

But Daniel Resolved

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[0:00] So we'll pick up Daniel chapter 1, we'll start in verse 8, and we'll read through verse 21. But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine that he drank.

Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs.

And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, I fear my lord the king who has signed your food and your drink, for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age?

So you would endanger my head with the king. Then Daniel said to the steward of whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Test your servants for ten days.

Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you and deal with your servants according to what you see.

[1:14] So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all of the youths who ate the king's food.

So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables. As for the four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar, and the king spoke with them.

And among all of them, none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.

And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus. Last week, or last time we were in Daniel, Daniel set the stage for us.

[2:36] He gave us the setting in which the true story of his friends and himself would take place. And he gave us that setting in big picture form. We're talking like 30,000 foot view here.

It was in the first seven chapters that Daniel introduced us to the events in this book that would take place as Judah was taken into exile.

And he introduced us to who those events centered on with Daniel and his friends. But even more than that, the God of Daniel and his friends, whose attributes were so clearly put on display for us.

And Daniel also introduced us then to the theme of this book, Whose God is God? As Nebuchadnezzar took those vessels from the house of God and he took them to the God that he worshipped there in Babylon.

And Nebuchadnezzar thought that he had defeated the Lord when in fact it was God who had given his people into his hands. Well, tonight, from that 30,000 foot view, we're now zooming in and getting into the events of the lives of Daniel and his friends, beginning with this very specific episode in our passage tonight.

[3:53] Now, it might seem like a small thing on the surface, the food and the drink that Daniel and his friends were to have. But as we'll see, this is a crucial moment in the book of Daniel.

It's a crucial moment in the lives of Daniel and his friends there in Babylon, this pagan city where they are now living far from home. Now, you may have heard this said before about the book of Daniel, and I want to reiterate this, that in many ways we can see Babylon represents the world, the

system of the world.

In fact, the biblical writers in the New Testament will talk about the world in this very way, as the world being Babylon. So Peter, when he's writing from Rome, he will send greetings from the church there in Rome to these Christians who are scattered all around the world.

And Peter will say to them, she who is at Babylon sends you greetings. Well, that's not Babylon where he was, it was Rome.

But Rome represented all that Babylon was. Rome was where the world influence was to be found.

And so we also have the Apostle John.

[5 : 10] He will use Babylon as well to represent the world system in Revelation. That system that's ruled by that unholy trinity of Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet.

So we read of the angel proclaiming in chapter 18, fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. She has become a dwelling place for demons.

So this idea that Babylon represents the world, we find it in the New Testament, and it traces back all the way to Daniel, who finds himself there in that physical city in his day.

So we can say Daniel is living in the world. That's a fact. He's really been thrust into the world. He's been taken by force into Babylon to live there until God brings his people back into the land.

There is so much that we can learn from Daniel as he lives in the world, because we live in the world too. And yet, as Daniel models for us, and as our Savior prayed for us in John chapter 17, we are not to be of this world.

[6 : 22] In the world, but not of the world. Living in it, but not living like it. Or perhaps to draw from the sermon this morning, we are to be the wheat in the midst of weeds, in the field in which we live.

So the question that's set before us tonight is this. How can you and I live in the world without becoming of the world? Well, we can follow a wonderful example that we find in Daniel, given to us here in God's inspired word.

Here is a blueprint that we have for living in the world without becoming of the world. And we see it here in Daniel's life in three character qualities given to us in this passage.

Here's the first. We live with firm resolve. Look at the example of Daniel here. Just the first sentence of verse 8.

But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine that he drank. Now that's just one sentence, but there is so much that is packed into this sentence.

[7 : 30] First, let's consider what it is that Daniel would not do. He would not defile himself. Now that is a very important word in this sentence because it gives us this very big clue as to why Daniel didn't want to eat the food or drink the wine.

Kids, it wasn't just because he was a picky eater. In fact, the food that he wanted to eat instead, most of us, picky eaters we may be, would say, I'd rather not have the vegetables.

So it's not because Daniel was a picky eater. So what's for dinner tonight might not be your first choice, but do not go telling mom and dad that you don't want to eat your food because, well, Daniel didn't want to eat his either.

