

Ending our series Stand...courageous living in turbulent times...something happens to us in Turbulent times...our world shrinks...from the often times illusion of how we think and often expect our lives ought to play out...to being disillusioned to how life is actually playing out....this is what is called **cognitive dissonance**, the living in a state of mental contradiction... this term cognitive dissonance describes **conflicting thoughts** or beliefs (**cognitions**) that occur at the same time...the belief that God protects his kids yet in reality a great tragedy happens... How does one filter this information in our minds and emotions? how does one handle what I believe with what I experience...for example I believe God loves me...but my reality feels like he does not! I know God can heal but my reality is he didn't...I know God is present but he is no-where to be found...one of the emotional aspects of our humanity is this...when turbulent times hit...our world shrinks...we no longer have an outlook that is outward...but we tend to close down, goes into survival mode ...we close in and close down...it is normal...we batten down the hatches...dress our wounds, isolate and insulate...and in our minds we spiral down, we kind of implode...

our beliefs and our realityare at odds...so we try to make some kind of sense...out of what does not make sense to us... this is not bad in fact it is normal...the truth is this...you will not be able to make sense out of most turbulent times while you are in them...because you lack the information necessary to make sense out of it!

and that is why Faith in a God who possesses all the information is so important for us to live courageously in our inevitable turbulent times...but not only to live through but also live productively! that is why faith hope and love are the most precious fruits God gives his children...

1 Cor 13:12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

1. when we look in a mirror ...we see only part the part reflected..but to see face to face means we see the whole...it is like me seeing a picture of you...in contrast to being with you...
2. Now we see things darkly...we know in part...don't know everything...we still need to learn
3. And that I will grow in fullness as the one who knows me fully teaches me..about me...and truth...

The key is knowing this...that now I know in part...only some of the information...I will be given more ...and some day I will be given all...even as I am fully known by God...I will fully know... what was up!

And as Paul concludes that when this is done...the one who teaches us pours into us now (present tense) these three things...which are actually ways of thinking...

1 Cor 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is

love.

- **Thinking founded on faith...thinking reflecting hope...thinking base of love toward...**
- **Even faith and hope are not as great as love...why? they will both be realized.... faith won't be something we live by for we will live with the presence of The father and the Son and The Holy Spirit...**
- **and our hope will become realized ...no longer hoping for but living in the Kingdom of God!!**

This understanding is what enabled Daniel to walk in Faith his whole life including as a prisoner for 70 plus years.. lets take a moment to understand his personal story... to appreciate the historical and cultural context of the conflict. **Daniel and many of his fellow Jews were no longer living in the Promised Land, but in Babylon.** The Babylonian Empire had crushed all its enemies, including the Egyptian Pharaoh Neco II at Carchemish in 605 B.C. This critical battle opened the door to Babylonian dominance over Judah. Daniel, probably as a teenager, was among the first residents of Jerusalem to be deported to Babylon.

now understand for the Jews of that time and now... Living in the Promised Land had been an essential element of the covenant between the children of Israel and their God. The land itself was more than a home, more than a gift from God. It was a symbol of His power and authority.

So When Babylon took the Jews into captivity, they were in shock that their God had not prevailed. The God who parted the waters of the Red Sea, and drowned the pride of Egyptian power, had not delivered Jerusalem from Nebuchadnezzar's armies! How could that be? how could we go from being the head of the dog to the tail...imagine the cognitive dissonance... knowing how God had demonstrated his power and authority in times past over and over...and now our lives and nations are in tatters only to get worse...

How could this be? is a question many of God's kids have asked down through the ages right to us sitting in our seats today!

1. **Listen it is a sad fact that or many followers of God...after having experienced, the heartbreaks, setbacks, the disillusionments of life Grow colder as they get older...and it is a sad feature of number of Bible characters — but not Daniel!**
2. **Despite his advanced years, Daniel remained steadfast in his courage to live out his faith...**

*******How did he do that? He believed there was purpose in the pain, that circumstances did not explain all that was happening...there was more going on than meets the eye, confounds the mind and plays tricks with the emotions... that there is a God in heaven and he is sovereign...**

a prayer he prayed in Chapter two stayed his mantra his whole life...

