

Daniel Purposed in His Heart

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[0 : 00] that hope in Jesus Christ that despite what this life offers and what it brings and what comes and goes, we have that hope.

We can always look up. We can always get a glimpse of what's real for us and what's waiting for us. Find in your Bibles this morning Daniel chapter 1, the book of Daniel, the first chapter.

I want to come up on a one-liner from Daniel, one that is one of the most famous phrases in this book. Daniel, the author, writing his own, his autobiography, and gave us some insight into what was going through his mind in Daniel chapter 1.

Let's read beginning in verse 1. The word of God says, In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem and besieged it.

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his God. And he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his God.

[1 : 33] And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel and of the king's seed and of the princes, children in whom was no blemish but well favored and skillful in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge and understanding science and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat and of the king's wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names, for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar and to Hananiah of Shadrach and to Mishael of Meshach and to Azariah of Abednego.

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Father, please bless not only the reading but the preaching of your words. Lord, please help us to see what Daniel did and make an application to us today in 2021 and for the rest of our lives. Lord, help us to take heed to why this is written and how we can profit from it. We pray these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only reason we can talk to you. In his name we pray.

[3 : 04] Amen. The Bible says Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with a portion of the king's meat. That's really quite a popular phrase. Daniel purposed in his heart.

I know you've heard it before. I know you've heard that line. I know you probably even know where it's at in your Bible. And this is just that one liner of Daniel's I want to focus on today. It's the one that's probably gotten the most attention in all of these chapters of Daniel.

It's such a familiar phrase. I use it. We use it at different times. You might tell the kids and tell them, you need a purpose in your heart that you're going to do right. You need to decide ahead of time. You need to say no.

You need a purpose in your heart that you're going to live for God. And I don't believe this is just merely a lesson for teenagers and for children. children, but this is good for anybody.

If you've got a heart pumping blood and lungs that are sucking air, this is good for you too if you're alive. No matter how old you are, this is not just for somebody that's entering into life's decisions at a young age, but this is necessary for the Christian life.

[4 : 06] For the Christian life. And so whether you live or whether you die spiritually can depend on how strong you are on the inside. That's something I want to emphasize strongly today.

How prepared you are in the inner man for the situations you're going to face in life. Because you're going to face some stuff and things are going to come up. They're going to catch you by surprise. And you need to be prepared for them. And you can't be prepared for exactly what they are and how it will affect you and how it will turn out. But you can be prepared for how you're going to respond and how you're going to react.

You can purpose some things on the inside ahead of time. I believe that situations show up, they reveal just how serious you are about serving God. Those trials and hard times, they show just how serious you are on the inside about living for Him.

Daniel here, he's put in a tough spot. A tough situation. He's in a place that if you're honest and you look at it, through no fault of his own. He's not the one that rebelled against God.

[5 : 13] He's not the one that told God's preachers and His prophets, get out of here. I don't want to listen to you. I'll do what I want. He's not the one that bowed down and served other gods. He's innocent. Yet here he is being drugged from his home, taken away from his parents, any siblings, any familiarity from his temple, from the priest, from his teachers, and taken 700 miles away, several months journey, far from home, not someplace he can just escape and make it back home for dinner.

He's gone for good. He's drug out of his home and spent the majority of his life, his natural life, as a captive in a foreign land.

Now, he succeeded, and he did right, and the Lord blessed him and was with him, and we know his story, how he made it into government, into positions. But that came for a reason, because of some things Daniel did that God found favor with him.

But this was a rough life that Daniel's being taken to, dragged to, a rough life for a God-fearing Jew. I want to say some things this morning that are really, they're simple things.

They're nothing deep to this. You're not going to walk away with, wow, I never saw that before. I promise you that. Well, what I hope you do walk away with is some resolve inside of you to imitate this character and find the reason, perhaps the reason he put this in his book, to let you know that he made a choice.

[6 : 35] He did something, and you can do it too, and you need to do it too, if you're going to stand on your feet for Jesus Christ. In verse 8, it says that Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.

I want to say a few things about that thought of purposing in your heart. The first thing is that purposing in your heart is simply this. It's to make a decision. It's purposing.

It's to establish, for Daniel establishing boundaries, a line that he will not overstep, a line or a boundary that he will not violate. It's a decision.

There's other people in this book that made decisions like that. In Job 31, Job says, I made a covenant with my eyes. Why then should I think upon a maid? He made a decision.

