

Life Group Notes

Sunday 10th October 2021

Speaker: David Mosimabale

Title: Daniel: Take A Stand

Passage: Daniel 1:1-21

Just like Daniel and the children of Israel were in exile in Babylon. We are exiles in Reading, our places of work, our communities, schools, university. As Elders we pray in this sermon series we grow in courage, wisdom, and spirituality.

Daniel 1: 1 They were besieged. How many of us feel besieged, it appears you are in a bondage, where you can't live life as the word of God commands us; where the standards, values we know through the teaching of the Bible seems to be eroding. Where truth has become subjective, where we now have your truth, my truth, etc. It is almost not clear what is right from wrong anymore, there so many grey lines, and confidence in the truth you have known may be shaking, and some of us are already redefining what truth is to us, or fast aligning to the dominating views and culture.

Jesus gave us the unequivocal answer, when he declared in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life..."

The state of things in the world does not take God by surprise. 2 Timothy 3: 1 – 5... in the last days, people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**. Daniel loved God more than the pleasures of the king's meat

For us as children in exile, let us not get confused, Jesus is the standard, following the way of Jesus remains the foundation of our faith. So even if the world is watering various standards as God intended, Jesus is our standard, his teaching should be the foundation upon which we build our lives.

v. 8 Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank.....(ESV)

He resolved in his heart. Are you purposing in your heart to take a stand for Jesus, are you resolving to stand for him even if you are going against the crowd? God wants you to decide in your heart to take a stand for him. He wants you to follow him. Remember to stand for nothing is to fall for anything. There is a lot of confusion in our world..... Jesus came to bring clarity, by showing us the way to the father – a relationship with him.

He purposed in his heart,in His HEART.....It is a heart thing, it starts from the mind, no wonder Proverbs 4:23 says guide your heart with all diligence for out of it comes the issues of life. The heart is the battle ground. Right now, in this season, there is on-going battles in our hearts on several issues. In exile, the battle is drawn long two lines: 1) Follow Jesus and 2) Follow the ways of the Babylonians. Look at every step, decision, action you want to make; the battle is always around either follow the way of Jesus or follow the way of Babylon.

- Daniel had an active relationship with God, he knew his God, he understood what was expected of him in his relationship with God, he was crystal clear. He was never in doubt about his stand. He took a stand, and made it known early. He was respectful, not judgmental but clear about his position and made it known with wisdom. The courage and wisdom he displayed were certainly a product of his spirituality – active walk with God.
- Daniel didn't judge, fight, or become hostile to the Babylonians. He purposed in his heart, then with wisdom, communicated his position to the Chief Eunuch. Noticed he didn't insult the practices of the Babylonians. He was very clear he wasn't going to be part of that. We don't have to be politically correct; we just must be tender, respect people's positions and views; but be clear on your own views, convictions, and act it out with love and respect and not change our beliefs.

- Therefore, knowledge and understanding of the ways of our God is so important so you can have a solid basis to stand on. Else you will be easily swept away by the currents of popular culture, which often is opposite to the ways of God.

Jeremiah 9:24 “but let him who boasts boast in this, that he **understands and knows me**, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth.”

Let us look at these two words, knowledge and understanding:

1. Understanding = Under + Standing. Under what are you standing? Are you standing on the incorruptible word of God as contained in the Bible, or on the philosophies of men or popular culture that is constantly changing due to the confusion we see in our world...?
To take a stand, what you are standing under must be solid.
2. Knowledge of God is key to how we live in Exile...
Knowledge is knowing God for yourself. This is not just head knowledge, but heart knowledge, revelational knowledge. Knowledge that impacts our hearts and transforms us. This is knowledge that is imparted by the Spirit of God. This was the knowledge Paul was praying in Philippians 3: 10 “that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering. This is the knowledge Ephesians 1: 18 - 19 was talking about; **“having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe”**

Daniel also leaned on his three friends. You don't need to go alone, engage your church family, your RFC 3, and your lifegroup. There is power in having the right company. If Daniel was with friends that were discouraging to his faith, it would have been hard. Besides his relationship with God, he had godly friends.

In this chapter, we see Daniel's spirituality-relationship with God, gave him courage and wisdom to take a stand. He was courageous to make his stand known, he applied wisdom by talking to the Chief Eunuch privately with an alternate solution for them to try for 10 days.

When we walk with God and take a stand, he will give us courage and wisdom to be able to do so, even if it means giving us miraculous interventions to make sure we are able to accomplish what we've purposed in our hearts. Take a stand and do not compromise.

Questions:

1. Share what part of the sermon encouraged or challenged you
2. Do you have a practical experience on how you have taken a stand to share with the group to encourage others?
3. What commitment are you making not to compromise?
4. Pray Ephesians 1:17 – 20 over one other