

This plan was well-thought and well-executed. The program would allow the Babylonians to make use of not only the natural resources of other countries but also the human resources and turn the leaders of those countries slowly in favour of Babylon. It is the same type of information propaganda practiced by many regimes in history. If you can change their minds to accept you, you don't have to fight them. Daniel lived in a place that had no respect for God. There were temptations all around him. There was tremendous pressure to conform to society and be like everyone else.

Think about what it would like to have your name changed, especially given the meanings below from the Hebrew to the Babylonian.

Beltshazzar – “God is my judge” to “Bel, protect the king.”
Shadrach – “The Lord is gracious” to “Command of Aku.”
Meshach – “Who is like the Lord” to “who is what Aku is.”
Abed-nego – It was changed from “The Lord is my helper” to “servant of Nebo.”

We too, live in a society where there is intense pressure to conform and be like everyone else. Where do you feel most pressured to conform or compromise?

Read Daniel 1:7-17 – after you have read the story, close your Bible and retell the story from memory.

1. Reflecting upon v8 At what point did Daniel draw the line? Why did he draw the line here? See In Leviticus 11:4-20. Ex 23:2
2. What does this tell us about his character and relationship with the Lord?
3. Share a testimony about a time you have been pressured to do something. What lessons did you learn?
4. In v9-13 How did Daniel handle this issue? See Prov 2:6. What was his attitude? Notice how Daniel interacts with the royal official. What can we learn from the way Daniel responds to those in authority?
5. What are some “reasonable” excuses or justifications Daniel could have come up with, for why it was acceptable to compromise?
6. What did he do when his first try failed? Why is it more tempting to give up when we first face resistance to follow the Lord? What would help you to be persistent in being obedient?
7. V14-16 The results are evident. How would you describe God's activity in this reading? What do we learn from this that joins in with the bigger picture of the Bible? Genesis 39:21, Psalms 4:3, Proverbs 16:7, Matthew 5:3-10. Read also 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. (These verses are often taken out of context to warn against not marrying an unbeliever, but this is not the case).
8. As you reflect upon the study, what do you recognise is good in your life and what do you think you need to change?

Prayer Points.

Pray for the wedding of Annabel Laver and Jacob Betts this Saturday. Pray for all the preparations and the witness of the gospel to others.

Pray for those in the church who are caring for others that we know in the church. Pray for people in the caring profession around us, especially believers.

It's currently the middle of monsoon season in Bangladesh. Pray that Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha will be able to offer emergency food and supplies to communities after disasters strike.

Sermon Notes



BIBLE STUDY

September 15th 2024

Faith in the Fire:

Defiant Faith

Daniel 1:7-17

The book of Daniel tells Daniel's story—and a fascinating and instructive story it is. But the main purpose of Daniel is to reveal to us who God is - His character, His purposes, His way of working in the world for the good of His people. The main lesson of Daniel, then, is not, as is sometimes assumed *Dare to be a Daniel!* Rather, the main point is this: *Dare to trust in Daniel's God, even when the world seems against you.* How do we remain faithful to God, especially in an age where it seems a great deal is moving in a different direction? What does it look like to trust in God when our world is turned upside down? Daniel remained faithful and God used him to great effect, how can God use us in the fiery challenges of life?

If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001