

Trusting the Lion King

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[0 : 0 0] They talk about following children and various sorts of acts.

They never included sort of Kristen in that list. On Thursday of last week, a lion escaped from a far north Queensland zoo, probably missed given the major and tragic news items of the week.

This 130 kilogram male lion escaped from his cage in the Mareeba Wildlife Animal Park.

About 60 of the park's staff were ordered to lock themselves indoors when the feline escaped through a hole that was accidentally cut in the enclosure by a worker using a steel-bladed whippersnapper.

Then the king gave the command and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lord's so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.

[1 : 1 4] Then at daybreak, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions. When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you faithfully serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?

Well, Daniel has faced many tests of his faith over the years. Daniel living in a foreign land, living in a land hostile to his faith.

As a young man, you'll recall, for those who have been here through the series, that Daniel and his three mates, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, had drawn that clear line in the sand.

Remember back in chapter 1? Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine. And then as the years had gone by, Daniel had delivered God's messages.

He'd delivered God's messages of judgment to two kings. Two kings with enormous human power. He delivered God's messages of judgment to King Nebuchadnezzar.

[2 : 3 0] We know him as Big Neb. In chapters 2 and 4. And then he delivered a message of judgment to King Belshazzar. As we saw last week in chapter 5.

Daniel was always prepared to stand up for his God. He was always prepared to be God's instrument. He had this unswerving trust in the sovereign God.

The God who's described through this book as the most high God. And chapter 6 is set against the backdrop of another king. This time it's Darius the Mede.

Another king comes with another kingdom. The kingdoms rise. The kingdoms fall. But Daniel, if you like, acting as a symbol of the kingdom of God.

Daniel remains. Earthly kings. It's like they sort of enter and then they leave the stage of human history. Daniel? What's he doing?

[3 : 3 6] He's still serving. The king of kings. The man is now in his late 70s. Perhaps into his 80s. And that is a tremendous model for us.

For us living in a world that is actually hostile to the gospel. Daniel. Finishing strong. Really just like the Apostle Paul.

Running hard to the finishing line. His eyes fixed on the finishing tape. Verses 1 to 9.

The not unusual pattern. Page 723 in the Pew Bibles. Here's Daniel. Living as an exile in a foreign land.

In a land that's hostile to his faith. And he's been in this situation for probably more than six decades. So. Have a think about then.

[4 : 37] What has been Daniel's approach. To living. First of all under the rule of the Babylonians. And now. Under the rule of the Medes. And the Persians. How has he approached this?

Has it been assimilation? That is. Has he just simply become. One of them. Given up on his faith. In Yahweh. As the one true God.

Has his approach been separation? I mean. Has he sort of. Retreated into one of those. Holy huddles. Removed from the culture. In which he found himself.

And we know. For those who've been here. And. Have been reading. Through these early chapters of Daniel. That it's neither assimilation. Nor separation.

Daniel. Participated. Have a look at verse one. It pleased Darius. To set over the kingdom. One hundred and twenty. Satraps. Stationed throughout the whole kingdom.

[5 : 38] And over them. Three presidents. Including Daniel. To these. The satraps gave account. So that the king. Might not. Suffer. Loss. So Daniel.

Distinguished. Distinguished himself. Above all the other presidents. And satraps. Because. An excellent spirit. Was in him. And the king. Planned to appoint him. Over.

The whole. Kingdom. So. Were there. Any boundaries. Were there any. Lines. That Daniel drew.

With respect. To his participation. Daniel. Has got a pretty impressive CV. I mean.

Under big Neb. He was the ruler. Of the whole province. Under Belshazzar. Kind of get the impression. Through chapter five. Don't you. That. He'd been sort of pushed.

[6 : 33] To the side. But the queen mother. Knew him well. And under Darius. He was one of the three. Top civil servants. In the whole kingdom.

And he was clearly. Heading. To the position. Of number one. For us. As Christians. We're called.

To be. In. This world. Not to retreat. Into a holy huddle. You see. Friends. It's not. More Christian. To be.