I realize there's temptations, and there's problems that go along with that. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to make a decision beforehand. I'm not going to allow it in my life. I made a covenant with mine eyes.

[7 : 35] David said in Psalm 17, verse 3, I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. That's Daniel making a decision. There's a line I'm not going to cross.

By mouth, I'm going to keep a check on it. Job was concerned about his eyes, Daniel about his mouth. Joshua challenged the people in his day when they had a choice to make which gods they were going to serve when they enter into this land and get established and live their lives, how they're going to, as families, choose to live.

And he said, choose you this day whom you will serve. And he made the decision, the proclamation, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. That's the decision he made.

And purposing in your heart is to make a decision. Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself, that he would not defile himself. He drew a line in the sand and said, there are some things in this life that I will not do.

Not me. I'm not going to touch it. I've been trained that it's wrong. The word of God says that it's wrong and that's enough for me. That's that. I drew a line. I'm not crossing it.

[8 : 44] Daniel purposed in his heart. He made a decision. There's some things, Christian, you don't need to pray about. You don't need to think about. You don't need counsel about. You've been taught and trained. You know it's wrong.

The only thing left is for you to decide that you're not going to do it. Kids, when they're young, they get, at least I'm speaking for myself, go to camp and get certain messages preached at them. Don't touch drugs. Don't touch alcohol. Stay pure. And they preach these certain things at you. And as a kid in church, you grow up thinking, yes, yes, I need to do that. I covenant. I commit to God. I'm going to do this.

I promise. I vow. Whatever the case. Those are good decisions to be made at a young age. But those aren't just for children. Purposing in your heart, making a decision, there's some things that if the Bible says it's wrong, it's wrong, and I'm not going to go there.

If it's wrong, it's wrong for me today. It's wrong for me tomorrow. It doesn't get easier because, oh, some Christians are doing it. So maybe it's not so bad. No. When you purpose in your heart, you see it black and white, and I'm staying away from it.

[9 : 43] But the one that doesn't purpose in his heart and make that decision now is the one that ends up leaning and going further and following. And before they know it, they're involved.

They're defiled. But Daniel purposed in his heart. Daniel made a decision. That's what that is, and it needs to be done. Daniel said that my walk with God is more important than any fancy meal or anything that appeals to my flesh.

If it's against the word of God, it's not for me. Come back to that Psalm 57. Let me show you some verses here that David says that are just, boy, do they ever speak to me in this.

And it's something you ought to take this position in regards to making decisions and purposing in your heart what you will and will not do. In Daniel chapter 1, we read that Daniel purposed in his heart he did not defile himself.

In Psalm 57, look at verse number 7. David said, my heart is fixed. Oh God, my heart is fixed.

[10 : 48] Now he's not saying that my heart is broken and you've mended it. He's saying, I'm determined. I'm not changing. I shall not be moved. He says it again in Psalm 108, verse 1.

If you want to mark that down, but we're going to go to one more, Psalm 112, and see it again. A third place. Psalm 112. It's also in 108, verse 1.

Psalm 112, and notice verses 7 and 8. He's speaking of the righteous man. In verse 6, he shall not be moved.

In verse 7, he shall not be afraid of evil tidings. Why? His heart is fixed. Notice, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established. He shall not be afraid. There's your King James Bible defining its terms. His heart is fixed. His heart is established.

[11 : 52] His heart is established. There's some boundaries. There's some things set up that are not going to change. He shall not be moved. It's settled beforehand who I am, how I'm going to live.

And notice that in the case of Daniel, and even in some cases with David, this didn't happen by accident with Daniel. It didn't happen by accident that he remained undefiled. He decided ahead of time and fixed it in his heart and purposed it.

He decided. Purposing in your heart is to make a decision. You know what happened in Genesis chapter 3 with Eve in the garden? Why she was seemingly so quickly fell?

It's because she never decided something inside first. I'm not going to touch that tree or partake of the fruit of that tree. She never made that decision. So when she was presented with it as a temptation and even beguiled about it, I guess so.

It is good for food. As a matter of fact, it is desired to make one wise and pleasant to the eyes. And down she fell and her husband with her. What should she have done? She should have purposed in her heart.

[13 : 03] What God said, I will not go against. Draw a line. Establish a boundary. Eve never purposed in her heart and she went against what God commanded. So oh, how important it is to have your mind made up beforehand and be resolved and intent upon obeying God and obeying the word of God and doing right.

How important that is. Decide now. Decide when you're young. Decide today. I'll obey God. I'll live for his glory. His life.

