

The Triumph of Faith

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 September 2026

Preacher: Colin Dow

[0:00] Let's read in Daniel chapter 6. Everyone should get themselves a wife.

! Page number 743.

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps. When you read that word satraps, think mayors, city mayors.

120 satraps to be throughout the whole kingdom, and over them three high officials or princes of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss.

Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

[1:14] Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.

Then these men said, We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God. So these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, O king Darius, live forever.

All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counsellors and the governors had agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction that whoever makes petition to any God or man, whoever prays to any God or man for thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into a den of lions.

Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it cannot be changed according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked. Therefore, king Darius signed the document at injunction.

When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber 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.

[2:41] Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and said before the king concerning the injunction, O king, did you not sign an injunction that anyone who makes petition, who prays to any God or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?

The king answered and said, The thing stands fast according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked. Then they answered and said before the king, Daniel, who was one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.

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. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, Know, O king, that it's a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.

Then the king commanded and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, May your God whom you serve continually deliver you.

And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den and the king sealed it with his own signet and with a signet of his lord's that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting.

[4:16] No diversions were brought to him and sleep fled from him. Then at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish.

The king declared to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you serve continually been able to deliver you from the lions?

Then Daniel said to the king, 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. Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no kind of harm was found on him because he had trusted in his God.

And the king commanded and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions, they and their children, their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

[5 : 33] Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and languages that dwell on all the earth, Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in all my royal dominion, people are to tremble in fear before the God of Daniel.

He is a living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and earth.

He who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus, the Persian.

Amen. May God bless. That reading of his word. Daniel chapter 6, the triumph of faith.

The triumph of faith. There are certain Bible stories which, though they may not be Christians, most people know something about.

[6 : 41] So Daniel in the lion's den is one of them. For those of us who were brought up in the church, we were taught about Daniel and the lion's den when we were children. So it's very familiar to us.

But then there's a great many things which are familiar to us all, be it places or people or stories. Especially as we grow older, we get more comfortable with familiarity.

It's really good to meet new people and go to new places and hear new stories, but we always want to return to the familiar because we feel safe there.

It's one of the reasons that we love the Bible so much. It's so familiar to us. The Bible contains stories which are familiar to us, like Daniel and the lion's den, but that's not the kind of familiarity I want to refer you to this evening.

Many of the stories of the Bible have common themes. For example, the story of Joseph being rejected by his brothers reminds us of how Jesus was rejected by Israel.

[7 : 46] The story of how David was chosen as king despite his being the youngest and most unimpressive of the brothers reminds us of the gentleness and meekness of Jesus.

There's common threads running through all the stories of the Bible. It's no surprise then that we see Jesus everywhere in the Bible because he really is everywhere in the Bible.

There are these levels of familiarity throughout the book of Daniel also. Themes common within the book itself and themes common throughout the whole Bible. The story of Daniel and the lion's den in Daniel 6, we learn four such familiar themes which run through the whole Bible.

A familiar foal, a familiar faith, a familiar fate, and a familiar future. But these common themes aren't just discovered in the Bible.

They're, as Christians, they become familiar to us in our daily lives. People will hate us for our faith in Jesus, but it will not stop us following Jesus.

[9 : 00] We will face bad consequences for being Christians through which God will help us. and those who hate us will ultimately face a bad end.

There's nothing surprising happening in this story, really. It's familiar to us all. So, first of all, we want to consider a familiar foal, a familiar foal.

So, our passage in Daniel begins with a new king called Darius. There's a new king, but God is still God and God is still in ultimate control. Heaven rules even when earthly rulers change.

To help governing his empire, Darius set up 120 satraps, or mayors, and over them he set three presidents, one of whom was Daniel.

Daniel was the top man, really. He was faithful and wise in all he did. Well, Darius, who was a very astute king, saw how trustworthy Daniel was and planned to make him second in charge of his whole empire.

[10:07] And again, it's familiar. It brings familiar bells in the mind. Do you remember how Joseph was made second in command in Egypt by Pharaoh? So, Darius is made, so Daniel is made second in charge in Babylon by Darius.

Cream comes to the top. Daniel's faithfulness means that he becomes indispensable to Darius. Daniel obeyed the words of the prophet Jeremiah, seek the prosperity of the city into which you are taken exile.

We are Christians. We are to seek the prosperity of Glasgow, the city in which we live. We are to be faithful, loyal, and wise, the kind of employees our employers trust and can depend upon.

However, Daniel's position and status attracted the jealousy of his fellow presidents and those 120 mayors. We talk today about the politics of envy, but such a thing has been around for thousands of years.

These leaders were jealous of Daniel and the favor in which he was held by King Darius. And again, in a different way, when we think about Jesus, the Jewish authorities were jealous of him because of his popularity with the common people.

