
Ignite

Dear Lord, guide our actions so that we will live by faith. Keep our eyes fixed on You and You alone. Help us to be steadfast in our journey of faith. Amen.





SERMON SUMMARY

Note to Word Facilitator: The sermon notes below is a summary of the sermon. You may choose to further summarize it according to the needs and context of your CG members. The goal is not just to go through it “verbatim” but to prepare well, allowing members to recall and engage the message in the best possible way.

How God Is Glorified Among The Nations Through Those Who Are Wise

Paul Elliott

Daniel 6:23-27

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. At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children.

And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth:

“May you prosper greatly! I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

*“For he is the living God and he endures forever;
his kingdom will not be destroyed,
his dominion will never end.*

*He rescues and he saves;
he performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth.*

He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”

Daniel 12:3

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead

many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Introduction

This week is the second missions week in the year where in DUMC, we remind ourselves of the important task of the Great Commission - both within our communities as well as cross-cultural. One of the greatest missionaries of the Old Testament that we can turn to for inspiration and instruction is none other than Daniel. Daniel was not a voluntary missionary. He was uprooted in chains to a foreign nation, culture and people. Even so, he was not bitter and in spite of his situation, he continued to orient his life according to God's purposes.

The story of Daniel started out early on with Daniel distinguishing himself above all the rest because "an excellent spirit was in him" (*Daniel 6:3 ESV*). So much so that king Darius planned to set him above all the other administrators and satraps. This caused jealousy, greed and hatred to rise up in the hearts of the other officials causing them to find a charge against Daniel. But they could find no charge of corruption nor anything to accuse him of for he was trustworthy.

What made Daniel so uniquely extraordinary? Much can be gleaned from scripture in that he was:

1. Uncompromisingly faithful in His Work *Daniel 6:4, 11:1; Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 2:14-16*

Daniel was uncompromisingly faithful in the work that God had prepared for him. He was modelling Ephesians 2:10 by understanding that he was divinely placed where he was to faithfully do the good works set before him. He was a Jewish slave serving a pagan king and yet was absolutely faithful to what he was called to do. Daniel purposed in his heart that he would serve king Darius and make him successful so that in doing so, God may be glorified among the nations. This frustrated his enemies as they could find nothing to accuse him of. **As we go about our lives, can we say we have been uncompromisingly faithful to the work that God has prepared before us?**

2. Uncompromisingly faithful in obedience to the commandments of God *Daniel 6:5, 1:8*

The enemies of Daniel concluded that they will never find any charge against him unless they found something against him concerning the law of God. He loves his God. Something happened early in his life and as he learned about the laws of God, something about the wonder, beauty, glory, majesty and reality of God captured his

heart. He never let that go. He held onto the truth of who God was. In Daniel 1:8, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat.

3. *Uncompromisingly faithful to his quiet time with God* Daniel 6:10

The administrators and satraps plotted to trap Daniel by getting the king to establish an ordinance and issue an edict: For 30 days, anyone who worships any other god or man except king Darius shall be thrown to the lion's den. This was signed and established as a law that cannot be changed. Yet in spite of knowing that his life was to end, Daniel's first response was to get down on his knees, give thanks and pray to God just as he had always done three times a day. For Daniel, God was everything. Nothing was going to change his commitment to be in His quiet place and spending time with God. **How are the affections of our heart today? Do our love and priority centre on God outside of Saturday or Sunday celebrations?**

4. *Uncompromising and Unwavering in his Faith and Trust in God* Daniel 6:22,23

Daniel's enemies were waiting to trap Daniel and found him praying to God. They went to king Darius to accuse Daniel and ask for him to be thrown into the lion's den. King Darius was distressed and was finding every possible means to save Daniel from impending doom. Darius had witnessed Daniel's life. Daniel was a faithful servant of God who would not compromise which prompted him to say: **"May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"** With that, Daniel was thrown into the dark lion's den and the entrance closed off with a stone and sealed with the king's and his nobles' signet rings.