No, he didn't want to eat the food and the drink the wine because if he did, he would defile himself. That's an important word. Now that's a technical term.

To defile yourself in the Old Testament was to become ceremonially unclean. There were many laws that God gave to the people of Israel to keep them from becoming unclean, to keep the people distinct, set apart, holy from the other nations.

[8 : 46] And here we find Daniel, a man who was to be set apart, distinct, holy, now living here in the world. How was he to be kept separate from it?

Well, stay ceremonially clean. Now sometimes, becoming ceremonially unclean was just a basic fact of life. Lots of issues of purity came down to simply living in a fallen world where death and decay exist.

So it wasn't sinful to become ceremonially unclean by, let's say, touching a dead body because someone has to do it in order to properly bury that person who has died.

So there were many instances in the Old Testament where you could become unclean or impure or defiled, you could even say. But it wasn't a sin issue.

You were not disobeying God by becoming defiled. For some issues in life. But for other issues, you were sinning by becoming defiled.

[9:48] Because those ceremonial laws didn't have to do with living in a fallen world. No, those ceremonial laws had to do with obeying what God has said you are to do or not do as you live in a fallen world.

Whatever it was that would make you ceremonially unclean or defiled, it could be avoided. This is true of laws related to food.

You see, going back to our example of a dead body, God doesn't say in His Old Testament law, don't touch a dead body in order to bury it. No, He says, if you have touched a dead body, here is what you are to do.

But with food, it's different. God says, don't eat these kinds of animals. He gives a command. He doesn't say, if you eat these animals, here is what you are to do. He simply says, don't do it. So you see Daniel's dilemma. He's living in Babylon where they certainly did not obey and live by God's Mosaic law.

[10:53] They certainly were eating unclean animals. Animals that God had said, don't eat. Animals that God had said in Leviticus, 11, you shall not defile yourself with them and become unclean through them.

So if Daniel were to eat those animals, he would be disobeying God. He would be breaking God's ceremonial law. There was no, if you eat these animals, here's how to make yourself clean. It would simply be, this is sin. So what did Daniel do? He resolved that he would not defile himself. And that means he resolves to not eat or drink what the king gave him.

Now maybe you're wondering, but what about the wine? Can't Daniel drink the wine? That's not ceremonially unclean. The Israelites drank wine. In fact, not only is wine nowhere talked about in terms of being defiled or unclean, but wine was often a symbol of God's blessing.

So couldn't he at least drink the wine? Well, that brings us as well to perhaps a second reason and a maybe overarching perspective that we want to keep as we consider Daniel's resolve.

[12:05] Remember Babylon's idolatrous ways. In fact, it's entirely possible and very likely that whatever food or drink was put before Daniel and his friends had in some way been offered to idols even before.

And Daniel simply wanted to stay distinct, separate, holy, as much as he possibly can be kept from the pagan culture of Babylon.

Remember, they had changed his name. They had hauled him from his home. They had forced him into this education and training for three years. But he would not be defiled by their food and drink. So he resolved not to eat it. He resolved not to drink it. Now we need to consider that word there, resolved. That's actually a translation of a Hebrew phrase.

And that phrase very literally is that Daniel put it upon his heart. Some translations say Daniel set his heart. Daniel determined in his heart.

[13:09] Daniel purposed in his heart. All of this shows that Daniel did not make this decision on the fly. He didn't make this decision on a whim. No, he was deliberate about it.

He worked it out in his heart. When the Bible talks about the heart, it is not just the place of our affections. It's the place of our will, our decision making.

It's in our heart that we think deeply. It's in our heart that we meditate. It's in our heart that we make plans. It's in our heart that we work out problems we face. Perhaps Daniel had David's psalm on his mind.

Psalm 4, verse 4, as he lay awake at night in Babylon. Be angry and do not sin. Ponder in your own hearts on your beds and be silent.

And if Daniel was anything like David in Psalm 4, Daniel didn't ponder alone at night. No, he was having dealings with God as he wrestled with his new life there in Babylon and all of the temptations that he faced and all of the trials that he faced, the dilemmas that he faced.