[11:33] Daniel's fellow governors were jealous of Daniel because of his popularity with the king. The Jewish rulers were jealous of Jesus because of his popularity with the people.

And jealousy is a powerful motive which most often always leads to evil deeds. So one nation is jealous of another nation's resources so they go to war.

One person is jealous of another person's reputation so there's slander and there's gossip. We must be ultra careful of jealousy as Christians for even as the Tenth Commandment reminds us, you shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or anything that is your neighbor's. To be jealous of another is to fail to love him as yourself.

So, these mayors and presidents are jealous of Daniel and they're trying to get rid of him. First of all, they use political means but they can't find any fault in Daniel because, as we read in verse 4, no error, no fault was found in him.

[12:50] Again, I know I'm over-egging the pudding as it were but do these words not sound familiar? Should they not be familiar? At Pilate's trial, Pilate said of Jesus, I find no basis for a charge against this man.

and of Jesus it's written he was a lamb without fault or blemish. So, they couldn't get him with politics.

So, having failed with their political conspiracy, they turned to Daniel's faith. Knowing that Daniel was faithful to his God, they came up with a plan that appealed to Darius' ego as king.

They went to the king and suggested that he enact a new policy over the whole of his empire. The king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction that whoever makes petition or prayer to any God or man for thirty days except to you, O king, shall be thrust into a den of lions.

Now, O king, establish the injunction, sign the document so that it cannot be changed according to the laws of the Medes and Persians which cannot be revoked. It's an ingeniously evil plan.

[14:04] Brilliantly designed to catch Daniel out. These mayors and presidents know that Daniel prays to his God every day so they're sure he'll fall foul of the edict.

And it's an edict which cannot be changed. It's the so-called laws of the Medes and Persians. Now, if you've been around the church for any length of time at all, you'll know all about this phrase.

It's a phrase which goes down in history. Many things in a church aren't changed because they are traditions. And these so-called traditions are the laws of the Medes and the Persians which cannot be revoked.

You'll know what I'm talking about. But the first edict which was according to the laws of the Medes and Persians wasn't about traditions, what people wear to church or the order of a service, but about the life and death of God's servant Daniel.

Does this not all sound pretty familiar to you? Even from this morning's sermon about Jesus' betrayal, in the gospel we discover that when the Pharisees and Sadducees couldn't catch Jesus out according to the laws of Israel, they plotted in secret and came up with an ingeniously evil plan.

[15:22] The plotters in Jesus' day may have been Jews, for as the plotters in Daniel's day were Babylonians, but the way they work is familiar. They plot evil things in secret, they put Daniel in a lion's den, they put Jesus on a cross.

Although their conspiracy may not be secret, let us be crystal clear that the church has enemies who are entirely as intent on our destruction as these fellow leaders were of Daniel's.

And some of these enemies may be in the church already, diluting the distinctive message of the gospel and rendering the Bible a work of fiction.

Other enemies of the church come from outside. They attack us in the media, call us dumb, naive, medieval, but their aim is one and the same, the end of the church, the end of the gospel we preach.

Let's not be surprised by this. the church has always been under attack, as it was in these days, as it is today. It always will be. It's the price of faithfulness.

[16 : 34] We have familiar foes. Secondly, a familiar faith, a familiar faith. From verse 10 we learn that Daniel knew all about this document.

He was a very wise man, so he also probably understood why this edict had been signed. He knew that his enemies were conspiring against him, and having found no fault in his conduct of civil affairs, they turned their attention to his faith in God.

Daniel was no fool. He was not naive about his enemies. He'd already seen it when his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were stitched up decades before and thrown to a fiery furnace.

But now it's Daniel's turn to suffer. One might suppose that given the risk, Daniel would have buckled down, and even if he did continue to practice his faith, he would do so in secret.

But in verse 10 we read, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber toward Jerusalem. He got down in his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he had done previously.

[17 : 52] As well as having faith, Daniel had guts. For all the time he'd been in Babylon, he'd opened his window and prayed three times a day toward Jerusalem.

This wasn't brazen defiance. He was just doing what he's always done. And he wasn't about to change his practice because his enemies had persuaded the king to sign a piece of paper.

Daniel had seen how God had protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, and he was convinced that if God could save them from death, he could save him also.

So he kept his practice going of openly daily praying to God, and he kept these windows open. And what I find stunning about verse 10, if you look at it carefully with me, is that in the midst of all this trouble, Daniel was giving thanks to God.

Here's a man in the most dangerous place in the world, doing the most dangerous thing in the world, he's just signing his own death sentence, he knows it, and he's giving thanks. There's no self-pity, there's not a gram of self-awareness, he just wants to praise God even while his enemies are conspiring to kill him.