Result? Daniel 12:3

King Darius may have been pondering throughout the night about Daniel's God - *Was Daniel's God greater than all the other gods? Could the god of Daniel save him from the mouths of the lions?*

At the first light of dawn, the king raced to the lion's den and he called out to Daniel. In just one night, he shifted from referring to God as "your God whom you serve" to "...[He is] the Living God". Daniel was pulled out of the lion's den, saved, secured and unharmed! God designed this moment specifically, intentionally and sovereignly for the purpose of making His goodness and greatness known among the nations.

A pagan king now believes with all his heart in the reality of Daniel's God. All this because Daniel was a faithful witness who let his light shine. King Darius then wrote

to those of every people, of every nation, of every language, an edict to turn in fear and trembling to worship the Living God. Legends and tales were told of what God did for Daniel for he served God so faithfully. Nations and kingdoms were stirred by the glory of God. **God was glorified, Nations knelt before God and the Prophet himself (Daniel) prospered.**

Conclusion

One man staggered the kingdoms. One man changed the life of a king through his faithfulness in God. What could God do with a church like us when His family members are committed and uncompromisingly faithful to His command to go into all the world and make disciples? It is a privilege that each of us can be a part of God's redemptive purpose that is certain and far greater than our short lives here on earth.



APPLICATION

Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to use the questions efficiently. You can select, modify or entirely create your own questions, according to the needs of your CG, especially if you feel that there are too many questions than required for the allocated time. The questions below are crafted with a certain flow in mind. You could use these towards the end or insert them in between your own sermon reflection and summary.

Suggested Icebreaker Activity/Questions

- If you were a movie producer doing a 2022 remake of “Daniel and the Lion’s Den”, what would be some creative titles for this new movie?
- Share one or two descriptive words that come to your mind when you hear “missions” (e.g. “cold”, “scary”, “not me”, “fun”, “energised”, “Yes”, etc.).