My life is his. He has me. Decide that today. Purpose in your heart. I'll live for God. When the temptations come up, you'll say it's not. God's not for that.

So I'm against it. It's a decision it needs to be made ahead of time. So secondly, in Daniel chapter one, I want to say this also. Purposing in your heart takes place on the inside.

Daniel says in verse eight, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. Before he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself, he decided on the inside, I'm not going to do this.

[14:15] So let me try to find a way that can make everybody happy. But before he talked to the prince, it was already set up inside his heart. His heart was fixed. It's a decision.

And it's something that takes place on the inside. And I'm not saying that this isn't something that is not evidenced on the outside. Surely it will be. But the point I want to get across and drive home, this is on the inside.

It's on the place that you can control. It's on the place where you have a throne and you make the choice. You can't control the world. You can't control your circumstances.

You go to work, you can't control the folks around you, your boss, or things that happen. And you can't control life. But guess what you do have control of? You've got control of the inside of you.

And that's where you need to make the choice. Purposing in your heart. It takes place on the inside. And I want us to take a moment here. We'll come back to Daniel. Let's run a few verses.

[15:13] Go to Romans 7. Because when God saves a man and he places in spirit within the man, he wants to take over the inside.

God's interested on the inside. It's what he goes after first. And he'll change the outside later. He'll change the outside progressively as he sanctifies you in your walk daily.

But before your outside gets cleaned up, the inside has got to be changed. God wants control of the inside. If you get saved, you get in a church where they start talking about the outside right away, you're around the wrong crowd.

If all they're doing is telling you, well, now you've got to start dressing like this, now you've got to get your hair cut like this, and you've got to quit talking like that, you should, you might be a wrong and around crowd if they emphasize the outside before God gets a chance to work on the inside.

The Lord will do the work inside. That's his goal. Start there, and then it absolutely displayed and overflows into the outside.

[16:19] Romans chapter 7, look what the Apostle Paul says in verse 22. He says, I delight in the law of God after the inward man. Notice that phrase, the inward man.

And later when he talks about that inward man in verse 25, he calls it the mind. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, so then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.

And then here, so here he's describing this battle and this fight going on between his flesh and the inward man, which is God's spirit, the new creature inside of him.

And he calls that the mind in verse 25. So when, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God. Look at chapter 8. Romans chapter 8, verse 5.

So they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

[17:23] Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. There's a carnal mind, which is the flesh, and there's a spiritual mind, which is the inward man, which is God inside of you attempting to change you, going after your mind.

He wants your mind. Look at chapter 12, Romans 12. God wants to take control of the inside.

Romans chapter 12, and verse number 2. And be not conformed to this world. And somebody will say, oh, you shouldn't dress like the world, you shouldn't look like the world, and make your body and hair, and, true.

But how do you combat not conforming to the world? It's be ye transformed on the inside by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. It doesn't happen by doing things on the outside, by changing the outside. It happens by having this thing up here changed your mind. Not talking about your brain, the organ, the inner man, the inward man, Paul calls him.

[18:45] Look what he says in Ephesians 4. Two more spots here about this. Very similar phrases coming ahead. Ephesians 4. God wants to take over and he goes after the inside first.

Ephesians 4, verses 22 through 24. Ephesians 4, 22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, as Paul calls it previous, the flesh, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that ye put on the new man, which after

God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The new man, the spirit of your mind, is giving Christ first place on the inside. That guy that he puts inside of you is created in righteousness.

That guy that he puts inside of you is created in true holiness. He's going to reflect God. Look at Colossians 3. One more. Colossians 3.

He uses different words but says the same thing. Tells us to put off the old man with his deeds in verse 9. Colossians 3, verse 10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge.

[20 : 14] Where's that? Up here? In the mind? He's renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. That's God. That's righteousness and true holiness.

God putting on the inside of you. He's going after your mind. Daniel purposed in his heart that he not defile himself. This purposing in your heart takes place on the inside.

That's the place God is after. That's where he's trying to influence you. Come back to Daniel chapter 1. Now, the outward does influence and does affect you.

There are circumstances and things that are, as I said, just they're out of your control. There's things in life, in the world that you cannot control. But what you can control is the inward man, the inside.

And you can control how you react and respond and whether you're going to submit to the will of God in this or not. Now, let Daniel be the example. Look at Daniel chapter 1. And we read it in verses 3 and 4 that the king spoke to this master of the eunuchs and he said, bring certain of the children of Israel the king's seed and of the princes.

