

Life with Purpose

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[0:00] We're going to look at Daniel tonight. Daniel firstly and then his friends. Daniel is an example to us of a young man who shows us how to live life with purpose, with Godly purpose.

Now there's a song that goes, standing by a purpose true, heeding God's command, honour them, the faithful few, all hail to Daniel's band. Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a purpose firm, dare to make it known.

So my plea to you tonight is how do you live life with purpose? A life with purpose. Firstly, prayer. Prayer is something good that we can purpose to do, to have in our lives. Life with purpose is life with prayer.

We see Daniel's prayer life stood out as a characteristic of Daniel, his devotional life. When Daniel faced a test of faith, he prayed. He prayed to God and he prayed through.

There was a law declared in Daniel 6 verse 7. It was conjured up by the enemies of Daniel so that he would be trapped and ensnared because they saw that Daniel prayed and they were hateful of Daniel.

[1:29] So they wanted to find a way of Daniel breaking a law of the land. They knew that he had integrity. And the one area that they thought they could trap him was that Daniel regularly prayed.

And in Daniel 6 verse 7. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors and the princes, the councillors and the captains, having consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for 30 days save of thee, they were addressing the king, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

They said, here's a law, we're going to make, we're going to make this law that anyone who asks, who prays, who seeks of anyone for 30 days, save of the king, shall be cast into the den of lions. And so this was such an order that Daniel would break as he prayed. Daniel just had to keep quiet for 30 days, just for a month.

He had to keep quiet for 30 days to keep his faith private for a month. What did Daniel do? Did he cave in and stop praying? Did he just do what everyone else was doing?

[2:50] To not care, to pray, to not seek after God? No way! Daniel was not such a man. Daniel kept on serving and praying through, praying to the only true God, even though he faced being cast into the lion's den.

Daniel 6 verse 10. It says, now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he knew, he had heard about this law, he knew that it was signed. He went into his house, as he would normally do, he went into his house and his windows being opened in his chamber towards Jerusalem, and he knelt upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.

Daniel didn't stop to pray. He didn't stop praying. Daniel 6 verse 16. Then the king commanded. He heard about it. Daniel got dogged in and was found to be disobeying the king's command.

They brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou service continually, he will deliver thee.

He will deliver thee. The king himself had some element of faith that he would see that Daniel would be delivered by his God.

[4:14] And verse 17, it goes on, And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den. Here was Daniel. He was in this cave, this den, this hole in the ground, as it were, and the stone was rolled over.

And the king sealed it with his own signet. There was some kind of seal, some kind of ring with a seal on it. And it was sealed with some wax, I suppose, or some item of clay or wax.

That the stone was sealed shut by the king's orders. And with the signet of his lord, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then verse 18. Then the king went to his palace and passed the night fasting.

Neither were the instruments of music brought before him, and his sleep went from him. The king had a sleepless night, just thinking of Daniel in the lion's den.

And then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel. And the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou service continually able to deliver thee from the lions?

[5:24] Then Daniel said unto the king, O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths at that. They have not hurt me.

Forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me, and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. So Daniel was still alive in that lion's den.

Those hungry lions had not had a piece of Daniel. Verse 23. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den.

So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. Will you believe God like Daniel?

Will you be like Daniel and have faith in God? Will you have purpose in your heart like Daniel had? Has he purposed to pray? Do we care enough to pray?

[6:22] Or is it not high on our list of priorities? Do we think to pray? Will we dare to be a Daniel? Living life with purpose means with purpose to pray.

Purpose to pray. And life with purpose, secondly, takes principles. Life with purpose takes principles. Godly principles.

Live with a right conscience. Earlier on in the book of Daniel, we see Daniel 1, verse 8. As we started with, 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.

Daniel purposed not to defile himself. He didn't want to pollute or stain himself before God. Here was Daniel in this godless country with ungodly things all around about him, but he stayed true to his Lord.

He stayed true to his Lord. I urge you tonight, friends, take care, lest you be defiled. Titus 1, verse 5, it says, Unto the pure, all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled, or dirty, and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

[7:42] Now dirt accumulates it, contaminates it, blocks. When you see sometimes you get a drain pipe, it gets clogged, doesn't it?

It gets blocked, and all kinds of trouble happens then. And so too, dirt, defilement, can defile the mind, the conscience.

