



THE ORCHARD

Daniel and the Lion Zen

Daniel 6:10-23

Pastor Greg Lawrence

October 18, 2026

Introduction

- Last week, we covered Daniel 7, where God gave Daniel a vision in the night.
 - Daniel saw the empires of men represented as gigantic beasts that devoured the world.
 - He saw the Ancient of Days judging the beasts, and he saw one like a Son of Man receiving dominion forever.
- This vision overwhelmed Daniel, but he kept the matter in his heart.
 - Ultimately, this vision of God's power over human affairs shaped Daniel for the rest of his life.
- Today, we move from Daniel 7 to Daniel 6.
 - The events of chapter 6 happen chronologically after the vision in chapter 7.
 - About fourteen years later, Daniel found himself working in government work again, this time under a new empire.
 - The Medo-Persian Empire had conquered Babylon, and King Darius now reigned.
- During the transition of power, Darius recognized Daniel's integrity and appointed him as one of three high officials overseeing 120 satraps who governed the empire.
 - But Darius was so impressed with Daniel that he planned to put him in charge of the entire kingdom.
- This favoritism made Daniel a target of the other officials.
 - Chapter 6 records what happened when a group of satraps tried to get rid of him.



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- Though Daniel received a vision of beasts being judged justly, he now faced judgment from an unjust law.
- Even with this vision of future victory,
 - does it make any difference when we face the beasts today?
 - Does it make a difference when we face job loss, a decline in health, difficult relationships, or opposition to following Christ?
- **What are we to do when we face real and present trouble? How are we to live?**
 - Hab 2:4 tells us that while we wait for the final vision of God to be realized, “the righteous shall live by faith.”
- **But what does it look like to live by faith?**
- In our passage today, Daniel displays three qualities of lived out faith that we can practice as navigate real and present trouble.
 - First, in the face of chaos, Daniel displayed **consistent faith**.

1. Consistent Faith (verses 10–13)

- Verse 10 reads:
 - “When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.”
- The only way to get Daniel in trouble was to make his worship of God illegal.
- The satraps had tricked King Darius into signing a law that anyone who petitioned anyone other than the king would be thrown into the lions’ den.



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- These officials were happy to honor Darius as long as it helped them gain power and influence.
 - Notice that verse 11 says they “came by agreement.”
 - They were an organized majority, while Daniel stood in the minority.
 - They even maligned him as “one of the exiles from Judah” (v. 13).
- Daniel was an exile whose faith set him apart.
- And it was that faith and trustworthiness that made him stand out to Darius.
 - That was a big problem for the other satraps.
 - If Daniel, a man of integrity, took charge of the kingdom, those without integrity risked being exposed.
 - Ironically, the satraps only proved their own untrustworthiness by manipulating the king into signing this law.
- Yet Daniel did not change course.
 - He continued to trust God “as he had done previously.”
- He kept praying as he always had.
 - He seemed almost unfazed.
 - But how?
- **Daniel had formed consistent holy habits.**
- I am always amazed to watch professional athletes perform at the highest level, whether at the Olympics or in a championship game.
 - They perform consistently under immense pressure.
 - Ask any athlete worth their salt how they do it, and they will tell you to practice the fundamentals.



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- Long before game day, they repeat the basics until they become second nature.
- Godly habits are the fundamentals of consistent faith.
 - Trials reveal consistent faith, but that faith is built long before the day of trouble.
- The most important thing you do for the day of trouble may not be anything you do on that day.
 - It may be what you do on an ordinary Tuesday when nothing exciting happens.
 - Long before Daniel faced the lions, he had faithfully relied on God in prayer each day.
- We can learn a lot from his example.
 - The exact way Daniel prayed is not prescribed for US, but the principles are worth following.
- **First, Daniel had a quiet place to pray.** He prayed in the privacy of his home.
 - Jesus likewise commends his followers to go into their rooms to pray.
 - A dedicated space can help protect our prayer lives from distractions.
 - Currently I find my car is a perfect place to privately pray out loud.
- **Second, Daniel had a way to focus his prayers.**
 - He looked toward Jerusalem because it reminded him of what he was praying for: the restoration of God's people.
 - We can also use prayer cards, Bible verses, or reminders to help us focus.
 - I like to apply a bible verse to the acronym PRAY to guide my prayer.
 - I praise God, repent of sin, Ask for what I need, and yield to his will.
- My father-in-law practices what he calls a compass prayer.



