

Resist Assimilation

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Date: 17 July 2011

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[0:00] We had an introductory message last Lord's Day and we turn this this evening to the first chapter of the book of Daniel.

! And the Word of God says, in the third year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his God in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his God.

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility. Young men, without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace.

He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table.

[1:25] They were to be trained for three years and after that they were to enter the king's service. Among these were some from Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

The chief official gave them new names. To Daniel, the name Belteshazzar. To Hananiah, Shadrach. To Mishael, Meshach.

And to Azariah, Abednego. But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine.

And he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

Now, God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel. But the official told Daniel, I am afraid of my lord, the king, who has assigned your food and drink.

Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you. Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

[2:37] Please test your servants for ten days. Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food.

And treat your servants in accordance with what you see. So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days, they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. To these four young men, God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning.

And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar.

The king talked with them. And he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the king's service.

[3:49] In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom.

And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus. Well, you will be assimilated.

Resistance is futile. Mark gets it. He must be. If you're a Trekkie, you'll know what I'm talking about. In the Star Trek universe, the worst enemy of all is the Borg. And there are these half men, half robots who live in a collective.

And they exist only to bring more and more people into their collective to be just like them.

[5:13] The few things they say to anyone that they meet is simply, you will be assimilated.

Resistance is futile. And the Borg and the Trek universe is so terrifying because they are so strong.

They cannot be swayed by any feelings. They are totally void of feelings. And they only live for one thing, and that's to make other people just like them.

And that was what Babylon was like. Babylon put immense pressure on all of its victims to become a part of them.

They sought every means to assimilate to make them just like them. And so they conquered people, and they brought them into their immense collective. And it seemed like for most people, most victims of their tyranny, that resistance was futile.

And that is the system that Daniel lived in. That was the system that we're going to be reading about, that Daniel lived in. And so Daniel was caught up in events much bigger than he himself.

[6:26] He was only a young man. He was 14 or 15 or so. When he was swept into exile, into Babylon, he's far, far away from home. It's a land where they speak differently.

They do things differently. They have different customs and different ideas. And there was this constant pressure, constant pressure to become just like everyone else.

And Babylon's mantra could have been, you will be assimilated. Resistance is futile. Now, if you think about it, your situation is not very different from Daniel's.

Now, we live in a different Babylon. We don't live in that Babylon. But the mantra of this world is still the same. You will be assimilated.

We will make you just like us. And so don't try to resist. But it's in that grim situation that Daniel found himself and that we, as God's people, find ourselves in this world that God speaks to us.

[7:32] He speaks to us about how to be faithful when the pressure is on. And more than that, he teaches us the wisdom that we need to be to prosper here as we wait to come home.

And he speaks to us in Daniel 1. So I would invite you, if you've turned away, to turn there. In Daniel 1, you have a wonderful example of how to avoid assimilation.

How to avoid assimilation. How to live in exile. And Daniel doesn't teach us like a lot of other wisdom books. He doesn't teach us with Proverbs or any sort of lecture.

This is a story. It's a picture. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel, they show us what it is to live wisely while in exile. And so this evening we have four points.

And the first is understand the world's methods. If you want to avoid assimilation, you need to understand the world's methods. So how does the world seek to assimilate us?

[8:37] To make them just like them? How do they put the pressure on? In Romans it talks about don't be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world. Well, there's that pressure to conform.

Well, how does that pressure come? Well, we see it in our passage. The world tries to re-educate the Christian. The world tries to re-educate the Christian.

So you know the story. Nebuchadnezzar wants trained men to run to work in his palace for his service. And so he's commanded one of his chief officials to find the young, handsome, intelligent, nobility of Israel.

And to bring them in and to train them to work for Nebuchadnezzar. Now, what's Nebuchadnezzar's plan for them? How is he going to prepare them?

Well, we see that at the end of verse 4. It says, he, that is the chief official, he was to teach them the language and the literature of the Babylonians.

[9:40] Now, the point is, is that they were to be trained as intelligent, well-spoken Babylonians. Their new teachers would teach them how to get along in this new system that they found themselves, how to succeed in Babylonian culture.

How to serve the king. How to move among the movers and the shakers of the Babylonian world. How to fit into the bureaucracy. So that this well-oiled Babylonian machine would just keep turning right along.