But Daniel was one who chose not to be defiled. He chose not to defile himself. It says of Daniel, and his friends, that they had character and commitment.

They faced the test of peer pressure as it often presses on us, and they passed the test. They did not blend in or join the party, join the crowd, follow the crowd, is what some say, isn't it?

But sometimes if you follow the crowd, it might be you follow them all the way to hell. You know, if you follow the crowd, the Bible says that the multitude go to evil, it says that the broad way, the wide way, leads to destruction.

[8:48] And yet the narrow way, God's way, leads to life, to trust Christ. There's only a few that trust him. Daniel 1 shows us Daniel and his friends.

There's Daniel here, and we have Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. That was their Hebrew names. And they had been taken captive, captured, brought to Babylon to this godless place, this godless city, and before the godless king, Nebuchadnezzar.

His army brought them to the University of Babylon, if you like, for an education that would lead to a job in the king's court. They were highly favoured. They were the best and brightest of their day.

Sons of royalty, strong and smart. And they were enrolled in this tough three-year program to learn the literature and language of the Chaldeans. So they had some benefits here.

Everything was laid on. The king graciously fed them from his own table. Just think of that. Invited into the king's palace and the king's table spread with all delicacies, you can imagine.

[9:59] You can imagine going into a royal palace and the kind of food that the king would eat would be the best that money could buy, wouldn't it? Such was the food that was offered to these men.

And they could even drink of his finest wine that was on offer for them. And then their names were changed. Each of their names as we started with, we mentioned just earlier, was Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Each of these names included the name of God. Daniel. Daniel. El. Means God is my judge. El. The name of God.

And all the other names too had names including the names of God. And they were changed to include the new names including the names of Babylonian God.

false gods. False gods with a small gem. Daniel and his friends were at risk of losing their identity. As their names were changed, there was that risk of losing that distinctiveness, that belonging that they had as God's people.

[11:05] But yet, these four young men were offered up things that would defile themselves before God, but they said no. They said no. We're not going to have a bar of that.

food unlawful for a Jewish person to eat was food offered to idols and prepared by Gentiles. And these young men were faced with this challenge this time as they were possibly between the ages of 15 and 20.

They were still relatively young men. And they could have chosen that day. They could have chosen the Babylonian way. They could have chosen the way of the world. They didn't totally withdraw from Babylonian culture.

They were in contact with Babylonian life, but they didn't allow it to corrupt them and to drag them down and stifle their faith and commitment to Christ. Young men, young women here tonight, older men, older women, we can make that same decision that Daniel did.

Daniel made the very hard choice not to eat of the king's choicest food or drink. It would have been the easy thing to do. It was laid on.

[12:17] It was free. It was offered. Daniel 1 verse 8 But Daniel purposed in his heart. But he would not, would not defile himself.

He made that decision. He made that purpose in his heart. He would not defile himself when the portion of the king's meat nor when the wine which he drank.

Daniel made his decision and the others followed. Daniel was a man with purpose. He kept a pure conscience. He was a man of principle, the principle of devotion to God, the principle of separation. 1 Timothy 1 tells us, likewise, as Paul exhorted the young Timothy. He said, now the end or the goal or the purpose of the commandment is charity or love out of a pure heart and a good conscience, a clear conscience if you like and faith unfamed.

Real faith. Not pretend but the real thing. Faith unfamed. Those three things, the purpose for Daniel, charity out of a pure heart, a good conscience, a clear conscience and a faith unfamed.

[13:25] Real, not pretend it was the real thing. Daniel had the same purpose if you like. He knew that he had to draw the line somewhere. He could have just sat and eaten at the king's table.

To sit and eat at someone's table was a sign as it is today, a friendship of trust. But his loyalty was unto God and his heart was after God. Some have thought that Daniel at this time was possibly about 14 years old.

Still very young. Do we know what to say no to and what to say yes to? It's a very important question especially for young people but for all of us really.

When the teenager goes off to study or to work what will he say yes to and what will he say no to? Will he go to the questionable parties? Questionable things.

Things that might lure him into unwise choices. Who will he go out with? Who will he rub shoulders with?

[14:33] Who will he spend time with? What will they do when they are out? Out of the eye of parents. What will they do? Important questions for all of us.

will we compromise our integrity or will we be steadfast to the godly principles we want to live by? How will we decide when the rubber hits the road when we come to those questions we have to answer? Will we say yes or no? Will we be guided by our convictions?