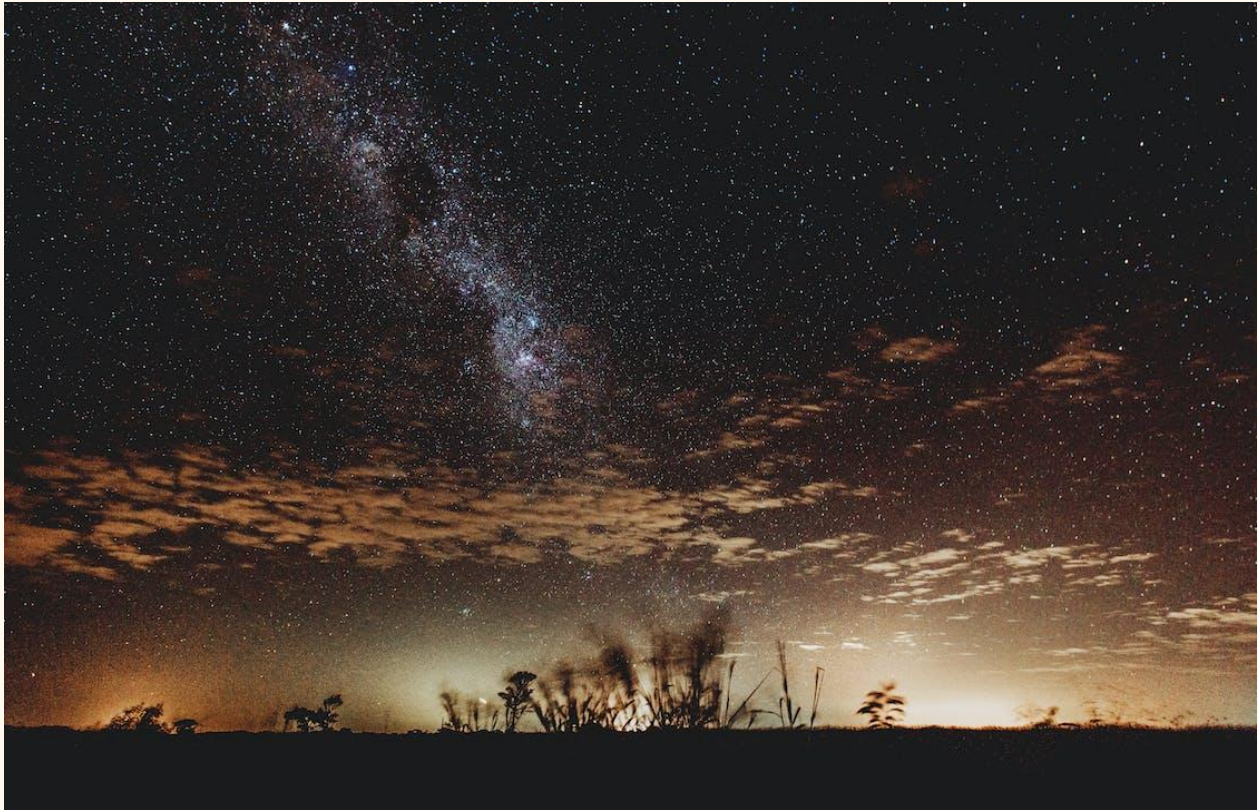


Photo by Jonathan Borba on Pexels

Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- Is having a “good work ethic” the same as being “uncompromisingly faithful” in your work? How so?
- How much time do you spend with God outside of the typical weekend celebration and ministry engagements? (*Note to facilitator: A show of hands of how many spend 5 - 4 - 3 to 1 hour can make it lighter and less uncomfortable.*)

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

- Knowing that God has divinely placed you where you are and prepared good works before you, what will you do differently tomorrow as you go about your daily activities?

- Share one thing in your vocation (work, family, other roles) that you may have compromised. How would you do it differently knowing now that God has placed this good work before you?
- On a scale of 1-10, rate yourself in your obedience to the commandments of God. (NOTE: Scale of 1-least obedient, 10-very obedient). How would you have rated yourself 5 years ago? What can you conclude about your journey?
- Are there things in your lives that keeps you from having a close and intimate relationship with Jesus daily?
- A one-degree shift in alignment would overtime reveal a vast gap from our intended destination. If this is true of compromise, what do we need to heed in your lives before it is too late?
- Daniel 12:3 says, *"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."* What are the characteristics of people you know who shine like stars? What are some steps you can take to be a light to others around you?

Question Bank (Extra questions that you can use to bring your discussion further as you see fit):

- Missions are about uprooting oneself to a foreign country or culture and making disciples for Jesus. Agree or disagree? Discuss.
- Have you been (or do you plan on) a short-term mission trip? Why or why not?
- How are the affections of your heart today? Do your love and priority centre on God outside of Saturday or Sunday celebrations? What are some small steps you can take to live a more God-centred life, everyday?
- How is your devotional life? What's your biggest struggle in keeping it consistent?
- *"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."* (Daniel 6:22, 23). How is faith linked to being blameless? What can we learn from this passage?



SERMON REFLECTION



Santhome Cathedral Basilica, Chennai - Photo by SURAJ G on Pexels

I had arranged the last remaining hours of my India business trip to stop by several places before heading to the Chennai airport. These included visiting the second longest beach in the world called The Marina and the Santhome Cathedral, where the body of martyred Apostle Thomas was said to lay. I found myself marvelling at God's greatness and goodness as I soaked up all the experiences of nature, history and ancient architecture. It wasn't only these though that I was praising God for - as wonderful as they may be - but that God was sovereign and infinitely wise. The one week trip has certainly been fruitful and throughout the trip, I was blessed to glimpse brief moments of how God works out His good purposes. Several seeming coincidences underscored the mission theme. And here I am assigned to write on Mission week! Coincidences? I think not. God's perfect plan? Most certainly!

It was my first business trip since the borders reopened post-pandemic and to be frank, I had mixed feelings about coming here. It was certainly energising to reconnect with colleagues after 2 and a half years of virtual working. Nothing beats being able to shake someone's hand and have conversations eyeball to eyeball.