And we had to realize that this would be a very enviable education. All they had to do was take it. All they had to do was settle in and let everything go.

Everything else they had learned. And then the promise was, when you learn this, you will succeed. The promise was success. And so the pressure was on. They just had to buy into it.

Just fit in. Forget what you used to know. Forget how you used to do things. All that stuff is old-fashioned. That's useless for this world that you find yourselves in. We're going to teach you how to rise to the top.

[10:47] Now, isn't that the world's way to this very day? Haven't you seen more and more of a push for our children in our country?

They want our children earlier. They want our children younger. They want them longer. And the world knows that if they can teach our kids, then they own them.

The old Jesuit saying was, give me a child for the first seven years and I'll give you the man. And the world knows that. That's how things work.

That's the Babylonian method. They want to re-educate. They want to transform your thinking to think after them. Well, then we see the world's next method in verses six and seven.

Among those, among these, some were some from Judah. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. And the chief official gave them new names.

[11 : 50] To Daniel, the name Belteshazzar. To Hananiah, Shadrach. To Mishael, Meshach. And to Azariah, Abednego. Now, the world wants to re-educate.

They want you to think like them so that you can get to the top. And in this case, they want to re-identify us. Re-identify you. The world wants you to think about yourself in its terms.

Now, they don't go so far as, well, your name is Jason. Now your name is George. That's not the point. The point is that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were good, strong, godly names. They were grounded in the character of God. So Daniel, his parents, gave him this name because Daniel means God is judge. And Hananiah meant Yahweh is gracious.

And Mishael means who is what God is. And Azariah meant Yahweh is my help. Now, you understand that even to this day, a person's name represents something of their character.

[13 : 04] Even parents name their children because there's hopes that that child will grow into the meaning of their name. And so it was the same in those days.

Azariah's mom and dad wanted Azariah to grow up and to trust in the Lord as his help. Because Yahweh is my help is what Azariah means.

And so he, Azariah's parents wanted Azariah to see himself as someone that the Lord would help. Someone that the Lord could help.

But that's not what Babylon wanted. Babylon wants you to think of yourself on its terms.

So Azariah, you aren't Yahweh is my help anymore. No, you're Abednego, servant of Nebo. Nebo was the Babylonian god of wisdom and writing.

[14 : 04] And so God isn't your help anymore. No, you're the servant of Nebo. And that's how it was. This continual, you're not going to be this anymore.

We're going to change who you are. And that's the world's way still. And you'll see what I mean. The world wants you to buy into what they say you are. They want you to identify yourself on their terms.

And so it calls you things like rich, poor, popular, preppy, fat, skinny, successful, tragedy, lost cause, truck driver, math teacher, factory worker, student.

The world pressures us to think of ourselves on their terms and in their judgment. You are how much money you have.

But Christian, is that true of you? You are what you look like. But is that true of you, Christian?

[15 : 10] You are what you do. Men, we struggle with that one. But is that who you are? That's what the world wants you to think of yourself as.

That's how the world labels you and wants you to identify yourself. But is that who you are? And the answer is not at all. Not at all. You are a child of God. You are a child of God.

What we are has not been seen yet. So you're a son. You're a daughter of God himself. You're Jesus. One of Jesus beloved.

You're one of the members of his body. You're the temple of the Holy Spirit. You aren't how much money you make. You aren't how you look. You aren't what you do. You aren't what the world says you are.

The world wants to re-identify you. It wants you to take your identity not from who God is and what your relationship to God is, but what you are and what you do and what you have.

[16 : 12] All worldly terms. And if they can do that, then they own us. Then we're theirs. If we start thinking of ourselves just like the world wants us to, if we buy into their re-identification, then slowly but surely we'll bend.

And we'll submit to them. And we'll start acting like them. And we'll start thinking like them. And we'll start appreciating the things that they appreciate. And we'll start desiring the things that they desire. And we'll start valuing things the way they value things. And for all intents and purposes, we'll be just like them. So ask yourself. Do you think of yourself in godly terms?

Or do you think of yourself in worldly terms? Remember, one of the world's methods to assimilating us, to making us just like them, is they want to re-identify you.

Now, most of chapter one is taken up with the world's third method. And the world's third method is luxury. You see that in verse five.

[17 : 22] The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. Nebuchadnezzar wanted Daniel and his three friends to live on the king's welfare, on the king's generosity.