In what's loosely. Described. As. Full time. Christian ministry. A poor term. I think. Given that we're all. Called to be. In Christian ministry. I mean. It's just.

Simply. A nonsense. To believe. That that. Is more. Christian. That I'm. More Christian. For example. The issue is. Where is the Lord Jesus.

[7 : 28] Calling me. To be. That's the issue. And for the great. Majority of Christians. Is calling us. To be salt. And light.

In the everyday. Places of life. So. The everyday. Places of life. Like being a plumber. Like being an accountant. Like being a mum. At a place centre.

Being a doctor. A teacher. A retail executive. For a pharmacy. Chain. A finance executive. The proprietor. Of a cleaning business.

We are. To be. Participants. Participants. Participants. With a but. It's.

The but. Of not denying. The Lord Jesus Christ. And. The wise. Boundaries. That the Lord. Has established. The wise. The wise.

- [8 : 24] Boundaries. That he's established. For the way. We are to live our lives. Daniel. Was clearly. Someone. That. This very powerful king. Could trust. That the king.
- Was. Clearly insecure. In his position. And Daniel. Was capable. And Daniel. Was absolutely. Trustworthy. If you look at verse four.
- Those seeking. To destroy. Daniel. Could. Find. No grounds. For complaint. Or any corruption. Because. Why? He was faithful. And no negligence. Or corruption.
- Could be found in him. Then Pilate. Asked Jesus. Are you. The king of the Jews? He answered. You say so. Then Pilate. Said to the chief priests.
- And the crowds. I find no basis. For accusation. Against this man. Daniel. Sounds to me. Like a perfect work colleague.
- [9 : 20] Doesn't he? Doesn't he? Verse four. So the presidents. And the sap traps. Tried to find grounds.
- For complaint. Against Daniel. In connection. With the kingdom. Oh well. It's not such a big deal. Perhaps. I mean. This is just the old. Aussie characteristic.
- Of knocking down. A tall poppy. And anyway. I mean. People in their fallen state. They're just racially. Prejudice anyway. I mean. He's not one of us. He's a Jew.
- Anyway. It's just natural. For us to be jealous. Of others. In high positions. Isn't it? I mean. And more than that. You know. The dependable Daniel. He just simply tries.
- To impress the king. With his honesty. I mean. He is such a pain. If you think about it. Never prepared. To participate. In our little schemes. You know. The little schemes.
- [10 : 15] That we run. Just raking off. The top five percent. Well. Friends. Is the hostility. To Daniel. Simply. Racial prejudice.
- Jealousy. Reaction. To his integrity. Is it? Verse five. The 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. You see. Friends. There's something. Far more. That's going on here. The opposition.
- Is primarily. Because Daniel. Is God's man. And behind all. Of the scheming. Behind the prejudice. Behind the envy. Of these other. Civil servants. There is.
- What the apostle. Paul speaks of. As the principalities. And the powers. In the heavenly realms. And again.
- [11 : 12] The high priest. Asked Jesus. Are you the Messiah. The son of the blessed one. Jesus said. I am. And you'll see. The son of man. Seated at the right hand. Of the power. And coming with clouds. Of heaven.
- Then the high priest. Tore his clothes. And said. Why do we still need witnesses. You've heard his blasphemy. What is your decision. All of them. Condemned him. As deserving death.
- Daniel's a follower. Of Yahweh. And because. He's a follower. Of Yahweh. He is caught up. He is embroiled. In a war. It's a spiritual war.
- I wonder if you noticed. That there was just absolutely no uproar. About the call to worship a man. There's no uproar. About worshipping. Darius.
- For 30 days. Worshipping Darius. For 30 days. To the exclusion of God. No uproar. And our culture. Has absolutely no problem.
- [12 : 12] Worshipping man. Mankind. And mankind's works. However. If you worship the one true living God.
- Then you certainly invite. Persecution. Satan. Never ceases. And. Will. Never cease. Waging war.

On God's people. Until he is finally thrown into the lake of fire. And that's. The reality. And the powers of darkness.

They had sought to wage. War. And to wear out Daniel. Since the beginning of his captivity. How have they done it? By. Wave. After wave.