[14:21] And as he lay awake working through these things in his heart, he was working through them prayerfully with his God. Pondering in his heart at night, resolving in his heart by day, I will not be defiled.

We too face many situations in life where firm resolve is needed. Temptation to sin is presented to us. A pressure to sin is applied.

A pressure to conform to the world and to its ways. How do we live in this world without becoming of this world? We need a firm resolve like Daniel to stay faithful to God.

A resolve that has taken root in the heart. It's not a resolve that we develop spur of the moment. It's a resolve that we develop day by day in the heart.

And you know, to bring the morning sermon series into this evening, consider Psalm 119. The more that we hide God's word in our hearts, well then, the greater that our resolve will be.

[15 : 30] The more that we will be ready when the temptation comes. The more that we'll be ready when the pressure rises. We have God's word at the ready to stand firm upon it.

That's the first character quality of Daniel that helps us to live in this world but to be not of this world. We live with firm resolve. Let's consider now the second character quality of Daniel and that is we exercise careful prudence.

We exercise careful prudence. Let me read again verses 8 to 10. But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine that he drank.

Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs.

And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, I fear my lord the king who assigned your food and your drink. For why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who were of your own age so you would endanger my head with the king?

[16 : 42] So we see then this transition that takes place there right in the middle of verse 8 from the inner workings of Daniel's heart to the outer interactions that he's now having with those in authority over him.

What was there in his heart is now bubbling up and coming out from his mouth. And what we really need to notice here is that Daniel is absolutely full of firm resolve and he is yet humble and gracious in how he lives out that resolve.

He doesn't come to the chief of the eunuchs who has, he's that man Ashpenaz that we're introduced to back in the previous passage. He doesn't come to Ashpenaz with this list of demands. He doesn't come planting his flag and challenging this man. He actually comes quite meekly you could say. First, by asking. He didn't demand.

He requested. Now that's not weakness as some might say. That's prudence. He's requesting instead of demanding. And the way that he requested was also very careful and it was wise.

[17 : 55] Look at how he made his request. He asked that he might be allowed to not defile himself. Asked and allowed. Those are words that we would associate with submission.

With someone under the authority of another which is exactly Daniel's place there in Babylon. He was a captive. He was under the authority of the chief of the eunuchs and so he asked that he might not be allowed to defile himself.

Now that might raise some questions in our minds. What if Ashpenaz had said no? What if he told Daniel that he had to eat the meat and drink the wine? What would Daniel have done?

Would Daniel have defiled himself? I think we can be rather confident that he wouldn't have considering what he would do later when faced with a similar dilemma of obeying those in authority over him or obeying his God.

He would encounter a future situation, one with lions and he wasn't afraid to go against those orders. So this is not a situation of compromise as though Daniel asking equals Daniel giving unreserved submission.

[19 : 05] If it's a matter of sin, we don't submit. But you see, Daniel models for us this humble, respectful demeanor. He is asking. He's not being unnecessarily abrasive.

I think we could learn from that. Too often, we as Christians today can jump from firm resolve straight to obnoxious hostility. We take this fighting posture right away when our convictions are threatened.

And Daniel doesn't do that. You could say he's slow to anger. He's got no harsh words on his lips. He isn't challenging Ashpenaz. He isn't berating him about the king's menu options.

He's careful. He's wise in how he approaches those in authority over him. In how he approaches those he absolutely disagrees with and is at odds with.

He asks that he would be allowed. We stand firm, but we don't need to be obnoxious and obstinate. It may be that our request in a given situation may not be granted.

[20 : 09] And then we need to say, I must obey God rather than man. But even saying that, we can do in a respectful manner. As Paul says of elders in 2 Timothy 2.24, we're not to be quarrelsome with others, but kind to everyone and able to patiently endure evil.

That's the spirit in which Daniel spoke to his opponents. And look at the result in verse 9. God gave him favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs.

Daniel's respectfulness was the means by which God gave him favor with Ashpenaz. I wonder how many Christians have made life hard on themselves simply because they took up their righteous cause in an unnecessarily obstinate way.