Daniel 2: 20 and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; *wisdom and power are his.* 21 He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. 22 He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

Daniel's assessment of God...

1. *Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his....* God is worthy to be praised for wisdom and power are his... He possesses the most wisdom and the most power..
2. *He changes times and seasons...* He is in charge of time and seasons and changes them as he wills
3. *He deposes kings and raises up others,..* He raises up and deposes human leaders
4. *He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning...* He adds wisdom to those capable of handling it...
5. *He reveals deep and hidden things...* He understands the breadth and depth of all things and reveals them as he wills
6. *He knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him...* Nothing is hidden from him, he is the illuminator

Daniel knew this about God ...he is in charge! and held onto it throughout his life... and because Daniel was wise and discerning...he could discern God's hand in everything.....God chose him as the Man to leave a testimony to four different Kings who ruled the known world at the time...

God wanted a man to leave a testimony of the true God to them...and us ..listen to what these Kings say about him...and remember they all attempted to have him killed

- **So when Danile was an old man...he got to meet and serve and continue his witness to Darius And Cyrus the Persian...and this is how they found out about his found out about his character and his God...**

Daniel 6:1 It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, 2 with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. 3 Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

- Sounds great! but this is what happened right after these glowing words!**

- We will see that bad things still happen even when you do the right thing. Because that is where God puts you on display to show forth his**work on this sentence...**

Dan 6:4 At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.

- **Now that is a man of character...not just words but reputation...for as I have shared with you...your reputation is your character!**
- **and this not just for a short time...for Daniel is nearing 80 years old... it was his reputation for a long time.. !!! what a testimony!!**

*Dan 6: 5 Finally these men said, “We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has **something to do with the law of his God.**”*

- **We know he will not violate his faith...** So they tried to use Daniel's faith in God against him. his reputation was deserved for his consistency in it! the key to a godly reputation... CONSISTENCY!!
- **we must make him choose between the King and his God! and make the consequence of disobedience dire**

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.

- Darius show how foolish a man can be....calls himself a god...but cant figure out the plan of his advisors...pretty weak god

They achieved their plan! a most important element of the story is the law of the Medes and Persians. Three times in the chapter we read that this law, once issued, could not be changed (verses 8, 12, 15).

Even the king was powerless to change his own laws. What we read in chapter 6 is different from the preceding five chapters. Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar were Babylonian kings, not Persian. As such, they were free from such constraints.

This provision may seem strange to modern readers, but there were valid and practical reasons for the Medes and Persians to adopt such an attitude toward law. First, the inability to change a law after

issuing it would impel the king to be more deliberate in considering legislation before enacting it. Second, the legal framework of society would be more stable.

- lions were often hunted by the kings, and they perhaps were kept to be let out for the hunt. The den where they were kept was a deep pit.

¹⁰ *Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.*

- Daniel knew the type of men who shared governmental authority with him. He knew they would be watching. He knew they had set a trap. But Daniel also knew the God he served!
- This verse also points out another important aspect of Daniel's prayer—he faced Jerusalem. Praying toward the temple in Jerusalem had long been customary among the people of God (Psalm 5:7), but Daniel may have had more in mind. Although he was a captive in exile in Babylon, he was undoubtedly quite familiar with Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple four centuries earlier.
- **but he could have chose another option.....It was only for 30 days. Daniel could have shrunk back and laid low for 30 days and not create any waves or buck the new world system. He could have saved himself a lot of turmoil and conflict.**
- **Our nature does not like conflict...but courage is only demonstrated in conflict!**
- **So He embraced the suck...** Remember way back in the beginning of his captivity...he had the conviction of his faith and the courage of his character and determined to not defied himself with the Kings Food...sixty years later nothing has changed!!
- He goes upstairs ...to an open window facing Jerusalem... no hiding...the home he has not see in 60 plus years and prays to God...like he always does three times a day...
- **If you go 30 days without praying, anytime then you will be a weaker person.**
- He learned and knew his strength comes from God!
- Daniel was a man already rooted in the courageous practice of his faith... whether... he was bragged on and whether he was attacked...this is how he did life...**His allegiance is to God first always!** Whatever the cost!
- It was a setup...they knew his character and used it against him...so they laid in wait

