|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Topic | How To Change A Kingdom |
| Reference | Daniel 6:1-28 |
| Date | 9 October 2016 |
| Speaker | Pastor Mark Tan |

Daniel in the lion’s den is the climax of what Daniel actually dedicated his life to do throughout two to three kingdoms. Daniel being in the lion’s den in itself is not the great achievement, although it a miraculous thing given by God, but Daniel’s conviction which God has ordained is that he was called by God to change a kingdom.

There are characters and there are key things that we need to hold dear to in order to see a kingdom change. We as a community of Christ like Daniel, who represents the one true God in a pagan and relativistic society we as Christians bear Jesus Christ in our hearts and in our lives and we represent him every time and everywhere we go. If we believe in Jesus Christ God is actually calling you to change this kingdom onto the kingdom of our Lord Jesus.

* **Clarity and Charisma**

By talking about Charisma I am not talking merely about praying in tongues, I am not merely talking about gifts of prophecy. This charisma is the enthusiasm that is stirred upon the conviction that we have on how clear the vision of our lives are to be.

**1** It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, **2** with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. **3** Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. (Daniel 6:1-3)

Daniel was not just a governor but he is actually the superior, the inspector general over a large number of districts. He was on a very-very powerful position. 120 states were accountable to Daniel and the two other guys. There was no corruption, there is clarity. The vision of the kingdom of Persia is spread and held accountable. Daniel did not take the job and keep his seat safe and comfortable. He took his seat and responsibility and he was not just representing the king of Persia but also the King of Kings and that displays accountability that displays good conduct and character. Because Daniel was so clear that he is not subjected to the king of Babylon and Persia, he is subjected to the King of Kings. Earlier in the Book of Daniel, he already drew that line to say that I am serving the King of Kings, I am not serving any king on this earth and he showed that by his diet plan. There was food coming from the king’s table going onto Daniel and he was actually not just recommended, he was actually ordered to eat it because it represents the providence of the king towards his subjects and in the great way. The symbolism shows that Daniel will therefore depend fully on the king of Babylon, but Daniel and his friends stood firm and made clear that he is not serving the king on this earth, he is serving the king of heaven and that is why he changes diet plan. That is why he says give me vegetables and water for 10 days and after 10 days you see how I look like. If I look any lesser than anyone else then feed me that food and by the grace of God not only did they look more handsome than anyone else but they were wiser and Daniel had the power to interpret dreams. Daniel is saying that even if you take meat, the source of energy out of my diet, I will still draw strength from the Lord, clear was his affiliation towards the one true God. The New Testament tells us that

“The time has come,” (Jesus) said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” Mark 1:14-15

Jesus has made clear of the goal of us as representatives of His kingdom and Jesus therefore encourages to have this charisma to want to go and share this news to the rest of the world that kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the good news. There are seven billion people in this world, out of which one billion claim to know Christ. There are six billion out there that are yet to hear of this good news. Jesus is asking for a mode of repentance and a belief in the good news. If we make this clear then we will have the charisma to not just stand up for it and just put our religion as Christian in our ICs but we put in our hearts and we have in our speech and we change the way we live, notice that Daniel never really talked about the one true God abruptly. He wasn’t an evangelist as to say. Daniel displayed the sovereignty of the King of Kings, in the way he lived and he lived it with clear vision and charisma to see it accomplished.

* **Unwavering Character**

**4** At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. **5** Finally these men said, “We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.”

Daniel was clear and unwavering in his character that he will not take any bribes that he is far away from being blackmailed into saying that he took corruption. He is not in the hands of any of his so called friends or any of his superiors, he is only accountable to the one true God and even his enemies knew it. His enemies saw his integrity towards God, they thought that they can only catch him with his identity with God, so they need to take his belief and his allegiance to God and they need to turn that against him. It happens to us regularly. In our everyday life we face challenges in this corrupt world that directly hit on our character.

The Gospel of Luke shows the true unwavering character of Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew it sounds as if Jesus only went through three temptations and after that no more. Luke made it abundantly clear. He was not tempted for just three days; he was tempted for 40 days in the desert. He was fasting and praying and he felt hungry and so the first temptation was to turn the stones to become bread. The devil will try and short change your character by touching at your appetite. Jesus said no. Then the devil said if you are truly the son of God throw yourself down. The devils try and manipulate our character by giving us titles and position. Jesus again said no. Devil again checked Jesus character by the daringness of what he is willing to do. Jesus said no. Jesus character was unwavering and because of that the devil already had the funny sinking feeling that he is going to lose and that is why even after that third recorded temptation, the text then goes on to say that Jesus was tempted even further. There were many more temptations that Jesus was given. The devil will keep on going at us again and again and again to manipulate and to change our character, so our character has to be unwavering. Where we can find such strength? Well we find first of all in the person that is Jesus who gives clarity to our goal and vision, the things that is worth living for that is for his good news. He then gives us the charisma to stand firm. Jesus is our provider we just have to put faith on him.

* **Consistent** **Conduct**

This is where Daniel’s experience in the lion’s den actually pales in comparison to what Daniel is about to do.

**6** So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: “May King Darius live forever! **7** The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers 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 thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions’ den. **8** Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repelled.” **9** So King Darius put the decree in writing.

So the whole empire knew that for the next 30 days that if you so much as bow down to anyone else other than the king or the image of king, you will be send to lion’s den. Daniel depended on the power and authority of his mighty God.