Let's consider the early church. Acts says that they were praising God and having favor with all the people. And then the very next line, and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

I don't think it's too much of a stretch to say the favor that they had with all the people gained them an audience that heard the gospel and was saved by God's grace. Daniel gained the favor with the people.

[21:29] The early church gained favor with people. The Lord Jesus Christ, He did the same. We have that very concise summary statement in Luke chapter 2, verse 52.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. I know that it's totally possible that we can take this idea of gaining favor too far and then become overly agreeable and overly tolerant and accepting and compromising on our convictions.

That is not what we are to do and that is not the example given to us in Daniel. Daniel is not asking because he's just ready to take no for an answer. Rather, Daniel balances firmness and favor so very well.

He is firm in his convictions. He has resolved and yet he lives with this careful prudence as he relates to people. Daniel models for us what Paul commands of us in Colossians chapter 4.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious seasoned with salt so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

[22:50] That's Daniel's example to us. Now let me give you perhaps another example a hypothetical one that we may encounter in life today. Say you work for a company and your boss has assigned a rather big project to you and he wants you to come in on Sunday to finish that project.

Now this isn't a job that is of necessity or of mercy like doctors and firefighters and nurses. When you applied for the job you made it clear that I won't be available on Sundays to work because of my convictions about the Lord's Day.

Nevertheless, this week your boss calls and says I need you in on Sunday to work to get this project done. You could see this as an opportunity to make a bold statement and you quit.

You tell your boss I need to worship the Lord that is my priority I quit. You could do that or you could ask could I not come in on Sunday?

That may seem overly simple but is that not something of the spirit in which Daniel behaved? I could use this as an opportunity to share my faith and to stand firm on my convictions about the Lord's Day but yet to do that with a careful wisdom that Daniel models.

[24:09] And perhaps then instead of angering your boss by quitting and him saying another Christian who's quit on me you've gained an audience with your boss for continued conversations about the Lord.

Now we might like the idea of walking out in a rather dramatic fashion that would make for a story to tell wouldn't it? how you were mistreated for your faith but you stood your ground but there was an alternative solution presented one that was maybe a little boring I asked not to come in on Sunday and my boss said yes but that solution gained you favor with your boss and it gained you an audience that they might hear the gospel because you walked in wisdom towards outsiders you were careful you were thoughtful you were prudent in how you approached that conversation with your boss.

That's the example that we see here in Daniel. Well now let's consider the third and the final character quality that he models for us and it very much is closely related it follows on the heels of the previous and that is we make persuasive plans.

If you want to live in this world without becoming like this world then we should be prepared to make persuasive plans. Let's read again verses 11 to 16.

Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel Hananiah Mishael and Azariah test your servants for ten days let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you and deal with your servants according to what you see.

[25 : 44] So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food.

So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables. So first kids I just want to draw your attention back to this he asked for vegetables and he was given vegetables to eat so don't go being all picky with mom and dad tonight for dinner.

But more importantly what we see here is that Daniel doesn't just ask for permission. He comes prepared with a plan of action and he's prepared to be persuasive with those in authority over him because while it's true that Ashpenaz was favorable to Daniel and his idea of not eating and drinking what the king provided Ashpenaz was also fearful of the king Nebuchadnezzar.

So it's very possible that he would have said no to Daniel's request. his fear of the king very well may have trumped his favor with Daniel but Daniel was ready.

He was ready to persuade with this plan. Here's this idea. How about you could grant my request while also not provoking the wrath of the king and Daniel doesn't let the pressure of the situation get to him where he just folds and says fine I'll eat the food and I'll drink the wine.

[27 : 12] No he keeps his cool and he crafts this plan and it's a persuasive plan at that. Test your servants for ten days and let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink.

So let's go back to our hypothetical example of our boss wanting us to finish that project on Sunday. It's very possible that when you just go and ask for Sunday off your boss replies with no I really need you.

Well like Daniel we can strategize. We can come up with an alternative solution. Now it may not be a pleasant solution but you're making the best of a difficult situation so you could offer to come in early or to stay late on another day to wrap up that project.