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- He begins by praying for family and friends in one part of the country, then works his way north, east, south, and west until everyone has been prayed for.
- Whatever method you use, find a simple way to focus your prayers.
- **Third, Daniel prayed with reverence.**
 - He got down on his knees to honor the Lord.
 - Kneeling and other many postures of reverence are found in scripture.
 - 1 Timothy 2:8 encourages men to “pray, lifting holy hands.”
 - Hannah Prayed for a child standing in the temple.
 - Many of us show reverence by closing our eyes, folding our hands, or bowing our heads.
 - Whatever our posture, we should approach God with reverence in our hearts.
- **Fourth, Daniel prayed at specific times.**
 - Verses 10 and 13 tell us he prayed three times a day.
 - We do not all need to follow that exact schedule, but setting aside regular times for prayer helps protect our communion with God from competing demands.
 - If we have an important meeting with our boss we often put it on the calendar.
 - So why not do the same with our meeting time with our God?
- **Fifth, Daniel prayed with thankfulness.**
 - He thanked the Lord even after receiving terrible news.
 - It is easy to thank God when things go our way, but he remains worthy of our thanks even when they do not.
 - Making thanksgiving a part of our prayers is a powerful antidote to discouragement in the middle of our struggles.



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- **Finally, Daniel brought his requests to God.**
 - We get a glimpse of his prayers in chapter 9, where he says, *“O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act” (v. 19).*
- I encourage you to read that prayer in its entirety.
 - Daniel confesses sin on behalf of himself and Israel, asking God to forgive his people and show them mercy.
 - He does not appeal to their worthiness, but to God’s glory.
 - As he prays in verse 17, *“For your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.”*
- Daniel’s prayer life is a powerful example of consistent faith.
- Christians should be remarkably consistent people.
 - It should be easy for others to find us worshiping on Sunday, and the world should expect to catch us praying.
- But if a group of satraps were looking for evidence against you or me, could they convict us of consistent prayer?
 - Or would they find prayer a rare occurrence in our lives?
- Now I must warn you.
- It is easy to feel guilty about our prayer lives.
 - But guilt alone is not the right fuel for lasting consistency.
- **Guilt is like coffee.**
 - **Its good to wake you up, but its not supposed to be the main thing fueling your life.**
- Daniel was not simply dedicated to good holy habits out of guilt or obligation.
 - He was devoted to God himself.



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- Worship of the true and living God fueled his prayer life.
- Daniel served God consistently because he knew God personally.
- Brothers and sisters, let God's glory and splendor fuel your prayer life.
 - When God himself is your reward, ordinary habits of prayer become expressions of love and thankfulness—and those things fuel consistent faith.
- In the face of chaos, Daniel displayed consistent faith.
 - But in the face of the inevitable, he displayed calm faith.

2. Calm Faith (verses 14–18)

- Once the satraps caught Daniel praying, they brought his case before King Darius.
- Verse 14 says: “Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him.”
 - Though Darius had signed an irrevocable law, he set his mind to save Daniel.
 - You can imagine him rushing around the palace, barking orders, examining legal documents, and searching for any possible loophole.
- The situation overwhelmed the king so much so that he could neither eat nor sleep.
- But isn't it odd that we hear nothing from Daniel during this part of the story?
 - The passage does not say Daniel and the king labored together until sundown.
 - As far as we know, Daniel did not even go to the king!
- Daniel did not appeal to the king, use his influence to argue his way out, or ask for a religious exception.



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- We hear no complaints about his enemies and no insults directed at those who trapped him.
- Darius was frantic, but Daniel was remarkably calm.
- Shouldn't Daniel have been the one panicking?
- When Daniel was young, he faced death if he and his friends refused to eat the king's food.
 - At that time, he appealed to the head guard and secured an exception.
 - So there is nothing wrong with working hard to solve a problem.
- But in this situation, Daniel knew there was nothing he or anyone else could do to reverse the law.
- Darius, on the other hand, struggled to accept the reality of the situation.
 - Only after exhausting every possibility did he turn to divine intervention.
 - As the sun set, he said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!"
- For those frantically facing the inevitable, God can be a last resort.
 - But for those with calm faith, God is our main resort.
- We live in an anxious and frantic world.
 - Powerful leaders scramble to find solutions because they are the only saviors they know.
 - Every day, the news gives us another crisis to worry about, often involving things beyond our control.
 - And we have enough of our own personal problems we face at home and at work.
- It is easy to panic, especially when those around us panic.



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- But I hope in this age, Christians will stand out as people with an un-anxious presence.
- Christians, of all people, should be oddly calm compared to the rest of the world.
- And our calm faith can affect those around us.
 - Notice that Daniel's trial began to change Darius's heart toward God.
 - Christian, your pain may be for someone else's benefit.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor involved in the resistance against Hitler during World War II.
 - The Nazis arrested and imprisoned him.
 - As prisoners faced execution and the danger of Allied bombing, Bonhoeffer stood out to his fellow cellmates.
- British intelligence officer Captain Payne Best later recalled:
 - "Bonhoeffer was different, just quite calm and normal, seemingly perfectly at his ease... his soul really shone in the dark desperation of our prison. He was one of the very few men I have ever met to whom his God was real and ever close to him."
- Bonhoeffer was a calming presence but the reality was the often fearful Bonhoeffer drew his calm from outside of himself.
 - He wrote, "Our strength is borrowed from God and lent to others."
- Daniel's calm faith was borrowed from God and lent to an anxious king.
- You never know who is watching you in your trial and needs to see your calm faith.
- As Darius discovered, frantic fixing cannot save us when we face the inevitable.
 - Daniel depended on God alone to deliver him from death.
- In the face of chaos, Daniel displayed consistent faith.