Engagements were great but it was also disruptive to routines. Back home, my wife had to pull all the weight from attending the many household responsibilities to managing our three kiddos. That meant school runs, showering, revising studies and putting them to bed. No easy feat. As for me, due to the time difference and unfamiliar surroundings, it was difficult to eat right, sleep right or to get any semblance of an exercise routine in place. In fact, due to the unfamiliar hotel gym equipment, I picked up a back sprain on day 2. All this while hard deadlines loomed closer which necessitated working after a quick bite at the end of the day.

It was on one of those days where in between meetings, I had to take a separate call with a colleague. We were working to complete a proposal due end of the week. The YouVersion notification popped up midway through our conversation as I was sharing my screen. Finally at the end of our serious conversation, my colleague asked me if I was a Christian to which I said "Yes". He then proceeded to ask If I knew what 'Alpha' was, to which I replied with a quizzical yes - wondering In my head where this was going. He then confided in me that he was also a Christian and that he would appreciate If I prayed for him. He and his wife, together with another couple were running a home 'Alpha' that very evening and he was nervous whether it would turn out well.

I expressed how encouraging it was to see my brother stepping out to answer God's calling and assured him I would pray. I shared an experience related by Rev. Miles Toulmin when he last preached in DUMC back in August 2022 ([***The Art of Fishing***](#)). Rev Miles is the Executive Director of Alpha Asia Pacific and he shared how God always works out His perfect plan, just not always how we expect it to. In this performance-driven world, we are inclined to expect results - great turnout, high participation rate, low dropouts, high conversions and increased referrals. But many times, drop outs may later return at a later season to accept Christ or even refer someone else to do 'Alpha'. We faithfully sow, leaving the rest to God.

Fast forward a couple of days later, we finally sat down face to face and my dear brother related that the first session went well with the visitors looking forward to next week's session. He told me that he related what I shared to his wife and the other facilitators, and that encouraged them to press on, committing the results to the Lord. Hallelujah! Praise God! I am so inspired by my colleague - whom I now call a dear brother - for uprooting himself and his family to obediently fulfil the call of being marketplace missionaries. There are real risks doing so in a country with its polytheistic culture where there still exist political pressures and social stigmas about Christianity. And God, in His infinite wisdom has placed me in India to play a small role to pray for and speak a word in season.

A planned business trip, a writing assignment, a chance disclosure and an opportunity to stand in the gap and speak words of comfort. This was a divine appointment. I pray this rich experience that, in God's great providence He saw fit to have me play a small part, will stir the hearts of many to walk faithfully in love and

obedience to God. Those He calls, He equips and in His infinite wisdom, we are placed precisely where we should be for His good purpose so that, above all, the name of our Lord be glorified by all the nations.

Contributed by Darren Lim



PRAYER



Photo by Worshae at Unsplash

Note to CGL: You (or someone you assign this portion to), may lead by praying OR reading these prayers together as a CG during worship.

Missions

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
(Matt. 28:19,20)

Pray for:

- More labourers to be sent into His harvest fields to unreached people groups (UPGs), despite the present economic and health challenges.
- God to equip missionaries with spiritual gifts, protect them from evil and harm, and that they will have a steadfast relationship with Him.
- The Lord to raise up more bible translators, especially for UPGs without bibles in their languages.
- God to soften the hearts of people to be receptive to the gospel, and that He will deliver them from their spiritual blindness and bondages.

CrossFields

CrossFields is the missions arm of DUMC. It is committed towards the fulfilment of the Great Commission by bringing the message of the Cross of Jesus Christ into His harvest field.

Pray for:

- Short-term missions trips planning for 2023; and for oneness of hearts and vision with our mission partners overseas (Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam & Japan) and locally (Sabah & Sarawak).
- God's wisdom as the core team plans our missions trainings, seminars and workshops for 2023.

- Church members to have a missional heart and the courage to step out of their comfort zone to share the gospel of love and truth to those who need to hear.