[21 : 28] Bring these children in whom was no blemish, well favored, skillful in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding science, such an ability to stand in the king's palace. Bring in the best of the best.

And Daniel was one of them. So you know what? Daniel's environment changed. Outwardly, Daniel's environment changed drastically. I don't know where he lived.

He was in Judah. He came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And he took treasures out of the house of God. And he took the best of the best, the ones that had no blemish, well favored, and skillful in wisdom, cunning knowledge, and understandings.

He took the best of the best. So Daniel wasn't some kid that was good at sports or a shepherd of the sheep perhaps. Daniel must have been in the system already as far as the Jewish growing them up to be somebody in the house of God, the service of God.

We don't know much of anything at all about his lineage, about his family, and where he lived and anything about it. But just going off of the ones that he chose, certain of the children of Israel, of the king's seed, of the princes, Daniel had to be somebody and have some good upbringing.

[22 : 46] And so he probably came from a very good home, in a very good environment, despite the temperature of the nation of Israel at the time so low that God said, you're out of here.

I'm going to perform my word against you like I said, because you rejected me. But it doesn't look like Daniel's rejected him. And it looks like he's had some things input into him, but now he's taken away, far away, to Babylon, to a place where he's not going to see God.

He's not going to see the hand of God, the temple of God, the instruments within the temple or a place of prayer. There's a house of another god, Bel.

He's going to be introduced to that one. He's going to see how they worship other gods. He's going to be taught some things that he, as a Jew, is not supposed to even learn. And Jeremiah, the Lord says to them in chapter 10, he says, learn not the way of the heathen.

Back in Deuteronomy, he warned them many times about when they go on the land, you better sterilize that land and wipe them all out. You better not let your children learn how they worship their gods. It'll be a snare to you.

[23 : 53] But Daniel's going to see stuff he never saw in his life. His environment changed, removed from all godly influences. Not only that, Daniel, no doubt, his appearance changed.

It doesn't say it in the text anywhere, but I cannot imagine that they allowed him to keep his Jewish robes or garments. He's being trained to stand in the king's palace.

He doesn't want to see these Jewish boys look like Jews anymore. He's trying to change them. So much so that he's changed, look at verse 4, at the end of the verse, that they might stand in the king's palace to whom they might teach the learning in the tongue of the Chaldeans.

They're trying to change his language. They're trying to change his look. They're changing his environment, and worse than that, on a personal level, they're changing his name.

His name is Daniel. Daniel named after the god. You see the E-L on the end. It's a reference to God. And a prefix put on his name as a suffix.

[24 : 55] His name means God is my judge. But this king says, God is your judge. What? No. Not that god anymore. I've got a different god. And so he changes his name to the god Bel.

And in Daniel chapter 1, verse 7, he changes Daniel's name to Belteshazzar, which means whom Bel favors. Well, he looked at that one, he thought, this guy's the cream of the crop because Bel, my God, must have blessed you.

he's favoring you above the others. And he gives him that name. And he ascribes his god and his false deity to Daniel.

Daniel, I'm showing you that you can't always change or control the outside. And while Daniel's the heathen king attempted to change everything about this young man, how he looked, how he talked, his name, his very identity of who he is, Daniel couldn't control that at all.

He tried to transform him into one of them to looking like one of these Babylonians, Assyrians. But one thing that king couldn't do was change who Daniel was on the inside.

[26 : 12] That belonged to Daniel. And Daniel gave that to God. Christian, more than God wants to change the world. He wants to change you.

He wants to do it inside. He wants to take what's there, clean it out, wash it, put a new man in there himself.

And he wants to change it. He wants it to be renewed. It'll come alive with real life. Spiritually minded is life and peace.

He wants to see love and joy and peace and gentleness and goodness and faith and meekness, long suffering come out of that new man.

He wants to see the bond of charity. He wants to see forgiveness and forbearing one another. He wants to see loving the brethren.

[27 : 07] He wants to see a new creature. And he wants to go at you from the inside. The world could attempt that you can be in circumstances that can really be difficult for you but the world can't change who you are on the inside.

They can't touch it. That you can give to God. And to do that you're going to have to purpose in your heart. On the inside I belong to God.

You can't blame the world for the decisions you make. You can't blame friends. You can't blame influences. You can't blame your circumstances for decisions you make.

You can blame them for certain circumstances but not for choices you make. Because you're in control of the inside. Purposing in your heart is to make a decision.