[19 : 10] Daniel is praising and worshipping. Now we don't know if Daniel was afraid or not, but we do know that his trust in God was so profound that rather than focus on protecting himself, he focused on praising God.

Despite all that stood against him, Daniel held fast to his faith. He refuses even to close the shutters on his windows, he's not even embarrassed when in verse 11 a group of these mayors and presidents assembled to spy on him and find him exactly where they wanted him to be, doing exactly what they wanted him to do.

It's a familiar faith, it stretches throughout the whole Bible. We see it in King David, where despite all his enemies who surround him, he keeps trusting in God rather than resorting to violence.

We see it in the Apostle Paul, when in prison in Philippi, rather than biting his nails and giving in to self-pity, he is praising and worshipping God. We see it today from Christians in many lands where they face imprisonment and death for their faith, but they stay faithful to the Lord.

And we see it more than anyone else in our Lord Jesus Christ, where standing before Herod and Pilate, he refused to save himself, but resolutely clung to his loving mission as our Savior and Lord to give himself as the sacrifice for our sin.

[20 : 52] It's a familiar faith. Given how familiar this faith is to us, will we stand for Christ when we come under pressure on account of our faith in him?

Will we stand for Christ? None of us are likely to be put to death for our faith in Jesus, but when we face more subtle forms of persecution, will we stand?

And rather than give in to self-pity and self-protection, will we praise and worship God instead?

What are some forms of subtle persecution we face today?

Could it be being mocked by our families and friends? because we're Christians? Could it be being made to feel on the outside by our classmates because we're Christians?

Whatever it means, will we remain faithful to Christ? It's a familiar faith. Third, a familiar fate, a familiar fate.

[21:56] So, Daniel's fellow presidents and mayors go to King Darius to present their evidence. They've seen Daniel praying to the God of Israel rather than to Darius.

They've played their game of chess and they've checkmated the king. He has no option now but to sign Daniel's death warrant. Darius didn't want to condemn Daniel, for as we read in verse 14, he set his mind to deliver Daniel and he labored till the sun went down to rescue him.

Well, who's so powerful now, eh? The king has become the weakest man in the empire. King

Darius has no stomach for the plan to kill Daniel but his hand is forced by the conspirators.

They come to Darius in verse 15 and they threaten him saying, no, O king. It is a law of the Medes and the Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.

So, Darius has no other option other than to sign Daniel's death sentence. And he orders that Daniel be brought and he be cast into a den of lions and that den be sealed with a great stone and cemented into place with the imprint of his own signet ring.

[23:18] As I said, Daniel, Darius rather, had no stomach for this because rather than condemn Daniel, his last words as that stone was placed over the entrance to the lion's den, where may your God whom you serve continually deliver you.

You see, Darius knew exactly the kind of man Daniel was. Why was he so foolish as to sign this edict in the first place? Why did he allow these government officials to run rings around him in the first place?

Daniel's faith, you see, has obviously had an impact upon Darius because that night when Daniel was in the den of lions, Darius didn't sleep a wink.

He was deeply distressed, not just about Daniel, but probably also because he knew that his officials had outfoxed him. And by fair means or foul, Daniel was in the lion's den.

Now, the lions we're talking about, Samuel and Madeline, they weren't tame circus lions. They hadn't had their claws and their teeth removed.

[24:35] They're vicious. They've been trained to kill and starve so that when someone's thrown into the den, they see their person as their next meal. They don't listen to please to stop, but with their powerful teeth and claws, they tear a person limb from limb until there's nothing left, not even a bone on which to gnaw.

In the beginning, Cain killed Abel. Joseph's brothers threw him in a pit and sold him to the Egyptians. King Saul ruthlessly pursued David.

The Babylonians threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into a fiery furnace. But more than any of that, the descendants of the Jews who had been captives in Babylon, they nailed Jesus to a cross.

Familiar faith met with familiar foes and suffered a familiar fate. We remember the words of the apostle who said, anyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Although Daniel's not mentioned in the list of the heroes of the faith in Hebrews chapter 11, we remember what's written of them. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with a sword, they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated, of whom the world was not worthy.

[26:05] They wandered about in deserts and mountains and dens and in caves. it's a familiar fate. Should, when the Messiah comes to Israel, he expect any different?

Should he expect them to anoint him as their king, or will he also suffer the fate of the Old Testament saints of whom the world was not worthy? Jesus was conspired against by the Jewish authorities.

He was arrested, tortured, and crucified. He was cast into the fiery furnace of Calvary. He was thrown into the lion's den of Golgotha. He was nailed to a cross.

This is the familiar fate of all who follow him. If you become a Christian, you must count the cost, and that cost may well be a fiery furnace.