Like Daniel you're persuading and in doing so you're showing yourself to be humble and as accommodating as you can be while still holding firm to your convictions.

living in the world yet still not being of the world and operating just as the world operates. Now maybe that particular example doesn't apply to you but we all live in this world where our convictions will be put to the test and in those moments how do we not give in and not just become like the world but we think strategically as Daniel did we craft a plan when needed.

[28 : 39] Now for Daniel and his friends the plan worked. After ten days they were evaluated and what were they found to be? Better in appearance fatter in flesh I don't know if we always want to be called fatter in flesh but they were fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food they passed the test with flying colors and we read of the results of this beginning in chapter 1 verse 17 As for these four youths God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams at the end of the time when the king had commanded that they should be brought in the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar and the king spoke with them and among all of them none was found like Daniel Hananiah Mishael and Azariah therefore they stood before the king and in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom and Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus so I mention this as we introduce the passage this evening this is a crucial moment in the lives of Daniel and his friends this is no small matter as they're tested regarding the food they eat and what they are to drink this first test was in some sense preparing them for the far greater test that they would face later in life the fiery furnace the lion's den those life or death situations that Daniel and his friends would soon be thrust into how Daniel and his friends responded in those situations it can be traced back to how they responded to this situation had they not been faithful in this first test how much harder would it have been to be faithful in the next it's one thing not to compromise on food or drink pagan assimilation practices it's another thing not to compromise when you're standing before the doors of a furnace that heat is so hot that it's killing the guards who are to throw you in it's another thing to not compromise when you're staring down into the abyss hearing the roar of hungry lions this was the first test of faithfulness and Daniel and his friends remained faithful faithful to God and not only were they faithful to God but God was faithful to them we see his sovereign hand we see his steadfast love woven throughout this passage and it's found in that little phrase that we saw last time together and God gave but what God gave tonight wasn't judgment that's what we saw in the first passage here in Daniel

God gave the king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar God gave punishment for the sins of his people for the unfaithfulness of his people to their covenant with him well here in our passage tonight we see just the opposite here God gives again but it's blessing it's blessing for the faithfulness of Daniel and his friends to their covenant with him so verse 9 says God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs so verse 17 says God gave Daniel and his friends learning and skill in all literature and wisdom so we see the sovereignty of God running all through the events of the book of Daniel both big and seemingly small both from that 30,000 foot view of history and up close and personal in the lives of Daniel and his friends God is not just sovereign over the big events he's not just sovereign over kings and kingdoms he's sovereign over all down to the very details of our lives it's what we see with Daniel even in his eating and drinking

God is sovereignly orchestrating the events of his life and the lives of his friends there in Babylon giving him favor in the king's court giving him and his friends knowledge and wisdom that will set them apart and actually gain them access to the very king himself and we've seen Daniel's faithfulness to his God this evening if you have the ESV translation that's the uninspired heading that's given to us for this passage Daniel's faithfulness the translators are saying that that's the main idea of these verses tonight Daniel's faithfulness his faithfulness to his God we've seen that certainly we've seen his faithfulness we should emulate his faithfulness as we live in this world but are not of this world that requires us to be faithful to our God as Daniel was but dear Christian don't miss the flip side as well here in chapter 1 Daniel's God has been so faithful to him at the end of that time of testing when Daniel and his friends had only eaten vegetables and drank water they came out 10 times healthier and in better condition than all the others tested for 10 days 10 times better off at the end who brought about that result

God did God was with Daniel God was blessing Daniel God was giving him favor in the eyes of his captors and God would do that not just for 10 days not just for 10 months not just for the three years of training God was faithful to Daniel and giving him favor all the days of his life look again at verse 21 and Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus that is an incredibly wonderful statement about God's faithfulness to Daniel and to his people and how he lavished his faithfulness on Daniel now we might hear that verse and we might naturally think that verse is telling us that Daniel died in the first year of King Cyrus so we might be thinking this is telling us that God was faithful to Daniel all through Daniel's life God was faithful to him all through his life but that verse is not telling us when Daniel's life ended that verse is not telling us how long

