

Daniel

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[0 : 0 0] God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs. And of course, as you know, Daniel was allowed to eat what he wanted, and there was a test to compare himself with the other king's servants. And Daniel, because he had the favor of the Lord upon him, showed to be the healthiest and the strongest amongst all the other servants that there were. What I find interesting about the book of Daniel is that Daniel did that at the age of 15. Daniel would have been about 15 years old when he was taken off into Babylon, into a pagan country, into a country where it's full of idols, full of multiple pagan deities and what have you. And the one question you want to ask yourself as you begin to read the book of Daniel is, how on earth could a 15-year-old be so faithfully strong to the Lord? I want to just let that sink in. 15-year-old boy entering into

Babylon, which would have been worse if we can put this in the context. The younger ones may not get this, but if we were to put it into its context, imagine Hitler times by 10, and you will get close to what the Persians were like. Okay, so imagine Hitler, and you think how bad that was during the Second World War. Now times that by 10, and now you've got a picture of the Persian Empire. And Daniel was taken off into that empire, and he would have been about 15 years old at the time.

How do you prepare a man or a boy to remain faithful to God in a world like that? And I think that is the striking question as we consider our Sunday school children. In the book of Ecclesiastes, we're told that children are to remember their Creator in their youth when they are young. Why? Because one day they'll get old. And if it's been instilled in them when they're young to be able to stand firm, they'll be able to do it when they're old. In fact, one thing is always true, especially of men, that whatever a man learned as a child, he will continue to do as an adult. Whatever a man learned to do as a child, men are simply an outworking of what they learned, unless, of course, there has been tremendous change in their lives. And so what we have in Proverbs, and of course, emphasized here in the book of Daniel, is essentially that God makes a promise to keep his people, but the people must make the same promise to stay faithful to God. If you ever wondered what was happening in Sunday school, if you ever wondered what was happening in Sunday school, the whole idea behind it is to prepare Daniels.

It is to prepare these young people to be able to stand firm at a lot younger age than you think they need to stand firm. They need to be able to be faithfully strong at a very, very young age.

And the way you get there is by preparing them. So I want you, and I know that you probably do, appreciate all the work that goes into teaching and leading these children on a Sunday morning.

[3 : 4 2] But that's only a snippet of the child's life. We are simply supplementing, hopefully, what is already happening in the home. And so Sunday school is important to give these children what they need in order to stand firm in a fallen world. This world is fallen, and it has every trap possible to take these children away from their faithfulness in God.

And so we are raising here, or we want to be looking at these children saying, we want to be able to raise Daniels. We want to be able to raise children in such a way that as they get taken off into areas where they have no choice, or it's just a consequence of the actions, they're going to be able to stand firm for God. And so what we have in the gospel, and this is important, is this, that every parent and every Sunday school teacher, leader, and helper knows this one thing, that you cannot save a child. You cannot, if we could save these children, would we?

Of course we would. But we cannot save the children. What we are, however, are messengers of the gospel, and God saves children by grace through faith as we proclaim the gospel to these children.

But a saved child is not an educated child. A saved child by God's gospel of grace and salvation and faith is something that God does for the child, something that we cannot do. But God places it in the responsibility of those who are mature in the faith to teach those who are younger. Not because they're not already saved, but rather because they need to be educated so that they can stand firm faithfully in a world that wants to tell them not to. And so the reason we have Sunday school is so that the gospel can be proclaimed, and so that these children would grow up and be faithful. So I would ask you this morning that as you look at the children who are here, and perhaps remember the faces of the children who are not here, to be able to give thanks to God for the education that they are receiving. Because what they receive in Sunday school will keep them strong, and we pray that that would be duplicated and build upon outside of these four walls. Thank you for listening.

We're going to stand and sing now as we close, and then children you can go back to your mums and dads. Thank you. Thank you.

[6 : 44] Thank you.