It may well be a lion's den. It may well be a wooden cross. A familiar fate. Well, lastly, familiar foe, faith, fate, future.

[27 : 20] Familiar future. Well, there's a lot to depress us in this passage so far. Suffering at the hands of familiar foes awaits all those who follow in Jesus' footsteps.

steps. But rather like a game of chess, when a grandmaster is always one step of everyone else, God will always have the final say.

He will always have the final say, just as he did in the story of Daniel and the lion's den. And because God will have the final say, we're filled with assurance, joy, and hope.

this story in Daniel 6 ends in three familiar ways. Daniel is vindicated, Daniel's enemies are destroyed, and God is glorified.

Take these familiar ways, apply them to the story of Jesus, and you'll see the same pattern. Vindication, destruction, glorification.

[28 : 24] So, in the first instance, Daniel is vindicated. Having unwittingly condemned Daniel to death, Darius is overjoyed when he hears Daniel's voice saying to him in verses 21 and 22, O king, live forever.

My God sent his angel and shut the lion's 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.

Just like with the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, God protected and saved his people from harm. God vindicated them. God declared them innocent in the sight of all.

And now everyone in Babylon, from the king downwards, knows they are not guilty. What is the resurrection of Jesus but the public declaration of his innocence, his righteousness?

That Jesus was not guilty of those things he was accused of. He was declared to be the son of God with power. Daniel was declared righteous by the king of Babylon.

[29 : 30] Our Lord was declared righteous by the Lord of the universe, by his resurrection from the dead. The day of our vindication as Christians comes in the future when all those who have accused us of foolish blasphemy and naivety for putting our faith and trust in Jesus.

In the sight of all creation, God shall declare us righteous in his eyes. Secondly, Daniel's enemies are destroyed.

The king ordered that all those mayors and presidents who had falsely accused Daniel be thrown into the lion's den. They and their families did not even reach the bottom of the pit before the lions tore them from limb to limb.

They had maliciously conspired against Daniel. Now their secret plots are exposed in public and they pay the penalty. They are guilty and they are destroyed even as Daniel is declared righteous and as we read in verse 28 prospered.

King Saul having tried to kill David ended his life in misery. The Jerusalem which crucified Jesus was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans.

[30 : 53] In many lands today Christians are being ruthlessly persecuted for their faith in Jesus. Their persecutors may seem to be in power now but even as Daniel's enemies were destroyed so shall they be also.

It may be it may not be in this life but it shall happen. While those they have imprisoned and executed shall enjoy eternal life those who condemn them shall be eternally destroyed.

The destiny of all those who defy Christ and his church do not hate them pity them. So Daniel's vindicated Daniel's enemies are destroyed and thirdly God is glorified.

Familiar pattern throughout the whole of the Bible and throughout the whole of life. Darius having seen how God had protected his servant writes a letter to all the peoples in his empire a circular saying peace be multiplied to you I make a decree that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel for he is a living God enduring forever shall be to the end of the earth he delivers and rescues he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth he who has saved Daniel from the power of alliance could we find a more God glorifying proclamation even from the mouth of the holy apostles we might think it was Paul who wrote these words and not Darius the Babylonian king ultimately it was God who received the glory for Daniel's salvation it was God who saved him from the power and terror of the lions in Philippians 2 the famous Christ hymn Paul writes these words about Jesus therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father the

humiliation and exaltation of Jesus was with this ultimate purpose in view God God God God God God should receive all the glory of all things forever and ever this is our highest purpose as human beings that in life and death following Jesus in a palace following

[33:48] Jesus in a den of lions through thick and thin God will have the glory these are all familiar things there is one issue remaining God saved an innocent Daniel from a den of lions but God did not save an innocent Jesus from the cross why God saved an innocent Daniel from the den of lions but he did not save an innocent Jesus from the cross why it was because Jesus was dying for a guilty humanity Jesus was bearing the punishment we merited and dying the death we deserved Jesus went down into a cross shaped lion's den for us ripped apart for us crying out in death agony for us and now he asks us to believe and trust in him for salvation here we have the familiar gospel message preached by Abraham and preached by David and the apostles believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ and be saved Daniel points us directly to Jesus he worshipped God he trusted God he believed in God and now we ask will you do the same let us pray how familiar the story is to us Lord but then we think of the glory of your name we want to see your name glorified in all of Glasgow we want to glorify your name there may be some of us this evening who feel as though we are in the lion's den some of us who are grieving over the loss of someone very close to us someone going through the mill someone who's having a really difficult time Lord we want to pray that you preserve them and give them strength through that horrific time of loss we want to pray Lord that you be with us in all the lions dens we must go through in this life give us faith oh Lord to triumph over them all so that you may receive the glory and all the faith and all the worship of our lives in Christ's name Amen Amen