Of attacks. On his faithfulness. To God. Daniel's now in his senior years. And the question is. Well. The man's getting a little bit older. Probably not walking quite as ably as he was.

[13 : 08] Is the devil going to take it a little easy on him? The answer is no way. The devil is completely non-discriminatory. When it comes to age.

On Friday night. One of our church parents. Was sharing with me. How. Their sub. Teen daughter. Is being picked on at school. Why is she being picked on at school?

Because of her love. For the Lord Jesus. Young. Old. It makes absolutely no difference. To the kingdom. Of darkness. And behind this.

Irrational opposition. To Daniel. Is Satan. Satan. Is the reason. Why Daniel finds himself. One day. He's doing a great job.

For the empire. Isn't he? And the next day. Daniel. Is on death row. Darius. Well he's weak. I think he's rather pathetic.

[14 : 06] He's. Infected. By that. Deadly. Disease. Of sinful pride. That's just simply been before us. Through all of the previous chapters. So when these conspirators.

They come to Darius. And they get him to decide. To sign this irrevocable decree. That he is to be the sole object of worship. For 30 days.

What does this man do? What does the great king Darius do? Verse 9. He just signed the document. I mean. His own.

Desire. For self. Worship. Completely blinded him. He was manipulated. Certainly by conspirators. He was.

Putty. In the hand. Of the devil. If you don't worship me for 30 days. Then you're dead meat.

[15 : 01] Excuse the pun. Friends. If we. Stand for Christ. Satan. Will oppose us. And that. Is a fact.

You see. The opposition to Daniel. Is the. Not unusual. Pattern. It's the not unusual pattern.

For a believer. And the evil one. He doesn't play by. Gentleman's rules. Peter simply describes him. As a roaring lion. Interesting turn of phrase.

Looking for someone. To devour. So. I think the physical metaphor. Is actually quite illustrative. The question is. Does a lion. Cuddle up.

To a six-year-old girl. Who happens to. Wander. Into the jungle. Certainly doesn't.

[15 : 59] The little six-year-old. Is simply. Pray. And Satan. Goes after. Whoever. Stands. For the Lord.

Jesus Christ. So. How do we survive? I mean. As followers of the Lord. Jesus. How do we live our daily lives. Without succumbing. To simply. Paranoid.

Freezing. Fear. How do we stand for God. In a strange. Hostile. Land. Verses 10 to 18.

Daniel's. Usual. Pattern. Although Daniel. Knew. That the document. Had been signed. He continued. To go to his house. Which had windows. In its upper room. Open towards Jerusalem.

And to get down. On his knees. Three times a day. To pray to his God. And pray. And praise him. Just. As. He. Had. Done. Previously.

