

Dare to trust the God of Daniel

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 September 2025

Preacher: Hoong Phak Ng

[0 : 00] Let's ask God for help as we open His Word. Father, Your Word is eternal and living. Speak to us, Lord, and draw us to know You, to love You, and to trust You in our lives and for our lives. Amen.

Now, a sister in KEC was told by a client who wanted her to do something illegal.

Your boss has agreed to this line of action. You just do what your boss and I decided. You just signed this document.

She did not. An upcoming, promising and hardworking politician was forthright about her Christian faith and had even published a biography of her faith journey.

She was then falsely accused of using her book to promote a Christian agenda and using her political platform to turn Malaysia into a Christian nation.

[1 : 13] You were forthright about your faith in Jesus. And your department head laughs, openly mocks you, and from that day, curses in Jesus' name.

And despite continuing to do your work well and even advancing your department's prestige, you found your work evaluation unfairly graded downwards, and he even suggested that you quit.

My cousin became a Christian in his youth. When he tried to give thanks for his food, his parents flew into a rage and told him, Your Jesus did not feed you.

Your food comes from my celery. He continued to trust God, even though his home life became difficult. A friend in Melbourne told me that he risked imprisonment if he ever counseled or prayed with a same-sex attracted person to ask God to suppress or remove his unwanted desires, even if the request for help came from the distressed person himself.

In this life, we will face opposition to our faith that tests our faithfulness and royalty to Jesus.

[2 : 46] They may be bosses, families, or friends, or even the state. And to decide to be loyal and faithful to Jesus can be costly.

The Bible promises that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will face persecution. Now in this chapter, Daniel is forced to choose between his loyalty to Yahweh or to obey the law of the king.

At risk, it's not just his pride, his comfort, or his salary. It was his very life. Chapter 6 ends the first section of the book of Daniel, which records his dealing in the courts of Babylon.

From chapter 7 onwards are records of his dreams and visions. Now Daniel survived the fall of Babylon to the Med-Persians in 539 BC.

He was now in his 80s. Darius the Mede sits on the throne. And God granted Daniel favor, and he did not lose his government position from the old regime.

[4 : 09] You see that in Daniel 5.29. There were many opinions of who this Darius the Mede was. While we cannot be 100% sure, but for very good reasons, it is very likely that Darius was the alternate name for King Cyrus of Persia.

Now Cyrus being his median name, and Cyrus his Persian name. Sorry, Darius being his median name, and Cyrus his Persian name. If you look back at Daniel 5.31 in your Bibles, it records that Darius the Mede was 62 when he took over Babylon.

World history records that Cyrus conquered Babylon at age 62. Coincidence? Or just two names of the same person?

And the empire-wide edicts that Darius makes in Daniel 6 could only come from the top men in the Mede Persian Empire.

And if you check at the alternate translation of Daniel 6.28 in your NIV footnote, you look at your NIV verse Daniel 6.28, there is actually a footnote of that verse.

[5 : 37] And that footnote reads this, Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, that is, the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

That is, rather than, and. This is actually a perfectly valid translation, as the Aramaic word one can mean and, and also called, or also called, depending on the context.

And I am convinced that the alternate translation is correct. Now, history records that one of the first things that Darius stroke Cyrus did was to give his subjects religious freedom to worship their own gods and to rebuild their temples.

This was recorded for us in the book of Ezra and found in the Cyrus Cylinder, an artifact displayed in the British Museum today.

Verse 1 and 2 tells us how he organised his government, his government for his vast empire. He appointed 120 satraps, or provincial leaders, and three administrators who were to hold them accountable.

[6 : 57] Why? Verse 2 tells us that Darius would not suffer loss, implying that he could lose state money to corrupt or negligent satraps.

Satraps, sorry. Here is one constant, unchanging reality since ancient times. Governments can be huge depots of waste, graft, and corruption.

The bigger the empire, the easier for misappropriation of funds, corruption, and wastage to go undetected. Verse 3, Daniel was getting a promotion, and everyone hated him.

Surely, that does not happen in your office, right? Only in bad old Persia. But it was easy to hate Daniel.