And a lot of people have thought that this is a matter of eating, that Daniel refuses these things because it's a matter of eating food sacrificed to idols.

But that really is completely speculative. It's not in the text. It doesn't say that. It just says that Daniel decided, he resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine.

There's no mention of sacrificing to idols. But every time this food is described, it's described as being royal food. It's coming from the king's table. And the point is, is that the king was going to provide for them.

The king was their ticket to the good life. He was going to provide well for them. And so he was going to give them exactly what they needed. He was going to be their lifeline.

[18 : 25] If they trusted him, he would take care of them. He would give them the good life. Now, do you see why Daniel would say this is defiling? It was to substitute Nebuchadnezzar for God.

It was going to substitute man for God, for the only living God. So listen to Ian Duggett. He's an Old Testament scholar and pastor.

The key to understanding why the four young men abstained from the royal food is noticing that instead they chose to eat only those things that grow naturally.

Grains and vegetables and a drink only naturally occurring water. This suggests that the goal of the simple lifestyle was to be constantly reminded of their dependence upon the creator God for their food.

Not King Nebuchadnezzar. So do you understand what's going on? Nebuchadnezzar wants all of his little students to be dependent on him.

[19 : 37] He wanted them to be loyal to him. And the way he was going to get their loyalty was to provide well for them. It wasn't by threat. It was by pleasure that Nebuchadnezzar was going to have these people be loyal to him.

And so honey attracts more flies than vinegar. Isn't that right? And so as long as they were dependent on him, on Nebuchadnezzar for the good things, they would do exactly what he wanted. They would do whatever it took to stay on his side. And so brothers and sisters, do you see the world's strategy?

The world doesn't need to persecute you to get you to fall in line. It doesn't need persecution to get most people to conform.

It just needs to seduce. It just needs to tempt. It just needs to give you luxury. So read Revelation 18 sometime.

[20 : 38] It's talking about the judgment of Babylon. And the picture in that case is this picture of affluent, powerful Rome.

And it says that Babylon is destroyed. And the sin that is continually brought up is the way she lived in luxury. And the way she seduced all the nations to do the same thing.

And so luxury is far more dangerous than persecution. So what cripples so many American Christians?

What leaves so many in this a deadly sleep? It's luxury. The devil doesn't need to persecute because he has something much more effective.

He has the American dream. He has the promise of promotion. He has the promise of a house and a car and the promise of a retirement on a sunset beach with your toes in the sand.

[21 : 37] And he has luxury. And so the result is apathy. And sleep. And death. And that was King Nebuchadnezzar.

That was his plan. That was Babylon's methods. So what are the world's methods? Re-education, re-identification, and luxury. Now let's look at Daniel's response.

How is Daniel going to avoid being assimilated? Because this is really where our lesson we need to learn. How are we going to stand up to this world's pressure?

Well, we look at Daniel's response. You see it there in verse 8. But Daniel resolved himself not to defile himself with the royal food and wine.

So Daniel drew a line in the sand. And he refused to compromise at this point. So when the Babylonians said, well, you're going to study to become a culture-educated Babylonian, Daniel didn't refuse.

[22:43] And if they were going to train him, that's fine. You know, he didn't have to refuse that altogether. He could take the good and leave the bad. When the Babylonians said, this is your new name, Daniel didn't argue with that at that point.

They could call him whatever he wanted. He knew who he was. This wasn't the issue with Daniel and his three friends. They knew that he knew that he was Daniel. He knew that God was the judge. Azariah knew that the Lord is my help. And you can call me whatever you want. They could see through their re-identification plans. But when they said, now eat the royal food. We will give you royal food and drink the wine.

Daniel resolved to say no. Daniel said, I'm not going to do it. Well, why? Why draw the line here and not somewhere else?

It's because this is the key place where the victory with the world is won or lost. Will you trust God or man? Will you trust God to provide?

[23:50] Or will you trust Nebuchadnezzar to provide? Will you trust the world? Will you live for luxury? Or will you live for the Lord? Will you live in fear of always trying to stay on people's good side?

Or will you live on faith? It wasn't going to be decided at school. And it wasn't going to be decided by what they called him. Instead, it was going to be decided at the dinner table.