- [16 : 57] Luke. Records. That Jesus. Went out to a mountainside. To pray. And spent. The night. Praying. To God. What was. Daniel's. Response.
- To the edict. That prayer. Was only to be offered. To Darius. For a period of 38. Or else. He'd be simply. Thrown to the lions. What was his response. To that. Daniel. He continued on.
- Just as he'd done before. Praying to God. Praying to the only God. He doesn't try and. Cover it up. He doesn't sort of sit back.
- And say you know. Just let me. Let me just shut those. Windows for a minute. You know. I'd never actually realized. How cold this room gets. When the windows are open. Daniel wasn't seeking.
- To make. A public spectacle. Of himself. He's just. Simply. Kept. Up. The discipline. That he'd established. Over many years.
- [17 : 52] Did you notice. The end of verse 10. Just. As. He had done. Previously. While many. Cities and villages. Along the Indian Ocean.
- Suffered. Catastrophic. Losses. From the December. 2004. Tsunami. The port city. Of. Pondicherry. In India. And it's.
- Three hundred. Thousand. Inhabitants. Were spared. Just. Beyond. The city limits. Six hundred. People. Were killed. By the devastating. Tidal wave. But Pondicherry.
- Withstood. The tsunami. Why. Were they. Protected. Well. The answer. Began. Two hundred. And fifty. Years ago. When the French. Colonized. The city. The French.
- Built. This. Massive. Stone. Wall. Massive. Stone. Sea. Wall. And. Year. After year. The French. Continued. To strengthen. The wall.
- [18 : 47] Piling. These huge. Boulders. Along. Its. Two kilometre. Length. You see. The regular. Consistent. Building. Up. Of. The defences. Prepared.
- Them. For the massive. Onslaught. Of water. Daniel. Knew. Well. The survival. Kit. For living. In a hostile.
- Land. It's pretty simple. It was. Regular. Communion. With God. In prayer. And. Meditation. On God's word. We see that. In.
- Daniel. Chapter. Nine. This had been. Daniel's. Daily pattern. Day. After day. Year. After year. So.
- Think of it this way. When the pressure came. When the tsunami. Of evil. Was. Roaring. Towards him. Was.
- [19 : 41] Towering. Over him. Daniel. Had a pattern. Of devotion. To fall back on. You see. He just didn't. Sort of. Collapse.
- Into a state. Of panic. And. In panic. Sort of. Just throw up. A prayer to God. Who he hadn't. Perhaps. Conversed with. For weeks. And weeks.
- Not at all. Daniel knew. In prayer. And as he. Knelt in prayer. And as he. Offered his. Life. And his. Gifts to God.
- He was doing. Something that he'd done. Literally thousands. Of times. Before. Over all of those years. And he just. Committed. The issues. That he faced.
- To the Lord. And. This was the routine. That sustained him. That sustained. His walk. With God. Friends.
- [20 : 35] Daniel's. Survival kit. Is the identical. One. That each of us. Need. Living. In a culture. That is. Increasingly. Hostile. To our faith. The survival kit.
- Is. Prayer. And. Being fed. By God's word. I guess. There must have been. A lot of. Temptations.

That Daniel. Would have faced. At the time. That temptations. To compromise. His devotional habits. With God. I mean. It was only for 30 days. Wasn't it? And.

It wasn't. As if Daniel. Was unaware. Of just this. Awful death. That awaited him. I'm sure. He would have thought. About his limbs.

Being sort of. Literally. Ripped out. Of his body trunk. And we know. From Daniel. Chapter 9.

[21 : 30] That Daniel. Was well aware. From reading. The prophet Jeremiah. That the time. Of the exile. Was actually. Rapidly. Coming to an end. He could have. Easily.

Been tempted. To say something. Like well. I mean. Listen buddy. I mean. God's going to do his thing. Um. It's probably not all that important. If I don't pray. For 30 days.

I mean. Seems a bit silly. To put my life on now. I mean. Our captivity. Is soon going to be over. I suspect. It was a great temptation. But friends.

When we think about prayer. Prayer is not about. Sort of. Getting things. It's an expression. Of our relationship. With our heavenly father. And Daniel.

Well. He knew. That lines. Had to be drawn. He knew it. He didn't just know it. He actually. Did it. He knew. The line. Beyond.

[22 : 26] Which he couldn't go. And his attitude. Was simply. If it takes me. To the lines. Then. Then I'll go. And as followers.

Of Christ. We do have to recognize. That lines. Need to be drawn. Because we. Essentially. Live in a pagan culture. We have to recognize it.

But much more than recognize it. We actually. Have. To do it. Daniel. Did participate. In the world. In which God placed him.

He'd been a loyal subject. To big Neb. And he was a loyal subject. To King Darius. The man had risen. Actually. To extraordinary. Human heights.

Participation. Participation. Absolutely. But never. At the expense. Of his allegiance. To God. Never. At the expense. Of his devotion. At the expense.

[23 : 20] Of his devotion. To God. Daniel knew. That he was being watched. While he prayed. Look at verse 11. The conspirators. Came. And found Daniel. Praying.

And seeking mercy. Before his God. I mean. This is. The. Classic. Setup. But Daniel. He wasn't prepared. To disown his God. He wasn't prepared.

To disown. His faith. And this. Is a challenging. Story. You see.