His two fellow administrators, simply out of jealousy. As for the satraps, Daniel had already made it difficult for them to get away with corruption.

[8 : 08] With him at the very top, it would be worse. Their days of lining their own pockets were numbered. Daniel was the administrator who refuses to close an eye.

Daniel's promotion was well deserved. In Daniel 5, he is known to have insight, intelligence, and outstanding wisdom.

In verse 3, Darius notices his exceptional qualities that distinguished him from others. He was honest, trustworthy, efficient, effective, and incorruptible.

It was said that every man had his price, but not Daniel. And furthermore, he was good at his job. We know people who are honest, but who simply cannot get the job done.

Seed warmers, as we Malaysians call them. But Daniel is not one of them. Verse 4 says, he is not negligent.

[9 : 22] He gets things done, and done well. With Daniel at the top, Darius can be assured that his interest and treasury will be in good hands.

No neglect, no corruption. No corruption. I wonder what people say about me, about you. By God's grace, may we glorify him in all we do.

But I think what made them hate the thought of Daniel in charge over them was this. Daniel was simply not one of them.

Notice what they call Daniel in verse 13. Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah.

He was not even Persian. He was just a Babylonian prisoner of war. And worse still, he never assimilated.

[10 : 25] Remember back in Daniel 1, when Pastor Brian pointed out that Daniel refused to eat from the king's table. To do so would have been like entering into a covenant relationship with the king.

A gesture that would have blurred his allegiance and compromised his identity as a worshipper of Yahweh. Serve the pagan king? Yes.

Become a pagan himself? Never. And through the decades that followed, Daniel never hid his worship of Yahweh.

It was common knowledge that Daniel served his God faithfully. His peers knew it. Darius knew it. Look at verse 16.

Even as he served successive pagan kings, walking the corridors of power and splendor, in verse 10, three times a day, he would fall on his knees, step into the presence of his God, and acknowledge Yahweh as his true king.

[11 : 38] Praying to Yahweh, affirm that there was a higher authority than the state, and that the state did not hold ultimate power or authority over him.

If you are still not sure of the secret of Daniel's success and his faithfulness to God, it is this, his prayer and his communion with his God.

His prayer, his prayers kept him humble and dependent on God. It reminded him that he couldn't do anything by himself.

Everything was from God. His wisdom, his excellence, his character and his abilities, even his faithfulness. Everything he had achieved in Babylon was from the gracious hand of Yahweh.

His daily routine of prayers was his lifeline to God and it prepared him for the trial he was about to face. If you think you can never be faithful like Daniel, think again.

[12 : 55] It is not him. It is his God. Turn your eyes like Daniel to the one who gives everything needed for a faithful life.

May our prayer routines be precious lifelines to God that will infuse our day with his presence and power and nourish our life with the determination to live for him.

Praying in the direction of Jerusalem was simply an obedience to his scriptures. Now, he got it from King Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple written for us in 1 Kings 8, 48.

That verse informed him. It said, If and if your people in exile turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive and pray to you toward the city you have chosen that is Jerusalem and the temple I have built for you then from heaven from your dwelling place please hear their prayers and their plea and uphold their cause.

And even though now Jerusalem and the temple laid in ruins his direction of prayer was an anticipation of a future when Jerusalem and the temple would be rebuilt.

[14 : 34] Daniel takes his scripture seriously. even his faithful service to the pagan kings was out of his obedience to Yahweh. According to God's word in Jeremiah 29, 7 exiles were to seek the welfare of the city of their captors.

Paul writes centuries later to regard our work as done for the Lord not just for human masters. at his daily job Daniel did his very best.

So to his peers Daniel was simply different. They think he is silly to worship Yahweh whom in their eyes was defeated by Marduk the Babylonian god.

Why else would Daniel be in exile? And they despise him even more now that he was promoted over them. They must get rid of him.

And so they tried to dig up dirt on Daniel. Verse 4 Finding none they finally decided we will never find any basis for charges against this man unless it has something to do with the law of his God.

[16 : 02] Thus far there was no law that restricted Daniel's worship of his God. So they will make one. One that they know Daniel will break.