¹¹ *Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. ¹² So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: “Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions’ den?” The king answered, “The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” 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.

- **he was determined but had to save face...just like Pilate was with Jesus..he was for Daniel but more for himself**

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!**”

- **It was not his God...but he knew Daniel served this God**
- **You know sometimes that is all were called to give as or testimony...that they know we serve God!**

¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel’s situation might not be changed. ¹⁸ Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

- **You know when you compromise your conscience and character..it troubles you...**

¹⁹ At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den. ²⁰ When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?” 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.”

- **Daniel familiar with angels...he introduced to us both Gabriel and Michael**
- **Daniel had a history of caring for his captors and witnessing to them of his God even when they do him great wrong! he reminds him that he did the King no wrong...and did God no wrong...**
- **Interestingly ...if he would have not prayed to God or even prayed to the King...he would have done both the king and God wrong... but by obeying God he did right by both...**
 1. **He honored God and two God showed the king a miracle proving he is once again in charge ! Perhaps he will believe in the miracle and testimony of Daniel**

- **And his character is such ..he blesses the same King who tried to kill him...by saying May you live forever!**

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 in a sense resurrected him...no wound at all...and that is how it will be at the resurrection...no wounds found on us**

²⁴ *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.*

- **Vengeance is mine says the Lord...and that is why we are not to judge...Rest assured God knows how to repay...**
- **Your Turbulent times ...no matter how devastating are designed to testify to a world that does not know it's right hand from it's left that there is a God ...who is alive and loves them...**

²⁵ *Then King Darius wrote **to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth:** "May you prosper greatly!" ²⁶ "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. ²⁷ 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."*

- **When God wants to reach people whom no one is reaching...he will do things that no one else is doing... like putting Daniel in a lions den.... or me or you in our own type of lions den...but take heart...**
- **the turbulent times will be the means in which he prospers Daniel...and us**

²⁸ *So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*

Daniel was a follower of God living in a world of ungodly influences. Temptation was always at hand, and as is the case with temptation, it would have been much easier to go along with the crowd and be popular. Christians living in today's sinful culture can identify with Daniel.

You might be enduring your own personal "den of lions" right now, but remember that your circumstances are never a reflection of how much God loves you. The key is not to put your focus on your situation but on your all-powerful Protector. Are you putting your faith in God to rescue you? end

end

end

- **and let me add this...your testimony also reaches the heavenlies...for He had a great resume in Heaven....**

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.² At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks.³ I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

continued to practice his faith...in his great mourning once more..for the people...and know this each of the kings tried to literally kill him!

Daniel 10:4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris,⁵ I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist.⁶ His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

¹⁰ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.¹² Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set

your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

- **over sixty years in captivity...and for what...that A testimony of God sovereignty over time and peoples...idols and troubles..to kings and countries that did not know him...yet he loved them...**
- **A testimony of God sovereignty over times and peoples...and his plans for Daniel's lineage the Jews that he is sensitive to the plight of God's people and all people including us ... and wants us to know..that He wins and we win..!**
- **and a word for Daniel himself...given in the last verse of the book...**

Dan 12:13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

7. Daniel keep going the way you are going....your inheritance awaits you!
8. it is worth it!

If God is going to reach people no one else is reaching...he has to do what no one else is doing....and he uses people to do it...

and that is you and Ibut it takes great courage!!