Because Daniel. Is actually. Fundamentally. No different. To me. Or to any other follower. Of the Lord Jesus. Jesus. Why do I say that? Because he was a sinner. Saved.

By grace. Through. Faith. And so. We are. Confronted. We.

[24 : 14] The followers. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are confronted. With two. Searching. Questions. As we consider. The life of Daniel. Firstly. What's the line.

Beyond which. We will not go. Probably different. In each person's life. But you need. To think. Through that question.

What is the line. Beyond which. You will not go. And secondly. And perhaps. So. Extremely. Convicting.

Are we prepared. To actually. Die. For our faith. Are we prepared. To die. For our faith.

The old. Sunday school. Line. Is a challenge. And I think. It's very convicting. Dare. To be. A Daniel. It's an easy line.

[25 : 11] To throw away. Isn't it? Think about it. Dare. To be. A Daniel. Will you. Will I.

Then the king. Heard the charge. Brought against Daniel. And he was. Very. Much. Distressed. While Pilate. Was sitting. On the judgment seat.

His wife. Sent word to him. Have nothing. To do. With that. Innocent man. For today. I've suffered. A great deal. Because of a dream. About him. And Pilate. Took some water. And he washed. His hands. Before the crowd.

Saying. I'm innocent. Of this man's blood. See to it yourselves. And when King Darius. Heard the charges. He was very much. Distressed. He was determined.

To save Daniel. And until the sun. Went down. He made every effort. To rescue him. Here's. Darius. And what. An impotent. Picture.

[26 : 07] The man. Who was to be. The object. Of worship. For 30 days. The worshipped. Man. He is. Absolutely. Powerless. To save his friend.

You see. When the arrogance. And that's what it was. When the arrogance. Of Darius. Reached its zenith. He is exposed. As being. Completely. Impotent. Darius.

Darius. Darius. Was an idolatry. He instituted. Legislation. That demanded. His worship. Idolatry. Was rampant. Through that culture.

And idolatry. Is rampant. Through ours. Idolatry. Interestingly. In the book of Daniel. Is predominantly. Human pride. And nationalism.

Idolatry. In Australia. Is nearly. A carbon copy. But God sees. Into our heart. He.

[27 : 05] Sees. And finds. Our idols. All those. Just great. Manner of things. That displace him. As the object. Of our devotion.

So these first six chapters. Of Daniel. They just seem to. Drive us. Again. And again. And again. To raise.

The rhetorical question. What. What. What. Competes. With God. In our hearts. What actually. Are. Our idols. Verse 16.

And the king. Gave the command. And Daniel. Was brought. And thrown. Into the den of lions. The king. Said to Daniel. May your God. Whom you faithfully. Serve. Deliver you. A stone. Was brought. Laid on the mouth.

Of the den. The king. Sealed it. With his own signet. And with the signet. Of his lord. So that nothing. Might be changed. Concerning Daniel. So Joseph. Brought the body. Of Jesus.

[28 : 00] And he wrapped it. In a clean linen cloth. And he laid it. In its own tomb. Which it honed. In the rock. And he then. Rolled a great stone. To the door. Of the tomb. And he went away. And the next day.

That is. After the day. Of preparation. The chief priests. And the Pharisees. Gathered before Pilate. They said. Sir. We remember. What that imposter. Said. While he was still alive. After three days.

I'll rise again. Therefore. Command the tomb. To be made secure. Until the third day. Otherwise his disciples. May go and steal him away. And tell the people.

He has been raised. From the dead. And the last deception. Would be worse. Than the first. Pilate said to him. Well. You have a guard of soldiers. Go. Make it as secure. As you can. And so they went with the guard.

And they made the tomb. Secure. By sealing. The stone. Verses 19 to 28.

[28 : 55] I think. I saw. A pussy cat. Then. At break of day. The king got up. He hurried.

To the den of lions. And when he came near the den. Where Daniel was. He cried out. Anxiously to Daniel. Oh Daniel. Servant of the living God. Has your God. Whom you faithfully serve. Been able to deliver you.

From the lions. Daniel said to the king. Oh king. Live forever. My God. Sent his angel. And shut. The lion's mouth. So that they would not hurt me.