And they came up with a rather brilliant plan. They were not stupid. They were top government officials. It was time to manipulate the king.

verse 6 So the two administrators and satraps went as a group to the king. It was unlikely that all 120 satraps were involved.

Many were simply too far from Babylon and as events unfold to its dreadful end, the lions then would not accommodate all 120 and their families.

The conspirators went to Darius and said, May King Darius live forever. The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisors and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next 30 days except to you your majesty shall be thrown into the lion's den.

[17 : 30] And King Darius please seal it not with a kiss but with a writing so that it cannot be altered in accordance with the law of the Medes and the Persians which cannot be repealed.

Might as well go all the way and kill Daniel. Greedy man used to power and easy money can be utterly ruthless in protecting their self interests.

Notice their lie? They gave the impression that this was the idea of the whole civil service but certainly the top official Daniel was never consulted and not in the group.

Now were they raising Darius up as a god? Or were they setting him up to be the only human mediator to the gods?

It was irrelevant either way. This decree would be a supreme test of loyalty to the king. You cannot pray directly to your gods or to any other human beings except to Darius.

[18 : 47] Now the Mid Persian empire was huge and its people diverse. This new decree would actually help Darius consolidate power and unite his population under him.

For one month, Darius's name will be the object in everyone's prayer. An additional outcome, everyone will know, if they still did not, that Darius was now the supreme head of state.

King Darius foolishly agreed. His vanity left had upended his own national constitution of religious freedom.

The polytheistic people of his empire would have no issue complying. One group, however, will find it objectionable. Faithful Jews like Daniel.

Verse 10 Without hesitation, when Daniel learned that the decree has been published, he goes to God in prayer. Verse 11, he asks for help.

[20 : 14] How is he to respond to this new decree? Of course, he was worried about his own safety. The idolatry of praying to or through Darius is a no-go.

Perhaps he could just stop praying for a month or pray in secret. But to do so would indirectly give legitimacy to the idolatry that the king demanded.

To stop praying was to stop regarding God as God. To be disloyal to his God was never an option. Daniel cannot give in to the idolatry of Persia or even to the idolatry of his own safety.

He needed strength from Yahweh. On his own, he might cave. Now at the age of 80, he makes the same decision he had made when he entered Nebuchad Nizah's service, when he and his friends made their undivided allegiance to Yahweh clear.

Nothing will prevent his worship of Yahweh. The decision to go to the lions den had been settled years earlier. The cost had already been counted.

[21 : 42] It was preferable to be eaten by lions than betray Yahweh and decline him worship. He entrusted his life to God.

He would do as he has always done before. He would pray to his God faithfully, openly, three times a day. Whatever the outcome, he will simply trust.

In verse 11 and 12, catching Daniel at prayer, the conspirators went to the king. They said, did you not publish a decree?

Yeah, and the decree stands, the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be repealed. Good. Verse 13, King Darius, you know Daniel, that exile from Judah, you know how disloyal he is to you?

He ignores and disrespect you, and your great laws. He has broken your decree. He still prays to his God instead of to you, not just once, three times.

[23 : 04] When the king heard this, he was filled with great rage against Daniel. Oh, no, no, wait, that's not what the verse says. Look at verse 14. Darius was greatly distressed and was determined to rescue Daniel.

It finally dawned on Darius he had been used. This was all a ruse to get rid of his favorite and most trusted administrator.

And as can be seen in the king's anguish described in verse 18 and 19, Daniel was also most likely a friend.

And so he made every effort to save Daniel. But we are presented with the sad reality that this king cannot save.

This king of the great Persian empire who fancied himself divine or at least a mediator to the gods was important.

[24 : 15] powerless to save even his friend. Shackled by his own law with no legal loophole.

By sundown the conspirators reminded the king just get on with his unchanging decree. So Darius gave the order and in verse 16 Daniel is thrown into the lion's den.

Sometimes we read this and we never stop to think how terrifying it must have been for Daniel. We always think of Daniel as so stoic and going into the lion's den bravely.

! I remember being outside the tiger enclosure in Taiping Zoo. I was all alone and there was no other person inside.