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- In the face of the inevitable, Daniel displayed calm faith.
- And in the face of death, Daniel displayed confident faith.

3. Confident Faith (verses 19–23)

- Despite the king's efforts, Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, and a stone was rolled over its entrance to prevent his escape.
- Darius spent the night without food or sleep.
 - At sunrise, he hurried to the den.
 - When he approached, he cried out in anguish.
- He wanted Daniel to be alive, but he could hardly imagine that he had survived.
 - He may have expected silence—or, at best, a dying man's final words.
 - Yet the king still went to the den.
 - He had not given up every hope.
- After Darius called out, Daniel answered:
 - "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."
- Verse 23 tells us the king was exceedingly glad and ordered Daniel to be lifted out of the den.
 - No harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.
- Hebrews 11 tells us that by faith Daniel stopped the mouths of lions.
- God delivered Daniel by grace through faith.
- Does that sound familiar?



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- It should.
- The gospel message that saves us from eternal punishment is the same message of grace revealed throughout Scripture.
- Daniel's experience also points forward to events that would happen to Jesus hundreds of years later.
 - Jesus was unjustly accused.
 - A group of leaders conspired to have him arrested and killed.
 - When he knew he would be betrayed, he went to a quiet place to pray, as was his custom.
 - His enemies found him praying and arrested him.
 - He was condemned to die, placed in a tomb, and sealed behind a stone.
 - Early one morning, his friends went to the tomb in anguish, expecting to find death.
 - Instead, they discovered that Jesus was alive.
- Daniel's story of faith is a shadow of what was to come.
- And his faith is the same faith we can exhibit.
 - Daniel could do nothing but trust God to deliver him.
 - We too can do nothing to save ourselves, but we trust Jesus has delivered us from sin and death and will save us from the final judgment.
- But you might say,
 - "Greg what if I believe Jesus can save me, but I still struggle to feel confident in my faith?"
 - "Am I saved if my faith feels weak?"
- Imagine you and I are at the airport, ready to board a flight.



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- We cannot flap our wings and fly ourselves to our destination, so we must rely on the plane and the pilot.
- Now imagine you are afraid of flying.
 - As you sit at the terminal, you worry that the plane might crash or fall apart.
- Meanwhile, I tell you that I am an aviation expert.
 - I have studied how wings work and how jet engines are built.
 - I assure you that flying is a safe way to travel and that we have THE best pilot in the world.
- But when it is time to board, I become so confident in my aviation knowledge that I actually don't board the plane.
 - Instead, I decide to go build my own plane and be my own pilot.
- In contrast, though you are shaking and scared to death, you slowly place your feet onto the plane, find a seat, and cling to the arm rest.
- Now who actually placed their confidence in the plane?
 - I may be confident, but I didn't actually place my confidence in the plane.
 - Whereas you were not fully confident, but you placed your full confidence in the hands of the plane and its pilot.
- **That is saving faith.**
 - Saving faith is not confidence in the strength of your faith;
 - it is confidence in the strength of the One in whom you trust.
- You do not save yourself by believing hard enough.
 - Jesus saves you when, even in weakness you place your trust in him.
- The same faith by which Christ saves us is the same faith by which he guides us.



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- Your faith may feel weak at first, but as you learn to trust the Savior, your confidence will grow.
 - He alone is worthy of our confidence.
- The lions named sin and death have been defeated.
 - Their fangs have been shut by the Son of Man who reigns in heaven.
- As Scripture declares, “O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?”
- Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- We can face death and judgment with confident faith in Jesus.

Conclusion

- In the face of chaos, Daniel displayed consistent faith.
- In the face of the inevitable, Daniel displayed calm faith.
- And in the face of death, Daniel displayed confident faith.
- The question remains, “Do you have this same faith?”
- Does your faith show itself in consistent holy habits?
 - Perhaps this week you need to give greater priority to daily prayer, knowing that your ordinary habits of faith will serve you in the day of trouble.
 - Dedicate yourself to prayer, fueled by love for God rather than guilt.
 - Imagine how ready you will be to face each day if you go to God consistently in prayer.
- Can you maintain a calm faith amid the inevitable dangers you face?
 - Are your efforts marked more by frantic fixing or calm trusting?
 - Do you look for loopholes before you look to the Lord?



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- Imagine the impact you may have on your family or your coworkers if they could experience your calm faith?
- Finally, is your confidence in God alone to save you?
 - If Jesus is not yet your hope in the lions' den, put your confidence in him as your Lord and victorious Savior.
 -
- What are we to do when we face chaos, inevitable circumstances, and even death?
- By God's grace, we can trust our God consistently, calmly, and confidently.