Would he thank God for his food and depend on the Lord to give him what he needed? Or would he look to Nebuchadnezzar? And so we read what Daniel did. He first asked the chief official.

And, you know, the chief official said, no way. I'm not going to die for your bad decisions. And so he went down another level. He went to the guard who was the guard over them. And he said, can you can you do something about this?

You see it in verse 12. Please test your servants for 10 days. Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food and treat your servants in accordance to what you see.

[25:01] So do you hear Daniel's tone? Do you hear Daniel's tone? Do you see his wisdom? It wasn't rebellion. He wasn't rebellious.

It wasn't an outright refusal. He wasn't rude. All he said was, give me give me 10 days. And then let's see what we look like.

And then you can decide what is best. You can decide from there. And so the guard agreed. 10 days is not going to destroy anyone.

So now what is the guard looking for? What's this test going to be? Really, this is a test of will God do something amazing or will he not?

Will he provide for his people or will he not? So what exactly was the guard looking for? Well, you see it in verse 15. At the end of the 10 days, they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

[26:02] And so he's looking for healthy, better nourished. And we're going to say, well, yeah, this is easy. This is a no brainer. I mean, if you eat vegetables and water, you're probably going to be pretty trim and healthy.

I mean, it's far better than eating a lot of the food that we could eat. But what this is good.

Vegetables are good for you. And so this is going to make them healthy. But I think the problem is we're thinking of these things in 21st century American terms about what healthy and beautiful and better nourished look like.

And we're not thinking about it in 7th century B.C. Babylonian ideas. The words are literally healthier and fatter, fatter than any of the young men.

The Hebrew word is bari. It means fatted or plump. Now, think for a minute. Do you know anyone who is plump eating vegetables and drinking water?

Probably not. So do you see Daniel is expecting something from God that is amazing, that's out of the ordinary. And he's putting his faith in God to help him.

[27:11] Maintain this resolution that I'm not going I'm not going to trust in Nebuchadnezzar. I'm going to instead trust in the Lord to do something. So for 10 days, it was vegetables and water, vegetables and water.

Do you feel the tension of these 10 days? What it must have been like? There's no way humanly, humanly speaking. That this plan would work. But it was Daniel's plan.

It was a plan that he hatched on faith that he thought about. And he was going to trust God to do something amazing to provide for him in the middle of Babylon.

So what did God do? The third point, we see God's vindication. We've seen the world's schemes. We've seen Daniel's plan. Now, how is God going to react to this? What is God going to do? And we see that he vindicates Daniel.

[28:12] So for 10 days, vegetables and water. And the question was, is God going to vindicate Daniel? Is he going to be a reliable source in Babylon?

Can we trust him in Babylon? Can God provide everything for Daniel and his three friends that they needed in Babylon? And if it could be decided here, we know that it could be decided for good. And the answer was a resounding yes.

And we already read verse 15. Let's read it again. At the end of 10 days, they looked healthier and better nourished. They looked fatter than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

Now, isn't that beautiful? Isn't that beautiful? God can provide for his people out of vegetables and water better than Nebuchadnezzar can do with all the royal food and wine.

God doesn't need fancy food to supply his people when they're in Babylon. So when you have drawn the line in the sand in your life and you've said, I'm not compromising here with the world.

[29:20] And the question is, will God honor that? The answer is yes. The answer is yes. And so with vegetables and water, Daniel and his three friends are now nice and plump.

And so the guard took away the choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. And so for three years it went. Vegetables, water and school.

Vegetables and water and school. And the Babylonians are teaching them all the language and literature of Babylon. But at the same time, God was at work.

He was teaching them. You see it there in verse 17. To these four young men, God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and language and learning.

Excuse me. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. All kinds. And so Babylon is in the system. And Babylon wants to re-educate them.

[30:22] Babylon wants to make them to be the men that they want. But at the same time, God is in the process. Isn't that strange? God is in the process. He's in the middle of the public school making his people exactly what he wants them to be.

And he's using their education to bless them. And so the world had an agenda. And God overruled it. And God used it for his good. And so at the end of three years, it was exam time.

And it's sort of like those old-fashioned exams. Or when you're defending your thesis or your doctoral dissertation, it was going to be an oral thing.

And so you came. They came in front of the king. And Nebuchadnezzar brought them in. He talked to them. And what did he find out? That it was these four Israelites that stood out above everyone else.