Secondly, purposing in your heart takes place on the inside. It takes place in your heart. And one more thing from this passage about purposing in your heart is that it's a personal and an individual commitment.

[28 : 09] Notice again in verse 8 that Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. This is personal.

This is individual. I don't know whether the others followed his lead here, his other friends mentioned in this chapter, or maybe they decided on their own and that's what brought them together.

I don't know about that. But I know that as Daniel wrote about himself in verse 8, he told us what was going through his mind. He told us the decision that he personally made.

He made a decision. He did it. It was on the inside and it was personal, individual. If the others partook of the king's meat, if others partook of the king's wine, if they defiled themselves against the word of God and what they were trained, that didn't affect Daniel because Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.

And this thought of purposing in your heart, Christian, is very much that. It's a personal commitment between you and God. You ought to have some convictions about you. You ought to have some commitments that you make with God.

[29 : 23] It's evidence of a personal relationship. It's not that, oh, the preacher said we all shouldn't do this so we don't do that. It's that you know God and you can talk to him and he can impress you and influence you and you acknowledge it and you admit I'm going to follow you, I'm going to

commit to what you say, I can preach a message and I can preach 30 messages and one of them will hit you.

And one of them will have something in it where the Lord says that's you, I'm trying to talk to you, respond, and he gives you an opportunity to commit and to purpose in your heart that you won't defile yourself.

But it's up to you to do that. For Daniel it was not to defile himself. For you it will be whatever God lays on your heart but it's your personal decision to make. To vow to stand for what is right, for what God shows you in your life.

And to do it regardless of whether you're going to stand alone or you're going to stand with the whole church behind you. It's an individual decision. You can't rely on others. You can't rely on parents.

You can't rely on your spouse. You can't rely on your kids. You can't rely on your church. You're going to have to learn how to know what God says and decide to obey it. Because one day you just might be standing by yourself.

[30 : 42] If it hasn't happened already. At work you are by yourself, most of you. And God's going to have to call on you to purpose in your heart that you're going to take a stand for Jesus Christ.

A stand that might be all alone. You have to decide and you need to be prepared. And that's what this is. It's purposing on the inside. I'm going to do this. And when it comes, you're ready.

And by the way, you're never standing alone. You're never standing alone. When the apostle Paul says that at my first answer, all men forsook me, no man stood with me, he says the next verse, nevertheless, the Lord stood with me.

He knew what it was like to stand all alone, have men just take off and flee, and there he is. And he's like, God, you didn't leave me, you didn't forsake me, and as I stand for you, you're right here strengthening me the whole time.

I've heard multiple times of kids that go away to college and they get challenged by some cocky, atheistic professor. You can't prove to me there's a God, and they mock Christianity, and there's Christian kids that sit in these classes that have been taught and trained, and they're saved, and they know the truth, and there they are in an environment where the world's mocking their God and their faith, and the kids are laughing, and some of these cocky professors will stand up and challenge, I'll put forth a challenge to the class, I'll give you the whole period on Monday morning, you take the whole time, and you prove to us if there's a God.

[32 : 17] Anybody want to take that challenge? And I've heard from more than one teenager that said, I was sitting there, and I was scared to death. Inside of me was saying, you need to do it, you need to do it, but I was scared to death because, look how many kids here, look at that, I can't, you know, they're just going to bury me, but I've also heard from some kids that said, I believe in God, I'm a Christian, and I guess, and the professor's like, Monday morning, floor is yours, and then they go call their parents, go call their pastor, go try to spend the weekend assembling material, and you know what?

The Lord stands with them, and they get up, and I've heard it from two individuals who stood in front of their college class and declared what they believe from the word of God to be truth and witness to the entire class, and afterwards, you know what happened?

Afterwards, they leave, and another kid says, hey, good job, I'm a Christian too, and another one comes up and said, hey, I want to say thank you for standing up.

I was too scared to do it, but I'm glad you did. They find out, I'm not alone at all. God's got people all around me that can strengthen me, and for sometimes they just need somebody to stand up, and to do that, you're going to have to purpose in your heart.

Purposing in your heart is an individual commitment. By the way, a conclusion here this morning from this passage, notice verse number five, there's just two more things I want to point out before we close.

[33 : 56] In verse number five, it says, the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

I want you to notice that this test and this decision that Daniel made wasn't just for a moment. It wasn't fleeting at all. This wasn't a thing where he's just like, you know what?

