

Daniel: Courage When It Costs You

Faithful & Grateful: Hope in the Midst of Hardship –
Part 3



Courageous faith is not proven when life is easy, but when standing with God comes at a personal cost. Daniel shows us how faithfulness in hardship grows stronger when pressure increases. Faced with opposition, threats, and injustice, Daniel chose courageous faith under pressure, trusting that God would honor obedience even when the outcome was uncertain.

Introduction

There are moments in life when following Jesus demands courage. It is one thing to be faithful when everyone around us agrees, supports, or encourages our faith. It is something entirely different to be faithful when obedience brings opposition, mockery, or real danger. Many of us have experienced moments when doing what is right costs something significant. It may cost friendships, opportunities, comfort, or peace. In some parts of the world, it costs far more.

As we continue our Advent series, *Faithful and Grateful: Hope in the Midst of Hardship*, we turn to the story of Daniel, a young man taken captive from his homeland and placed in a culture that opposed his beliefs. Daniel's story in Daniel 6 shows us what courage looks like when standing with God places everything at risk. Daniel stayed faithful under pressure, grateful in hardship, and bold in prayer even when it threatened his life.

Daniel teaches us that courage comes from trust, not from confidence in ourselves. He did not know how his story would end. He did not know if God would rescue him or if he would lose his life. But Daniel chose obedience because he believed that God is worthy, no matter the cost.

This is faithfulness in hardship. This is courageous faith under pressure.

Let us explore the courage of Daniel and learn how we too can stand firm when following God demands everything.

Faithfulness Is Tested When Culture Pressures Us to Compromise

Daniel's story takes place in a foreign land. He was taken from Judah as a young man and placed in the service of the Babylonian empire. The culture around him did not share his faith, values, or devotion to God. Yet Daniel distinguished himself through hard work, integrity, and wisdom. Scripture says that an excellent spirit was in him, and he quickly rose to a position of influence.

This is important to understand: Daniel did not withdraw from the world. He lived faithfully in the midst of it. He did not compromise his convictions to gain favor, but neither did he hide his faith to avoid conflict. His faith was visible, consistent, and unwavering.



When King Darius planned to promote Daniel, jealousy grew among the other officials. They searched for a reason to accuse him, but they could not find corruption or negligence. Daniel's character exposed their lack of it.

So they attacked the only place they could: his devotion to God. We read in Daniel 6:6-9:

Daniel 6:6-9

(6) So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: "May King Darius live forever! (7) The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den. (8) Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." (9) So King Darius put the decree in writing.

They convinced the king to sign a decree that prohibited prayer to anyone except the king for thirty days. Anyone who prayed to another god would be thrown into the lions' den. The goal was clear. They wanted to make Daniel's faith illegal.

Daniel's situation is not unlike what many believers face today. The world often pressures us to compromise our convictions, to choose comfort over obedience, and to hide our faith rather than stand by it. Culture may not threaten a lions' den, but it can threaten social acceptance, career advancement, and relationships.

Here is the lesson: Our faithfulness is often tested, not in big moments first, but in everyday pressures. Daniel's courage began long before the decree. It began in small, daily decisions to honor God in everything. Faithfulness in hardship is built one choice at a time.

In the comments below, share a moment when your faith was tested by cultural pressure or public opinion, and how God helped you stand firm.

Courage Comes from Consistent Devotion

When Daniel learned of the decree, he did not panic, negotiate, or seek a way out. Instead, he went home, opened his windows toward Jerusalem, and prayed just as he had always done. Daniel did not change his devotion to fit his circumstances. He did what he always did: he sought God.

This is the center of Daniel's courage: Consistency in prayer builds courage for crisis.

Scripture tells us that Daniel prayed three times a day, giving thanks to God even though doing so put his life at risk. We read in Daniel 6:13-16:

Daniel 6:13-16

(13) Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." (14) When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. (15) Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, "Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes



and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." (16) So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

Notice the words *giving thanks*. Daniel expressed gratitude in the face of death. He was grateful in hardship because he believed that God was greater than the threat before him.

The officials caught Daniel praying and brought him before the king. Darius was devastated, because he admired Daniel. But the decree could not be undone. Daniel was sentenced to the lions' den, and the king was powerless to stop it.

Daniel's courage came from trust, not from certainty of rescue. He believed that God was able to save him, but his devotion was not dependent on the outcome. Daniel did not pray because he was sure God would spare his life. Daniel prayed because God is worthy, even if obedience costs everything.

This is courageous faith under pressure.

Our courage grows the same way Daniel's did.

- It grows in daily prayer.
- It grows in gratitude when circumstances are uncertain.
- It grows in choosing obedience, not only when it is safe, but especially when it costs something meaningful.

Comment below with one habit or spiritual practice that helps you stay close to God during difficult seasons.

God Honors Those Who Trust Him in the Dark

Daniel was placed into the lions' den, and the stone was sealed. To everyone watching, the story seemed over. The enemy had won. God's servant had been silenced. Faithfulness had been punished. But the silence of the night did not reflect the presence of God.

God was working in the dark. We read in Daniel 6:21-23:

Daniel 6:21-23

(21) Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! (22) My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty." (23) The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

God sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths, and Daniel was unharmed. When the king rushed to the den at dawn, he cried out, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God been able to rescue you?" Daniel answered with peace, confidence, and a testimony of God's faithfulness.

The very thing that was meant to destroy Daniel became the platform for God's glory. The king declared that the God of Daniel is the living God, and His kingdom will not be destroyed.



Daniel's courage led to a public declaration of God's greatness in a nation that did not know Him.

Here are three powerful truths from this moment:

1. Faithfulness does not guarantee avoiding hardship, but it invites God into it.
Daniel still went into the lions' den, but God met him there.
2. Courageous faith creates testimony.
Daniel's rescue pointed everyone to God, not to Daniel.
3. God uses our obedience to influence others.
A king proclaimed the greatness of God because one man stood firm.

Faithfulness in hardship may not always lead to immediate rescue. Many believers throughout history have given their lives for their faith. But whether God rescues or sustains, He is always present, always good, and always working for His glory and our good.

Share in the comments how God has used a difficult season in your life to inspire or encourage others.

Conclusion

Daniel's story shows us what faithfulness in hardship and courageous faith under pressure look like. He faced cultural pressure, personal risk, and public opposition, yet he remained faithful, grateful, and unwavering in prayer.

Daniel did not know what God would do, but he trusted Him anyway. His courage was shaped in ordinary days and revealed in extraordinary moments. His faith became a testimony that changed the course of a nation.

As we continue this Advent season, remember that courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is choosing obedience because God is worthy, even when the cost is great. God honors those who trust Him in the dark, and He will honor your faithfulness as you stand firm in Him.

This Week

Take time each day to pray for courage to obey God in whatever situation you face. Write down one decision or area of your life where obedience will require courage. Ask God to strengthen your spirit, build your faith through prayer, and fill your heart with gratitude as you follow Him.

Next week we look at the early Church in the book of Acts. Faced with arrest, threats, and persecution, the followers of Jesus chose joy, unity, generosity, and boldness. Their joy was not based on circumstances but on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Do not miss next week's message, "The Early Church: Joy in Persecution."