There was something more to them than anyone else. They understood more. And Nebuchadnezzar was forced to say these four are ten times better than everyone else.

[31:27] And they're ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in the whole kingdom. What should you learn from this? Well, God can vindicate his people.

So when you draw the line, can God vindicate you? Will God honor your faith in him? And the answer is yes. What is it to live wisely in Babylon?

It's to depend on the Lord to give you what you need in that situation. And God will honor that. So under God's care, Daniel and his three friends prospered.

And as they were faithful to him, God was faithful to them. Now, have you heard of Eric Little? Let me ask it in a different way.

Have you seen the movie Chariots of Fire? Have any of you seen that? It's the true story of Eric Little. And Eric was a Scotsman.

[32:29] He was a devout Christian. And Little was one of the finest athletes in all of Great Britain. And he played rugby. And he played cricket. And he was fast.

He was very fast. And he was so fast that he qualified for the 1924 Olympics. A lot of you probably know this story. And he was favored to win the 100-meter dash.

It was his event. He was the best at it. He was favored to win it. But a few months, not like the movie. The movie says it found out on the boat ride over. That's not true. A few months before, he found out that one of the qualifying races was on a Sunday.

And he realized he couldn't do it. Couldn't do it. No matter how important the race was, he wasn't going to break the Sabbath to run.

And so he dropped out of his best event. Now, do you think Great Britain was happy about that? Not at all. I mean, Great Britain went up in arms.

[33 : 36] Some people called him a traitor. They hated him. The newspapers railed on him. They were angry. They were offended.

But he didn't bend. He wasn't going to compromise. He had drawn his line in the sand. So instead of the 100, he was going to race the 400.

400 meters. He had run the 400 meters before. His times were modest at best. I mean, I'm sure they're a lot faster than any of us can run. But they weren't Olympic gold medal quality runs.

And no one really expected anything out of him. They said he didn't have the stamina. He was a sprinter. He didn't have the stamina to finish strong. But he was going to run anyways.

And the big day came. Now, in those days, they didn't have starting blocks like we do, those metal things. Instead, you had a little spade and you dug out a little piece of the track. And you made your own starting blocks right there.

[34 : 34] And so Little was digging out his starting blocks. He was getting ready to race. When some nameless American, one of the members of the team, the one who does the massages for the player or for the athletes before the events, when some nameless American walked up and gave him a scrap piece of paper.

And on it, he opened it up and on it simply said, In the old book it says, He that honors me, I will honor. Wishing you the best of success always.

It's a quote from 1 Samuel 2, verse 30. And he clutched that scrap piece of paper. Starter pistol went off.

And he ran a world record 400 meter dash. He finished five meters in front of the next closest person. God will vindicate his people.

Sometimes it's not. And most of the time it's not so amazing. God will vindicate his people. Eric Little fought against the world. He stood up.

[35 : 43] He drew the line in the sand. He resolved to go on faith. And God honored him. And Daniel and his three friends stood up against the world.

They made a resolution. They trusted in the Lord. And God vindicated him. And so the question is, Will you trust God to vindicate you in this world?

Have you drawn a line in the sand? Are you trusting in God? And when you trust him, Will he vindicate you? The answer is yes.

Let's move on to our fourth and final point. We've seen the world's schemes. We've seen Daniel's plan. His reaction. And we've seen God's vindication.

And now three brief lessons. This is our fourth point. Three brief lessons. Lesson number one is for you parents. Friends. You parents.

[36 : 49] Isn't this encouraging? This encourages me. How old was Daniel again? He was 14. He was 15. He was a teenager.

He wasn't an old teenager. He was a young teenager. But God gave him grace to live against this world and for him in a faraway country without mom and dad.

And it was a hostile environment. And there was pressure. Pressure like we've never experienced to that degree. We're not talking to kings.

And they're not telling us what to do. And we're not standing up against them. But by God's grace. God's grace. And your faithfulness.

Your children. Could be the same way that Daniel was. They can avoid that assimilation. Where you will be just like us.

[37 : 46] And resistance is futile. And how do we know that? Because Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Hazariah did it. By God's grace. So parents, this should encourage you to disciple your children.

To disciple your children. We don't know anything about their parents. Except in the last days of Judah. When the whole country had gone and turned away from God.