Yeah, I can do it. I can do anything for a week. I can do anything for a few weeks if I have to. I can endure this thing. This was not a quick confrontation.

This was a three-year ordeal. So his decision, purposing in his heart, this thing he did on the inside of him personally was, it was a real commitment that I'm going to rely on God to see me through this thing and I'm not going to quit and I'm not going to give up.

It's not just a fleeting little quickie. This is a three-year process. Daniel's going to trust the Lord. We read it in Psalms. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

[35 : 06] And that's what Daniel was doing. But there's more than that. Verse number 18 says, now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

And I want you to consider this, Christian. That there is an end. There is an end to the time you have to purpose. It's coming to a close.

And at the end, there's going to be an examination. And at the end, you, just like Daniel, are going to stand before the king.

And you're going to be glad in that day that you purposed in your heart not to defile yourself. yourself. When you stand before the king, the Lord of glory, in the judgment seat of Christ, and he's going to look on you and try you and your works and your life.

And he'll see right through all of it. And he'll know what you decided in your heart and how you stood for him because you purposed to do what's right. And that day, he'll see if you defiled yourself or not.

[36 : 15] And that's an examination that if you'll stand like Daniel did, you'll be glad you did. You'll be glad you did it God's way. It'll be worth it. And like Daniel, you'll get rewarded.

Daniel came out ten times better than all of the magicians and astraught. The people that were already there came out way above all of that. And Christian, you can come out that way too.

My challenge to you this morning is to be resolved, to purpose on the inside that you're with God all the way. That you're with God, that you're going to take a stand for what's right, that you're going to take a stand against what's wrong, that you're going to decide to fight, and that you're going to decide not to give up.

Jesus Christ went to the cross, determined to follow through all the way to the end, and he took it all alone, and he paid for your sins, that the Bible says that he might bring us to God.

He did that for us. Now he calls us to commit our lives to him and to his will, as the scriptures plainly state. Let's bow our heads together.

[37 : 29] With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I want you to think. I want you to talk to the Lord. Lord, I want you to remember that this example of Daniel's godliness and his faithfulness to God, it didn't happen by accident.

He got through those three years. It wasn't by chance. It's because he made a decision. I'm not going to defile myself. And if you're going to live for Christ, if your life is going to count for Christ, if your choices are going to be those that please, God, you're going to have to make a decision. You're going to have to do it on purpose. It's not going to happen by accident. What happens by accident is sin. Because you're not paying attention. Because you don't have your guard up. Because you don't decide I'm not going to do it. You'll fall every time. But if you purpose ahead of time that I'll obey the Lord, that I want what he wants, that he has first place, then you'll find the strength on the inside to follow through.

I invite you, if you feel the Lord dealing with your heart, to come forward and to talk things over with God or to commit something to him that he's dealt with you already in your life. And maybe you haven't laid it down.

[38 : 55] Maybe you haven't purposed in your heart to give it to him. I want to invite you to pray. I had a friend when I was younger, when I got right with God, I got in church, I got things going.

And I started inviting my friend to come to church with me. And he'd been in church growing up on and off a little bit. And I remember one night saying to him on a Wednesday night, I said, why don't you come to church tonight with me?

I said, it's not going to be a long service, it'll be good, just come to church with me. And he said, oh, let me think, what am I doing? What am I doing? What's going on tonight? And I remembered him talking that way and I thought in my mind, the difference between him and me right now is that you ask me where I'm at on Wednesday night, I can tell you because I've purposed in my heart that I'll

be in church every time I get the chance.

Not every time I have to, every time I get the chance, I'm there because I want it. I'm feeding on it. I love it. I love being around the people of God. They're my people.

They help me. But that friend of mine had to think, what else do I want to be doing right now? What else do I want to be doing on Wednesday, not church? What else do I have that is more important to me?

[40 : 11] He truly was not resolved. He didn't purpose in his heart in that area. What about you, Christian? Does God have first place?

Are you resolved? Or are you just drifting? Just drifting along until something happens. And then you call on God. We're going to sing, have I have, I have decided to follow Jesus.

And if you're not purposed in your heart, then you're a good candidate for temptation. You're a good candidate for deception and easy picking for the devil.

But like we sing in this song, you can decide a personal decision on the inside to stay with God. It's number 397 in the hymnal. Let's stand together as we sing.

Invite you to come and pray if you need to. This altar is always open to do business with God. local ■■ in Rome. Christian■ het