God was faithful to Daniel that verse is telling us how God was faithful to Daniel it's showing us the end result the wonderful outcome of this dire situation that Daniel is in that ties back to God's faithfulness because guess what Daniel would live at least into the third year of King Cyrus' reign we'll read of that later in Daniel so that brings us back to this verse here in chapter one why does Daniel end this chapter by saying that he was there in Babylon until the first year of King Cyrus because when Cyrus conquered Babylon do you know what he did next he allowed the Israelites to return to the land but it wasn't just because Cyrus said you know what this seems like a good idea I'm just going to do this it's not just because he came up with the thought no God turns the heart of the king like a stream of water and we see that in Ezra chapter one we know who was at work behind the scenes so there in

[36:29] Ezra one beginning in verse one the opening verses of this book we read in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia so that orients us right away with verse 21 here in Daniel one in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled later in Daniel Daniel's going to read Jeremiah's words there in captivity in Babylon so we're still right here with Daniel by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia oh there's God's hand again at work for his people stirring up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and put it in writing thus says Cyrus king of Persia just to be clear this is Cyrus speaking the Lord the God of heaven has given me we've heard that kind of language before has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem which is in

Judah whoever is among you of all his people may his God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord the God of Israel he is the God who is in Jerusalem God was so clearly at work he gave all the kingdoms of the earth to Cyrus he stirred up Cyrus's spirit to return the exiles to the land through this pagan ruler God would fulfill his promise

of restoration he would be faithful to his people he would be faithful to Daniel and his friends his faithfulness was constant so much changed in Daniel's lifetime literally kings and kingdoms rose and fell the very king and kingdom that Daniel lived in rose and fell as the Persians conquered the Babylonians so much of his life there was so much change but God's faithfulness was constant a thread that ran through all the way to the day that the exiles returned to the land and though Daniel didn't himself return to Jerusalem with the exiles likely because he was very old at that point Daniel still lived to see those exiles leaving Babylon and heading home to Jerusalem all because of God and his faithfulness he was faithful to Daniel and Daniel was faithful to him living with resolve living with prudence living with purpose making good plans I want to be like Daniel don't you living in the world but not becoming of the world living with the same resolve and prudence and purpose but so often I find myself failing to live as I ought relating less to Daniel and more so to the people of Judah taken into exile at the opening of that book continuing to fall into sin wandering from the God that I love falling so short of the kind of courage and obedience and faithfulness that we see in Daniel and his friends that is why we need to keep fixing our eyes on Jesus Christ the author and finisher of our faith as Hebrews says the one who with perfect resolve went to the cross for us suffered under God's wrath and died in our place I want the resolve of Daniel I want to be spent for the kingdom of God I want to be able to echo Paul's words in Colossians 1 to this end I toil struggling with all God's energy that he powerfully works within me may God give that kind of resolve to us I want the resolve of Daniel but before I ever wanted that resolve I needed the resolve of my savior if he had not set his face like Flint if he had not had that hardened resolve to obediently go to the cross what would be of us dead in our sins justly condemned to hell for all of eternity but thanks be to God that Jesus Christ went to the cross that he willingly laid down his life he fixed his eyes on the cross so we now fix our eyes on him and then we can by his grace and through his strength we can now live like Daniel we can sing our closing hymn this evening not trusting in our own strength that we're mustering up but working so hard out of the strength that God alone supplies so we can live in this world but not be of this world we can live in this world we can hold the banner high the gospel banner high with a firm resolve to be faithful to Christ let's pray together our father we would come pleading with you this evening that you would show yourself faithful to us as you did to Daniel that you would equip us that you would strengthen us that you would give us that resolve and that prudence and that ability to think strategically and we pray that in all of this we would be in this world but not of it that we would go forth from here holding the gospel banner high proclaiming Christ making him known near and far to all that you bring into our lives so give us strength give us joy in the spirit we pray we ask all of this in Jesus name amen philippians 1 beginning in verse 27 only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ so that whether I come and see you or am absent I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel amen you Thank you.