They gave their children names. That suggest that they really loved God. That they trusted in the Lord. That they were standing faithful to him.

When everyone else was away. They must have been some parents. And they disciplined their children while they were still boys. And it paid off.

For years and years to come. So mom and dad, you do the same. Prepare your children to live in Babylon. Because they are going to live there. That's lesson one.

[38:44] Parents, be encouraged and disciple your children. Second lesson. Young people. Peer pressure is real, isn't it? But with God's help, you can be different.

You can dare to be a Daniel. You can dare to stand alone. So let me ask you, young people. Have you drawn a line in the sand?

Have you said, you know what? I'm not going to be like the world. Everyone else is doing this. Everyone else is living for this. Everyone else is living for luxury. And living for popularity. I'm not living for that.

Have you drawn a line in the sand? Where you've said, I will trust the Lord. I don't need the world's applause. I'm living for an audience of one. And it's him.

So young people, look at Daniel. He lived for God in a very hard place. There's grace in the Lord Jesus for you to do that. It's impossible without it.

[39:46] But with God's grace, you can do it. It's possible. It's happened. Then finally, their third lesson. Do you see our desperate need for the gospel?

You see our desperate need for the gospel. When we read Daniel, we read something that we haven't done. To a great extent. We've believed the lies.

We've bought into the re-identification. We've fallen for the world's traps. We've lived for luxury rather than for the Lord.

We've been afraid. We've compromised. Maybe big. Maybe small. 1 Samuel says, I will honor those who honor me.

But the gospel is a lot better than that. The gospel is, I will honor those who have dishonored me. I will save and redeem those compromising sinners.

[40:50] I'll save those compromising sinners who turn to me for mercy. Who cry out to me to help. And that's what God did in the gospel. He sent his son down into a world, into exile.

Far away from home. And the Lord Jesus never once compromised. He never, ever, one time said, I'm going to live for this instead of God.

And he trusted in God for everything as he walked in this world. But in the gospel, there's more than an example. Jesus is a beautiful example of living against the world.

But the gospel is Christ's sacrifice because he had this perfect, uncompromising, spotless life. He is able to die and give that life and die for those sinners so that those people who have not honored God.

God could rescue. Jesus was the one who never compromised. He never shook in fear before a man. And he laid down his life and he died like a sinner.

[42:03] And he had our sin on him. All of our compromise. All of our fear. All of our luxury, loving sins.

And he took them upon himself and he bore them to the place of wrath. God poured out his wrath so that we could go free. We need Daniel's example.

But we need the gospel. If we're ever going to live that way. So now we can be justified. And all you do is look away from yourself.

You look away from yourself and you look to Jesus and he will save you. And where is Jesus now? He's not in exile anymore, is he?

He died. God raised him and raised him to his very right hand. Now he sits at the Father's throne on the Father's throne and he's ready to help you.

[43:04] He's ready to give you wisdom. He's ready to give you grace. He's ready to put steel in your backbone. And so when the world's pressure comes, there's a power that is stronger within you than from without.

And it's the Lord Jesus. And by his spirit, we can live an uncompromising life in a Babylon that is trying to conform us and squeeze us to be just like them.

We can dare to be a Daniel because of the gospel. Let's sing that song. Hymn 660. Our Heavenly Father, we pray that you would give us that grace in the Lord Jesus Christ to stand against this world, against the pressures that we face.

Lord, I pray for our young people. You give them grace and wisdom to stand. In these very difficult times. Pray that you would be with our men who are at work.

Give them grace to be godly and ungodly places. Lord, I pray for our ladies and the pressures that they face and the temptations and the trials that they face.

[44:16] That you would give them grace to stand in an evil day. Lord, there is so much to overcome in this world. Before we see the kingdom of God, our only hope is in you.

Our only hope is in your faithfulness. For we are not strong enough on our own to be faithful. We need your grace. Thank you for the Lord Jesus.

Thank you that he forgives us of our sin. Thank you that all of our compromise was on him and he took the blame. And we have walked away.

I pray that out of love for him, that it would compel us to be faithful for him in the world that we find ourselves. Lord, thank you that this world is passing.

That Babylon only exists for our time of exile and soon we will be coming home. I pray that you would hasten the day, Lord Jesus. It's in your name I pray.

[45:15] Amen. Amen. Amen.