



Living for God

Daniel 1 – Trust God

“Live in the world but not of the world in order to change the world.”

We live in a society that has on the whole rejected the things of God. Many people no longer believe in God or even have a nominal association with him. Other worldviews and religions are seeking dominance for people's affections. Christianity is not only rejected but it is abused and belittled. It is often hard to be a Christian these days and to stand up for Jesus among our non-Christian friends sometimes comes at a price. However we believe in a God who is complete control of a out of control world we must trust in him as we live for him today.

The issues facing Daniel as he finds himself in a foreign land and indoctrinated with a foreign worldview is how was he going to make a stand for God?

Trust in his power “Living in the world...”

Daniel was taken from his home land, his family and his worship. He faced three years of being taught many foreign things and often things contrary to Judaism. He was given a new name, taught a new history and offered the best food and wine to win him over to the Babylonian side. Those young Jewish men must have been overwhelmed with what they saw and might have asked the question, where is God? Daniel 1:2 shows us that it was God who gave Jerusalem and her king over to Nebuchadnezzar. Israel's exile was punishment for her sins but God knew exactly what he was doing and he used that time to bring them to repentance but also show the foreign kings who was the true God.

Trusting in his provision “...but not of the world...”

Daniel 1:8, Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself by eating of the King's food and wine. Here we see Daniel and his friends making a stand and telling the Babylonians that they are not going to submit to this new religion and lifestyle. They were Jews and they believed God was still King. Daniel's approach to making this stand was full of grace and respect towards the chief of the eunuchs. He often to be tested for ten days to see if only eating vegetables made them look worse than all the others. God caused the eunuch to show favour towards Daniel so that he was able to do this. As Daniel made his stand God was with him through it all and helped him

Trusting in his purposes “...in order to change the world.”

The closing paragraph of Daniel 1 shows the remarkable results of Daniel's three years at the University of Babylon. He had gained the best knowledge and wisdom. He excelled in being able to interpret dreams but Daniel recognises that it was God who gave them these skills and had put them in a place where they could have the upmost influence in this new society. God was going to show Nebuchadnezzar and future kings over the next few decades that he was God and they should worship him. Daniel's success meant that he was in the best place to be used by God for this purpose. He remained in the king's service for 70 years.

Application

We compared Daniel's new life to our current situation in post-Christian Britain. We are being asked to taken on new worldviews and to leave Christianity behind. It would be very easy for us to turn away from God and simply fit in with the crowd, but we must trust that God is in control and we must decide to live for God in the world rather than back away or assimilate to it.

There are many areas in our day to day life where making a stand for Christian is difficult and could result in being persecuted in some way. However, Daniel 1 encourages to make that stand because the Lord is with us and he will help us to know where and when and how to stand up for Jesus.

As we live for God in an ungodly world with powerful kingdoms rising and falling around us, we must remember that we are part of a great kingdom, a kingdom that spans the globe and spreads across all of time. It is a kingdom where Christ sits on the throne and his reign will never end. Whatever may happen to us between now and Christ's return we must trust that we are part of his great purposes to glorify himself and grow his Kingdom.

Questions:

Trusting in his Power

What do you think about when you see the state of our society when watching the news? Do you ever doubt God's control?

In what specific ways is Christianity under attack and being replaced by other worldviews and philosophies?

Can you think of other occasions in the Bible or history when it seems like God has been defeated and his enemies have won?

Will you decide to trust in God's power and live in the world rather than hide from it or assimilate to it?

Trusting in his provision

Share occasions when your faith has been tested and you've had to make a decision to make a stand for Christ or not? What happened?

If you know there have been times when you've denied God or hidden your faith out of fear spend some time praying and repenting for those things

How does Daniel 1 encourage us and set an example for us as we make a stand for Christ? What is God's role in this?

Trusting in his Purposes

How did God bless and use Daniel during his three years in Babylon?

When we decide to make a stand for Christ what does he promise? Refer to other texts/ Bible passages

Discuss occasions when God has been able to use you to make a spiritual difference in someone else's life? What happened?

Talk about how you would like to see God change society, your friends, neighbours work colleagues and pray that God would use you to make a difference in their lives as you live for him