A tiger fixed its gaze on me, jumped into the lake and dashed straight at me. I remembered the terror that rose inside of me even though I knew I was protected by a glass panel.

[25 : 32] Big cats are scary, very scary. Proven helpless, Darius breaks his own decree.

Darius says, he prays actually, may your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you. Verse 17, the king seals the stone cover to the den with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that no one can break in to rescue Daniel.

Surely, that is the end for Daniel. Will Yahweh save his faithful servants? Daniel was a mess.

Sorry, Darius was a mess. Daniel was calm. Darius was a mess and he spent his night in anguish. Surprisingly, I think this pagan king held a glimmer of hope that Daniel's God might somehow come true.

You see how in verse 19, at first light, at dawn, he makes a beeline to the lion's den and calls out, Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue from the lions?

[27 : 01] That was the million dollar question for Darius and for us too. Is the God of Daniel able to save? verse 21, from the den, Daniel calls out, may the king live forever.

My God sent his angel and he shut the mouth of the lions. Yes, God did come true. He saved Daniel from the lions.

While Darius had a sleepless night, Daniel was spending the night in the company of an angel. Daniel said, they have not hurt me because I was found innocent in his sight.

Daniel was vindicated. He had been judged by God and found innocent. Daniel had done right before his God by staying faithful to him and by trusting him.

verse 23 explains that his rescue was because he trusted in his God. Hebrew 11.33 affirms that the prophets had shut the mouth of lions because of their faith in God.

[28 : 25] Faithful and trusting. And Daniel adds, nor have I ever done any wrong before you, your majesty.

And the king was overjoyed. Now, to understand what's going on, I must tell you about a near eastern belief, part of Darius's worldview.

You see, when a condemned man is punished and yet escapes his execution unscanned, it is proof that he is innocent of the charges against him.

So, by being not eaten by the lions, Daniel could tell Darius that he had really done the king no wrong. Darius knows now that he had, that Daniel had always been the same Daniel who had the best interest of his government at heart.

He is the same loyal administrator. The conspirators had suggested the new law for their own interest rather than for the king's interest.

[29 : 47] And this explains the next awful and distressing scene. By Persian law, anyone who makes a false charge against another would be punished by receiving the same fate they had intended for their victim.

So, at Darius command, the conspirators were thrown to the lions, and sadly, by Persian justice, so were their innocent wives and children.

And just in case anyone thought that perhaps the lions were just not hungry or were scrawny and weak, this was not the case as can be seen, that even before the condemned reached the floor of the den, the vicious and hungry lions had overpowered and killed them.

There can be no doubt that Daniel's deliverance was a real miracle. God did it. God's mercy on Daniel was also his mercy to King Darius.

Having encountered a miracle of Yahweh that he cannot deny, Darius issues yet another decree, this time honouring not himself, but honouring Daniel's God.

[31 : 17] He said, verse 26, Yahweh is the living God and he endures forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed and his dominion will never end.

He rescues and he saves, he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.

The Jewish exiles in Persia on hearing all that had happened to Daniel would have been encouraged to remain faithful to Yahweh and to put their complete trust in him who can save his faithful servants.

The God of Daniel has always rescued and saved. We see that throughout the Old Testament and in today's passage.

And he continues to rescue and to save. In Daniel 6 we are given glimpses of an even greater rescue God staged through his son Jesus Christ the greater Daniel.

[32 : 33] Some events that Daniel experienced here foreshadows events that would happen to Jesus showing us again God's sovereignty and that he has a divine plan for this world.

We like the administrators and the satraps have sinned against God in our selfishness always looking out for our own interests harboring jealousy greed stealing envy anger having murderous thoughts lies and sin in other ways.

We have sinned against God's perfect law and by his law has been sentenced to a godless eternity. All of us.

But God stages a rescue through his son that gave forgiveness of sin and salvation to all who put their trust in him.

God's law was also not changeable. But unlike Darius who was shackled by his own law, God is not powerless to save.

[34 : 01] God does not put aside his law, but in love he meets the requirement of his own law and take the punishment demanded by it.