Will it be the word of God that shapes our decisions and choices or will it be just from perhaps the latest soapies or reality TV shows or whatever Hollywood streaming at the moment might set our agendas and our decisions?

Or will we be rather like the psalmist who said I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress Psalm 17 verse 3 That's a good purpose to have isn't it?

[15:39] I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress on purpose that my mouth shall not be sinful in other words we can utter the words of filth of muck and mire of the filth of Hollywood you see the latest trashy movies and they're filled with curse words some would just lightly use the name of our precious Lord and Saviour as a curse word trash the very name of almighty God to trash the name of the Lord Jesus Christ rather purpose in your heart that when you speak that name when you speak his precious holy worthy name that you speak it with reverence with fear with godly motive and love and honour I am purpose that my mouth shall not transgress

I will purpose myself it's a good purpose for you to make for me to make I am resolved I know there's a man of long ago who made a number of resolutions he says I am resolved I am resolved numbers of them and skirt if you look that up I haven't taken time to find that but if you search for that there's a number of resolutions that a man made I am resolved I will determine I will commit I will purpose to live right and true I will let godly principles guide my decisions and choices friends I urge you tonight to make that your choice that your behaviour that your feelings that your thoughts will be guided by truth and integrity Daniel made some hard choices in his day what do we see in Daniel's time he had courage to face those things that challenged him and for each of us in your family in your home in your life there will be times you'll have to make a stand there will be costly times where you'll have to step over the line and say no

I refuse that and I receive this as you're guided by godly decision making and we know it can be costly to do that when we make such choices it might cost you a job it might cost you friendships you might get labelled when you stand on your convictions but god will honour those who honour him I urge you tonight make the hard choices be in the world but not of the world be a person who lives by conviction in a world of compromise so he's saying Daniel a life with purpose living with purposeful prayer living by godly principle and thirdly living to please God pleasing god makes a life with purpose that matters pleasing god it means being devoted to him and obeying him above all others pleasing god it's what matters most in deciding the choices we'll make does what

I'm thinking to do please god or not does it displease god Daniel 3 I'd like to turn to Daniel 3 as we've got it here Daniel 3 verse 1 Nebuchadnezzar the king had made an image of gold his height was three score cubits and the breadth thereof six cubits it was gigantic he set it up in the plain of Jura in the province of Babylon this massive image of gold verse 14 we pick up the story again Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said unto them is it true O Shadrach Meshach and Abednego do you serve my gods do you not serve my gods nor worship the golden image which I have set up now here they were the great crowd was as one bowing before this massive golden image but Shadrach Meshach and Abednego these three Hebrew boys they stood they did not bow and so the king was questioning them and he said now if you be ready that at what time you hear the sound of the corner the flute the harp the salt sackbut the psaltery the dulcimer and all kinds of music when you hear these musical instruments go he says you fall down and worship the image which

I have set up well but if you worship not if you worship not you shall be cast that same out into the midst of a burning fiery furnace and who is that god that that shall deliver you out of my hands here they were they were faced with a decision they could bow down they could do just like everybody else is doing you know everybody else is doing it that's what people say isn't it everybody else is doing it doesn't make it right doesn't make it right and so even though everybody else is doing it Shadrach Meshach and Abed he goes stood firm they did not bow in verse 16 they addressed the king they said we're not careful to answer thee in this matter if it be so our god whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and he will deliver us out of thine hand O king but if not be it known unto thee

[21:21] O king that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up they addressed the king politely courteously but they stood firm on their convictions of faith they were told that if they did not bow down to this pagan god they would be thrown into the oven their choice was please god and face suffering potentially or please man and go along with the crowd with ungodliness they just had to go with the flow just to go with the flow maybe just for a few minutes just maybe just go along just do as everybody else was doing just keep a low profile and they could get by and they'd be fine no sweat sometimes the world and your peers will try to influence you as well to disobey god to disobey that first commandment to love the lord with all your heart mind soul and strength these young men were faced with the decision to bow or burn to bow or burn that was the decision that faced them what did

