

YOUNG MAN DANIEL
Series: "Christ in the School of Prayer"
February 21, 2016 –Daniel 6: 10-28
The Church of the Covenant

God so loves it when we pray earnestly and from the heart to HIM that HE is no particular respecter of persons where prayer is concerned. He hears and answers young people; HE hears and answers old people; HE hears and answers regular people sitting in the pews; sometimes HE even hears and answers pastors! But HE has come today to both hear and answer the heartfelt prayers of your soul. Long ago the Lord God Almighty heard and answered the prayers of the YOUNG MAN DANIEL. There is much to be learned from this young pray-er from the Old Testament.

First, Daniel lived in a secular culture that did not honor the God of Israel. The people of God had been taken into the Babylonian Captivity for their sin and for 70 years were to pine away for Jerusalem and the close personal relationship they had had in the Promised Land. The Babylonian culture is a lot like ours today; it promoted the fact that there were MANY gods and MANY ways of getting to God. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is ONE, and you shall worship no other gods before HIM. So Daniel finds himself in the middle of a culture that is seeking to convert him away from following the One, True and Living God. They even try to change his name; they even try to change his identity. Dani –EL (any time you see "EL" in a name it is a reference to the God of Isra-EL) the God who saved the people from bondage, and led them through the wilderness and have promised them (and us) a new Promised Land. So Dani-EL is named for the God of Israel. But he is renamed by his pagan, secular culture, Belteshazzar, which is the name of the god of the Babylonians. The secular culture has tried to change the very identity of the YOUNG MAN DANIEL. Our name is our identity and the foreign cultures around us are always trying to change our name from Christian to something else. From "child of the living God" to in bondage to this world. His three Hebrew friends are also renamed; they are renamed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The heathen culture tries its best to change these young men, but you can change the outside, but only God can change the inside; only God can change the heart.

Second, King Nebuchadnezzar grants Daniel favor for the interpretation of a dream but then immediately sets up a golden image of himself and demands that everyone falls down and worships it. The powers and the principalities always want us to abandon our first allegiance to the Lord God Almighty and to fall down and worship their secular power. In the story of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar cleverly has a series of music and sounds that pre-program people to fall down and worship him. At the sound of the "*Horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe*" everyone is to "*fall down and worship the golden image*". (Daniel 3: 10-11). At the sound of the twitter and tweet, Facebook, Ipad, cellphone and television every young person is to fall down and worship the neon gods we have created by our own hands. It preprogrammed the people of Nebuchadnezzar's day with the "HORN, PIPE, LYRE, TRIGON, HARP, BAGPIPE" It preprograms us like Pavlov's dog today with the "TWITTER, TWEET, FACEBOOK, IPAD, CELLPHONE, TELEVISION. If you don't think the secular world is trying to change the identity of our son or daughter, please think again...

Third, but Daniel is a "*man greatly beloved*" (Daniel 10: 11) by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Daniel and his three young friends will not bow down and worship the gods of their surrounding secular culture. Daniel surrounds the entire story with praying to the Lord God Almighty –one of the best prayers of intercession in all of scripture is chapter 9 of the Book of Daniel. Because of their prayer and because they will not bow down and worship false gods, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are thrown into the fiery furnace. The fire is intense. But miraculously it burns but does not consume. The time of

fiery testing and trial has come upon them but they choose to trust in the One, True and Living God. And so they are saved. They are delivered from their ordeal. Daniel prays. Daniel intercedes. God intervenes. And in the midst of the fiery furnace there appears one whose *"appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods"*. (Daniel 3: 25) The time of fiery trial comes. Daniel prays. And a man like a son of the gods shows up. Who is this man? Who is the answer to the prayers of the Young Man Daniel???

Darius, is a successor King to Nebuchadnezzar and he signs an edict that *"whoever makes a petition (whoever prays) to any god or man...except (to him) as king, shall be cast into the den of lions."* (Daniel 6: 7) Secular cultures are relentless in their efforts to pull us away from worshipping God alone. And, of course, Young Man Daniel, will not cease to bow his knee and to worship the One, True and Living God of Israel. So he is cast in the lion's den. And a stone is rolled over the entrance. And they expect to hear him being eaten alive by these lions. It is a metaphor for evil, this lion's den. "(evil) is a roaring lion, seeking whom he will to devour", states I Peter in the New Testament. There can be many kinds of evil seeking to "eat us alive". There can be health issues which attack. There can be personality differences. There can be family problems. There can be job concerns. There are many "lions" out there seeking to devour us, seeking to drag us away from our faith in the Lord God Almighty. --Seeking to kill not only the body, but more importantly, the soul. --Seeking to wrest us away from our love and trust in the Lord. Seeking us to bow down and worship other gods for our deliverance. HORN, PIPE, LYRE, TRIGON, HARP, BAGPIPE –TWITTER, TWEAT, FACEBOOK, IPAD, CELLPHONE, TELEVISION.

As a pastor, when I look out at my congregation I know you are all here not accidentally, nor randomly, nor by coincidence. I look out and I see people who have been through the fiery trials of life and cast into the fiery furnace. I look out and I see people who have been cast into the lion's den and have lived to tell. The fiery struggles of life, the times of the lion's den in our life, are why we are here. It is why we have come to worship. It is why we have come to pray to the One, True and Living God. It is why we bow down to God and why we do not bow down and worship something less. When we find ourselves in the fiery furnace, when someone we love is beset by lions in the lions' den, it is then we pray and turn our hearts to the One who alone saves and delivers, the One who hears our prayers and who answers our prayers, as God did for the YOUNG MAN DANIEL.

So Daniel is cast into the lions' den. And Daniel has prayed. And Daniel's identity is still Dani-EL (in the Lord) not Belteshazzar (in the world). And Daniel has refused to bow down to the false gods of this world. And Daniel prays to the One, True and Living God, whom he alone worships, serves and prays to. And God hears from heaven and answers his pray. And what happens? Daniel says to the king: *"My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me..."* (Daniel 6: 22) Daniel prays and someone shows up. Here it says an "angel"; earlier it said, "like a son... of the gods". I believe that both of these representations are examples of the prefigured Christ in the Old Testament. The angel and the One who appears like a son of the gods is JESUS. Daniel prays. Daniel is cast into the lions' den. And Jesus shows up. We pray in the midst of the fire. We pray in the midst of the lions' den. And JESUS shows up. JESUS is the answer to our prayer.

And the response of the thoroughly secular and heathen king who has demanded the world worship him and not the Lord God is what? King Darius declares: *"For He is the Living God, enduring forever...He delivers and rescues, He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, He who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."* (Daniel 6: 26-27) HE WHO DELIVERS, AND RESCUES AND SAVED THE YOUNG MAN DANIEL...HE WILL DELIVER, RESCUE AND SAVE YOU!!!!!!!!!! In the middle of our praying, in the middle of the fiery furnace, in the middle of our worshipping and trusting God, in the middle of the lions' den, in the middle of the trials and struggles of life, it is there and then that JESUS shows up. It is why I

say it is CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER. Don't worship and serve gods, golden idols, golden calves, that can never intervene, never deliver and never save. Pray to the One, True and Living God, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and Jesus will show up. It is the story of prayer. It is the promise of God. It is the story of the YOUNG MAN DANIEL.

You could come to the Covenant Prayer Summit this evening at 6pm and watch Jesus show up in the midst of whatever lions' den you find yourself. Amen and Amen.

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IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*