

LIVING WITH THE LIONS

Dear Friend:

One of my favorite Bible characters is Daniel. A straight arrow in a crooked and depraved culture he stood tall for God all his life. At some point in his teens or early 20's the king of Babylon brought Daniel and several other Jewish young men of Judah to the city of Babylon. Babylon invaded Judah (including Jerusalem) and took control of the area. The king and his court wanted the best and the brightest from among the Jews. You probably know the story from the book of Daniel.

Babylon conquered Judah in 586 B.C., but the Medes and Persians (Iranians) conquered the Babylonians in 539 B.C. Daniel and his friends were so good at what they did that the kings of the Medes and Persians kept them in leadership. Eventually, Daniel becomes one of 3 Vice-Presidents. This made the other V.P.'s very mad; they were Medes/Persians and were jealous that a Jew would be granted equal political position and power as them. So, they hatched a plot to get rid of Daniel. They go to the king of Media and suggest that he put a 30-day law into place where he names himself God and no one can pray to anyone but him. This strokes the King's ego, and he goes along with the plot, probably not realizing what this will do to Daniel. The law goes into effect and the V.P.'s spy on Daniel and catch him praying to the one true God of Israel. Subsequently, he is thrown into the lion's den, and you know the rest of the story, Daniel is rescued by God.

We all live among the "lions", so what can we learn from Daniel's predicament? First, Daniel had his priorities in order, so should we. For Daniel it was God first, God second, and God third. Being a person in a position of power and political position did NOT matter more than being a person obedient to God. Godly principles + Godly convictions = Godly character, no matter what the situation. So, how are your principles and convictions? In line with God? Is he first, second, and third in your life? Second...Daniel had his prayer life in order. As I mentioned, no one was to pray to anyone but the king. Daniel would have none of that. Three times a day he prayed to God, facing Jerusalem. The V.P.'s were spies and caught him praying. Daniel would not give-up his prayer life even if it meant going to the lion's den. Do we take prayer this seriously? I am afraid many do not. And to be honest...I wonder if I would, or would I just pray with my eyes open so that I may live! Third, Daniel was a man of trust in God, thus, peace in his heart.

Circumstances did not control Daniel - he made sure God controlled his heart and mind, regardless of the circumstances.

May you and I live the life patterns of Daniel. Put your priorities in order, never back-down from prayer and let God control us, not our circumstances.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Mike

Prayer: Donna Clickenger (now a permanent resident at Villages of Sunbury nursing home), Glenna Stanley (hospital, breathing problems and heart), Lyle Starr (moving to western U.S.), Building Fund Commitment Sunday, February 18th \$25,898

Events: February 1 we kick-off the month-long Boy Scout Shelter House Repair Project (we raise \$1,000 and the Boy Scouts are adding \$4,000-\$5,000). Shelter house is in very bad condition, will get, new roof, all new gutters, windows repaired, new drywall ceiling, new facia boarding and paint job)