He did this by sending his only begotten son whom he loved, Jesus the Messiah into this world. Jesus, the greater Daniel, lived an even more innocent and faithful life than Daniel.

In fact, he was perfectly innocent and always faithful to God, blameless and sinless. He lived a life we could not on our behalf.

The final days of his life was foreshadowed in Daniel 6. He too was falsely accused by his peers who accused him of blasphemy and demanded his death.

They too cooked up false charges and brought them to the Roman governor Pilate. Pilate also failed to free Jesus and gave in to the demands of his accusers.

[35 : 19] Jesus died on a Roman cross and he was put in a tomb. And like Daniel's lion stand, its entrance was also covered with a stone and at this time sealed with a Roman imperial seal so that no one would interfere with his body.

When an innocent and faithful Daniel faced death, God spared him. When a perfectly innocent and always faithful Jesus faced an excruciating death, God did not spare him.

God allowed his son to die. Why? Why? It was always God's plan for that to take place. Jesus would be our substitute in death.

He took the punishment that we in our sin deserved. He paid the price for our redemption. God would grant forgiveness of sins for all who put their trust in him, in what he had done for them.

Unlike Darius, Jesus is the true mediator between God and man. Through the sacrifice of the greater Daniel, God made a gracious and merciful rescue available for people.

[36 : 54] But that was not the end of the story. The climax was three days later. God will not abandon his faithful servant.

He is able to save even from death. Daniel emerged from the lion's den alive, untouched and vindicated.

The greater Daniel emerged from his tomb alive, even though he had died, raised by God with a resurrected body and vindicated.

What a greater miracle! Even death was defeated. By his resurrection, he was confirmed to be the son of God in power and given the highest throne.

He will endure forever, his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end, and it will be revealed in its glory when he returns.

[37 : 59] God's rescue is so complete that he promises that we too, those who belong to his kingdom now, will receive our resurrection on that day.

The Bible says we must receive God's rescue personally. If you have not done this, you can do this by receiving Jesus as your king and by believing in the good news of his death for forgiveness of your sin and in his resurrection for you.

For all of us who have already received Jesus' rescue, his salvation, we are in an even better position than Daniel to put our full trust in him to save us from any trial that results from our faithfulness to him.

Temptations that test our loyalty and faithfulness will be different for each of us. Within our own hearts, our sinful desires pull us in directions we know are against God's desires.

Challenges come at work, at home, from friends and enemies alike and even from your family. Your friends may call you to join them in an activity that Jesus has made clear in his word not to participate in.

[39 : 32] Your boss may expect you to do things you know is illegal and put your job at stake. Your parents have other ambitions for your life when all you ever wanted to do was to go into full-time ministry for Jesus.

Your family insists that you join them to lay justice to the ancestors and they will not take no for an answer. Perhaps the test of our loyalty may come from the law of the land.

You say no, that happens only in other countries. We are okay here. What if the law changes as in Daniel's Persia and make you and I criminals?

Every one of these challenges can result in unpleasant and even dangerous consequences for us when we decide to remain faithful to the Lord and not betray him.

this passage asks of us, has the decision to go to the lion's den settled for you? Has the cost already been counted?

[40 : 55] Will we, can we, remain faithful to Jesus when threatened with the loss of comfort, loss of financial security, loss of approval, loss of physical safety?

Daniel has modelled for us how to live faithfully. But we thank God for his greater Daniel, Jesus, who defeated death itself, who gives us the courage to actually risk all for him.

He is able to save us from every trial that results from our faithfulness to him. For his resurrection assures us that all his faithful ones can be sure of emerging from all their trials alive.

So, let us be daring to trust in the living God of Daniel, for he is indeed mighty to save. let's pray.

Lord, we thank you, Lord, for your word today. We pray, Father God, Lord, that in our communion with you, in our prayers with you, in our relationship with you, you might be so precious to us, that betraying you is absolutely not something we will ever do.

[42 : 36] We pray that it is that you will strengthen us and enable us to remain faithful to you, trusting that you will take us through our trials, any trial, and get us out alive.

Amen.