**10** Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

In the midst of all the persecution that is about to happen before him, the legal punishment for him he decided to depend on God much-much more. The consistent conduct does not depend on how many times we share on social media a statement to say that “we need to change this country”. No, these things are helpful and entertaining sometimes, these things actually open some truth to us when we do but it should therefore gear up our conviction and to steer our conduct so that not only do we stand for a change in his kingdom starting with our daily lives.

When Pharisees and the religious leaders got soldiers to arrest Peter and his disciples, brought before the court and told them to better stop preaching this Jesus. He was warned to not do this again or he will be killed but he said,

**29** Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! **30** The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. **31** God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. **32** We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” Acts 5:29-32

They are consistent in their conduct, not because that they are depending on their own name sake but that is because they are representing the name that is above all names who displays his presence true and through in the name of Jesus and through the Holy Spirit.

* **Courage**

**11** Then the officials went together to Daniel’s house and found him praying and asking for God’s help. **12** So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. “Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?” “Yes,” the king replied, “that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.” **13** Then they told the king, “That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day.” **14** Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament. **15** In the evening the men went together to the king and said, “Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed.” **16** So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, “May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you.”

We see here that Daniel was on his knees praying towards almighty God and yet God let him go ahead, the officials picked him up and took him before the king. If I was at Daniel’s place, it might be yelling at God, “why this happened to me, I have been faithful, haven’t I been praying three times a day towards Jerusalem and yet when the officials came you did nothing. No angels, no soldiers, no friends, nothing. The officials came, took me and put me before the king, already ready to go into the lion’s den”. A lot of us feel that God does not deliver us that God does not save but in no matter what situation we are God has vindicated us and He is right there by our side. We are always talking about our fear to go into lion’s den, actually we even fear before going to the earthly king before even getting punished that is something we need to check our hearts. If we represent the King of Lings and Lord of Lords, we represent Jesus then no earthly king is fearful for us and nor the law.

If Daniel ends up being eaten by lions anyway he had already changed the kingdom, because he made the king of Persia call upon the Almighty God. At least the king then acknowledges that their God is real. The courage that Daniel displayed is not in his own strength and eloquence of speech, the courage that he displayed upon his belief that God will vindicate and rescue him and even if not on this earth then in the heavens. We don’t serve a kingdom that dies out; we serve a kingdom that will last forever. The story then unfolds in the way that we know very romantically.

**17** A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel. **18** Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn’t sleep at all that night. **19** Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions’ den. **20** When he got there, he called out in anguish, “Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?”

The king had hope because of the courage displayed by Daniel, it changed his heart. By just showing sheer silent courage Daniel was able to get even pagans to actually call upon the most high living God.

**21** Daniel answered, “Long live the king! **22** My God sent his angel to shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.” **23** The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God. **24** Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions’ den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den.

At the end of the day Daniel was then proven innocence and that very kingdom and before the most high that was the most important thing for Daniel. We also have the apostles having that same courage in Jesus

They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. **41** The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. **42** Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. (Acts 9:40-42)

We take our courage knowing that we are not serving a king or a kingdom on this earth that will just come and go, we take courage in serving a king and a kingdom that last forever and we are called heirs, his children, saved by the person that is Jesus. Jesus calls us to be courageous not just in words, not just in the noise but in our deed, in our conduct and the way we face these troubles and we face it the same way that Jesus did. When Jesus was accused by Pontius Pilate and by the religious leaders, he too stood silent. He only opened his mouth when it was the right time to give God glory and to make sure of his sacrifice.

**Question**:

Often times we ask ourselves to act or not to act. Should we do something about it or not?

I do not think that is the question. That was not the question that Daniel had in his mind.

The question is when to act and how to act.

Daniel did not display himself to be utterly religious before the king before this encounter of the lion’s den. He only showed that he depends on something that is not of this world and only when the enemies actually say let try and accuse him of his religion then Daniel displayed even greater, he went to the window knelt before Jerusalem, looked up to the heavens, O God now you save me. When the apostles go from one place to another, may be a synagogue, market place, a place of gathering, they proclaimed the gospel. It is not a question what they did or not, but the question is when and the question is how and God is actually asking these questions in our hearts today.

The question for us today is when or how do I proclaim Jesus amongst my family, my workplace and to those who don’t know Jesus yet?

**25** Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth: “May you prosper greatly! **26** “I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. “For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. **27** He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.” **28** So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Daniel 6:25-28

We see a kingdom changed slightly. There was not a mass revival in Persia, but the name of God therefore was revealed and that is the beginning.

When the kings of Babylon lost and the Medes and Persia took over, when they looked at Daniel they did not kill him, because they saw something very different in Daniel, because Daniel in his heart of hearts was not serving any particular king above him, unless is the king of all these kings, the king of heaven, the king of truth and we see this uttered by Daniel himself later in the next chapter.

Daniel 7:**13** “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. **14** He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and **his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed**.

Daniel was serving a king that will last forever, a kingdom that will have no end, whose banner and standard will be lifted high above the heavens all the days of his life and every life after that. This king is Jesus

**30** But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. **31** You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, **33** and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; **his kingdom will never end**.”

At the end of days we will see a kingdom totally changed when Jesus comes and rules on this earth again and we are waiting for that day.

If we want to see God’s kingdom on this earth, we have to be clear in charisma of our goal and that is to proclaim the name that is Jesus. We need to be unwavering in our character, we need to be consistent in our conduct and we must be courageous. Don’t do this on your own, do this with Jesus, because it is for his kingdom and for this king and Jesus promised to be with us.