Because I was found. Blameless. Before him. And also. Before you. Oh king. I have done. No wrong. So let me ask you this.

Should. We. Each expect. In this life. That God. Will shut. The mouth. Of lions. Either actually. Or metaphorically.

[29 : 51] That seek. To devour us. Will he? The author. Of the letter to. The Hebrews. In the New Testament. Is writing.

To. Persecuted. Struggling. Suffering. Christians. And he actually. Surveys. A sample. Of Old Testament. Saints.

Who had. Gone before them. Who preceded them. And he writes this. In chapter 11. He says. Speaking of them. Who through faith. They conquered kingdoms. They administered.

They justed. They obtained promises. And. Shut the mouths of lions. And he goes on. And he says. Others suffered. Mocking. And flogging. And even. Chains. And imprisonment.

They were stoned to death. They were sawn in two. They were killed by the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goat. Destituted. Persecuted.

[30 : 47] Tormented. God. Doesn't always. Rescue his servants. In the way that he rescued Daniel. God.

Calls. On some. To win. By living. God. Calls. On some. To win. By dying.

Whether. In life. Or in death. God. God. Does. Rule. And we. As his followers. As his people.

Are called. To serve him. Then King Darius. Was exceedingly glad. And he 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. But after the Sabbath. As the first day of the week.

[31 : 43] Was dawning. Mary Magdalene. And the other Mary. Went to see the tomb. And suddenly. There was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord. Descending from heaven. Came. Rolled back the stone. And sat on it.

His appearance. Was like lightning. His clothing. White as snow. For fear of him. The guard shook. And became like dead men. But the angel said. To the women.

Don't be afraid. I know that you're looking. For Jesus. Who was crucified. He is not here. For he's been raised. As he said. Come.

And see the place. Where he lay. Daniel. Was delivered. From the den. Christ. Was. Delivered.

From death. As we come to the end of the series. Daniel. Is a great model. For believers. Daniel.

[32 : 36] Is a great model. For us. In his faithfulness. To God. He's a great model. Of participation. In the. In the culture. That he found himself.

But with a but. It's the but. Of a man. Who knew. That lines. Had to be drawn. He knew it. And he actually drew them. And even.

If that meant. Physical death. Daniel's a great model. For us. Of trust. Of trust. In a sovereign God. Regardless. Of the circumstances. Daniel's a great model.

Of recognition. That spiritual warfare. Is a reality. For the life. Of a Christian. Regardless. Of age. Daniel's a great model.

Of recognition. That although. The devil. Described. As a roaring. Lion. Wants to devour us. We don't actually. Have to live our lives. In daily.

[33 : 35] Paranoid. Fear. Because. Daniel. Is a great model. Of regular. Disciplined. Communication. With the living God.

Daniel's certainly. A great model. If you like. He serves as a symbol. You might even say. He serves as a type. He acts as a symbol. He acts as a type.

For a far. Greater. Greater. Person. Jesus Christ. The anti-type. Not just a man.

Very God. And. Very man. A totally perfect man. A totally perfect man. Who. Does.

Die. He dies. For us. For our sins. As our substitute. And. He is.

[34 : 32] Really. Brought. Back. To life. And. By his death. And resurrection. He completely defeats. Sin. Satan.

And. Death. He is. The only one. Who's worthy. Of our trust. He's the only one.

Who is completely. Trustworthy. And totally. Powerful. He is the one. Who demands. Our absolute. And complete. Allegiance. If you like.

Our whole. Of life. Worship. He is the one. Who is God. So. Don't fear the devil.

Don't fear the world. The apostle John. Says in his first letter. The one. Who is in you. Is greater. Than the one.

[35 : 29] Who is in the world. The God. Whom we worship. The triune God. Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. He. Does. Reign.

And therefore. We can trust him. We can trust him. No matter. What comes across. Our path. So two questions. As we finish. Do you trust him?

Perhaps not that hard to answer. Yes. Second question. Do you trust him? Completely. Completely. Do you.

Trust. The living God. Completely. Amen.