed.

Trust: We are told that Daniel's trust in God with whom he was so close kept him from injury.

6. The king ordered the men who accused Daniel in malice be brought and cast into the lions' den; before reaching the bottom the lions overpowered them, breaking all their bones. (*Verse 24*)

Malice punished: A human king punished malice. It seems God is doing something in his heart.

D. Darius' decree to all nations: God's kingdom cannot be destroyed, so worship THE One who delivered Daniel. (*Verses 25-27*)

1. Then the king wrote to every people, nation and language, 'May your peace abound! I decree in my kingdom, men should fear and tremble before Daniel's God ... (*Verses 25-26a*)

All people: This language describes all the people praising The Lamb of God before His throne (*Revelation 7:9-10*).

Peace: Like 'shalom', the Aramaic word for peace also means welfare, prosperity and well-being.

Fear Daniel's God: The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (*Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; Psalm 111:10*)

2. ... He is the living God, enduring forever; and, His kingdom will not be destroyed ... (*Verse 26b*)

Enduring Kingdom of God in Jesus: Jesus is The King who will be king forever, as the prophets foretold (*2 Samuel 7:8-13; Psalm 89:4, 29, 36; Revelation 11:15*).

Kingdom not destroyed: This truth is given twice more in the book of Daniel. First, the rock not cut by human hands that grew to a huge mountain filling all the earth (*2:34-35, 44-45*); then, he had a vision of one 'like the son of man' (Jesus) being worshipped by all peoples over an eternal kingdom that will never be destroyed (*7:13-14*).

Jesus is The King of God's indestructible Kingdom

3. ... His dominion is to the end, He delivers and rescues, doing signs and wonders in heaven and earth, who delivered Daniel from the hand of the lions.' (*Verses 26c-27*)

Signs and wonders: Nebuchadnezzar testified to the signs and wonders of The Most High God (*4:2-3*).

Deliverer: The ultimate deliverer of people is always THE Most High God!

Other passages about Jesus, God's Son, in Daniel: With Daniel's three friends (*3:24-29*); The Anointed One (Messiah) will be cut off after sixty nine sevens (*9:20-27*), but God's Kingdom in Jesus will triumph.

Jesus is The King of God's indestructible Kingdom

Vision of Glorified Jesus: After his prayer of repentance, Daniel was addressed by one looking like the glorified Jesus (*Revelation 1:12-16*) who will fight against the prince of Persia, and some people will rise to everlasting life, shining like stars forever (*chapters 10-12*). Jesus will be King of His people who become righteous through faith in Him, and His Kingdom will prevail over all who try to destroy it.

Jesus is The King of God's indestructible Kingdom

II. The Jewish elder council wants the governor to punish Jesus out of jealousy. (*Luke 23:1-5*)

A. They lead Jesus to Pilate, calling Him an enemy of the Jews and Caesar because He calls Himself Messiah (King). (*Verses 1-2*)

1. Having risen, the whole multitude of them led Him to Pilate. (*Verse 1*)

Elders: These were the elders of the Sanhedrin (*Luke 22:66*).

2. They began to accuse Him, 'We found this one perverting our nation, and forbidding people to give tribute to Caesar, and saying he himself is Messiah King'. (*Verse 2*)

Accuse: This is a formal accusation before a judge. They give three reasons for a conviction:

Pervverting nation: This means to turn aside from God's right path, leading people from God.

Forbidding tribute: Knowing Rome was more interested in tax revenue they say Jesus wants to take away this revenue.

Messiah: Messiah means 'anointed king'.

B. After Pilate questions Jesus, he declares Him innocent, but the elders urgently insist He is a troublemaker. (*Verses 3-5*)

1. But Pilate asked Him, 'Are you king of the Jews?'; but, having answered him, He said, 'You are saying it'. (*Verse 3*)

Question: Since the Jewish elders accused Jesus of calling Himself their Messiah (The King of the Jews), Pilate asks Him the logical question.

Answer: Jesus answers ambiguously. This is because Pilate asked the question in the form of a statement, expecting a positive answer.

2. But Pilate said to the chief priests and people, 'I am finding no cause in this man'. (*Verse 4*)

No Cause: Pilate discovered no reason that supported the accusations of the Jewish leaders and priests.

3. But they were urgently insisting, 'He is stirring up the people, teaching throughout the whole of the Jews, and having begun from Galilee until here'. (*Verse 5*)

Stirring up the people: He has been stirring up the people for a long time.

Teaching everywhere: His teaching began in the north by Galilee until it is here in Jerusalem.

Urgent appeal: Not believing Jesus is The Messiah (King), they continued to urgently appeal to Pilate because they cannot accept Him as The King. They are jealous of Jesus, just as the evil leaders under Darius were jealous of Daniel.

Not all of God's people want Jesus to be The King

Conclusion: Daniel is a man who had intimate courageous faith in God that became a consuming love for Him so he could practice spiritual disciplines to remain close to his God, even at great risk to his physical safety. The King of kings desires all His citizens living under a civil law forbidding them to practice acts of love to Him will choose to ignore that law and still express devotion to Him.

Jesus is The King of God's indestructible Kingdom