Shadrach Meshach and Abednego do when threatened with the fiery furnace they purposed to please god their purpose was to please god they remained faithful to their god they trusted god no matter what to protect them from the fiery furnace these young men stood up against the whole nation that was trying to make them be unfaithful to the only true god what a challenge they faced those who commentators said this life or death were not to be considered those that would avoid sin must not parley with temptation when that which we are alert or affrighted is manifestly evil when it's manifestly evil there is no consideration to be made as obvious the choice he goes on they must obey god rather than man they must rather suffer than sin they must not do evil that good may come therefore none of these things move them you know there was really no time for decision making here the choice was clear as to what they had to do they honoured god they pleased god that was the principle that they held fast to in daniel 3 25 as they were ultimately thrown into this fiery furnace then the king looks in and he says lo behold i see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire and they have no birds and the form of the fourth is like the son of god they turn shabrak meshach and abed to go and here's this other one he's like the son of god they knew something supernatural was happening here the very son of god christ prior to his coming in human form from mary's womb came and stood with these young men in the fiery furnace and friends god is with you when you have to face such things you know we aussie christians don't have much to have to stand up to really do it we don't have a lot to challenge our faith even though we are in a godless culture there will still be those comparatively little things that face us we won't have to necessarily face a fiery furnace but there will be those little things those little maybe imperceptible things where if the crowd around you uses curse words that you might slip one or two yourself unthinking succumbing to the pressure the peer pressure the defilement makes you dirty it pollutes you to use dirty words it pollutes you it stains you and so rather make a choice in james 4 it says the adulterers and adulteresses talking about people being unfaithful to god know you're not that friendship with the world is enmity it's hatred with god to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of god it says so don't make the world your friend friends the world is not your friend it's the enemy of god and for a christian the world is no friend to you that want to serve god this world can lead people to activities that defile they'll make you dirty they'll make you dirty unclean and so rather purpose to please god to do what's right before him just consider now if you would to read a cap daniel and his friends had a lot of pressure on them to conform to the babylonian ways the ungodly ways and we too teenagers younger than teenagers older than teenagers here tonight we too are faced with the same question the same decision are we going to commit to do right to please god that his relationship matters more to us than some other relationship to obey him above all above all will you choose to do right will you purpose in your heart to please god will you keep yourself from that which offends god will you determine will you make that purpose in your heart to serve him to learn god's word to know what will defile this is how we know what's right and wrong because god tells us what's right and wrong and we'll know what defiles and what makes clean so be a daniel today be a daniel dare to be a daniel purpose to keep yourself from the world from that which will pollute your body your mind keep yourself in prayer purpose number one daniel purpose to pray he purposed to pray he said i'm going to pray no matter what no matter what the cost no matter what the opposition no matter what the inconvenience i'm going to pray i'm going to commit to pray to pray commit purpose to pray to pray secondly purpose to have principles that you'll hold fast to godly principles as daniel purposed in his heart he would not defile himself he didn't want to

defile himself he wanted to be clean he wanted to choose godly and clean things integrity of character to keep himself before god and thirdly we see that there is that wonderful purpose we can have that purpose that we can have to do that which would please god please god and when it all boils down to it it boils down to that doesn't it do we want to please god or displease god and to have that commitment to stand fast no matter what the crowd does we don't bend to the world's way of thinking we'll do right before god it tells of barnabas that soul mate of paul's that when he came and he saw the grace of god he was glad and he exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would plead unto the lord he exhorted them that with purpose of heart they would plead unto the lord you know this word plead it's like glue now it says a man should leave his father and mother he should cleave to his wife he should be joined like glue it's like super glue it's what god wants husband and wives to be super glue and paul barnabas is exhorting him that with purpose of heart that we would cleave unto the lord we have that closeness to him that closeness that cleaving that we be joined to god like super glue as it were that nothing can separate and our love our faith our purpose of heart will be so fixed and firm and steadfast that nothing will separate us friends I urge you tonight to live life with purpose you can and it starts with trust in christ it starts with trusting him in simple faith and saying lord take my life and let me be what you want me to be I urge you tonight to make that your prayer

let's pray heavenly father we thank you that you are the almighty god the living god the only true god and you've come that we might have life and have it more abundantly and true life everlasting life is to know you is to know our saviour we thank you lord for the cross for the blood precious blood spilled poured out purposefully for we that believe here tonight we thank you lord for that precious blood help us lord to have purpose in our lives to live a life purposefully to have purpose of heart as daniel did and as barnabas exhorted your people to in acts 11 lord help us to have purpose of heart to cleave unto you and to stick fast and steadfast unto your will to your way for your glory we pray amen to