



BAND of BROTHERS

SUMMER SERIES 2023 – WEEK 6

Daniel: Sold Out to God

“Son of man, suppose the people of a country were to sin against me, and I lifted my fist to crush them, cutting off their food supply and sending a famine to destroy both people and animals. Even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were there, their righteousness would save no one but themselves, says the Sovereign LORD.

– Ezeiel 14:13-14 NLT

- **Worldliness and godliness don’t mix**

“A second and even great threat to the church’s independence is the one that sidles in the door on Sunday morning unnoticed because it wears a familiar face. It is the subtle, gradual acceptance of cultural values and practices. Accommodation always dulls the gospel’s sharp edges.

“What the church needs most desperately is holy fear. The passion to please God more than the culture and the community in which we spend these few, short years.” – Chuck Colson, *The Body*

- The fine art of compromise
compromise – to make a shameful or disreputable concession (as in principles)
 – *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

- The culture demands that we compromise...
 - ...our convictions ...the Word of God
 - ...our morals ...and the gospel itself
 - ...our standards

- In the world and part of it
 - We have been called to be agents of change

“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket.” – Matthew 5:13-15 NLT

- Many of us have lost our “saltiness” by spiritual dilution
- We’ve allowed our light to be dimmed by exposure to darkness

“The problem with which we have to deal is how to save the Christian community at this moment from the very danger of being thrown into the same pot as the world, that is to say, it must keep itself distinct from the rest of the world by virtue of its ‘saltiness.’ How does Christ’s community differ from the world?”

“We have come through a time of peril – and we are not finished with it yet – when we were told: ‘Everything will be quite different when you as a Church cease to have such an entirely different flavor – when you cease to practice preaching which is the opposite of what the world around you preaches. You really must suit your message to the world; you really must bring your creed into harmony with the present. Then you will again become influential and powerful.’

“Dear brethren, that means: The salt loses its savor.” – Martin Niemöller (1937)

- The danger of compromise

“I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one...” – John 17:14-15 ESV
- Why are we not to compromise?
 - *“...so that the world may **believe** that you sent Me.” – vs 21*
 - *“...so that the world may **know** that you sent Me.” – vs 23*
 - *“...so that the world may know that **you sent me and loved them.**” – vs 23*

“The weakness of the church is not that we’re too uninvolved in the politics or administration or our society, but that we too easily absorb the false values of an unbelieving world.” – John MacArthur, *The Vanishing Conscience*

- The pressure to cave in
 - The path to compromise always starts with a single step
 - It seems innocent enough
 - But it can lead to destruction
- The lost art of conviction
 - Paul used some strong words when encouraging believers

Stand firm	Be strong	Resist
Guard	Persevere	Pursue
Be on the alert	Don’t lose heart	Suffer
Press on	Grow up	Be Diligent

- Paul calls believers to a live distinctively different lives
I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.... – Ephesians 4:11 ESV

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us... – Ephesians 5:1-2 ESV

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you... – Ephesians 5:3 ESV

Walk as children of light... – Ephesians 5:8 ESV

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness... – Ephesians 5:11 ESV

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. – Ephesians 5:15-16 ESV

- **Daniel: A man of uncompromising convictions**

- The man

*“Daniel was one that kept his station in the greatest of revolutions, reconciling politics and religion, business and devotion, magnanimity with humility, authority with affability, conversations with retirement, heaven and the court, the favor of God and of the king.”
– Clarence Edward Macartney, *The Greatest Men of the Bible**

- He was a Hebrew who lived during the reigns of three kings of Judah
- He was a contemporary of the prophet Ezekiel
- He was of royal or aristocratic blood
- He was carried into exile at the age of 15

- The context

- An atmosphere of compromise
 - For years, the nation of Judah had compromised God’s commands and laws
 - The prophet Jeremiah had spoken against them for 22 years
 - They had abandoned God
 - Despite all He had done for them, they no longer sought Him
 - They defiled the land He had given them
 - They served other Gods besides Him
 - The priests did not seek Him
 - The rulers sinned against Him
 - Self-appointed prophets contradicted Him

“The heavens are shocked at such a thing and shrink back in horror and dismay,”

*says the LORD.
 “For my people have done two evil things:
 They have abandoned me—
 the fountain of living water.
 And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns
 that can hold no water at all!” – Jeremiah 2:12-13 NLT*

- The coming destruction
*“O people of Judah and Jerusalem,
 surrender your pride and power.
 Change your hearts before the LORD,
 or my anger will burn like an unquenchable fire
 because of all your sins.” – Jeremiah 4:4 NLT*

“But my people would not listen to me. They kept doing whatever they wanted, following the stubborn desires of their evil hearts. They went backward instead of forward. From the day your ancestors left Egypt until now, I have continued to send my servants, the prophets—day in and day out. But my people have not listened to me or even tried to hear. They have been stubborn and sinful—even worse than their ancestors.” – Jeremiah 7:24-26 NLT

- The chronology
 - 609 BC King Josiah is killed by the Egyptians in battle
 His son, Jehoiakim is made a vassal king
 - 605 BC Nebuchadnezzar defeats the Egyptians at Carchemish
 He invades Judah and besieges Jerusalem
 Daniel is taken captive to Babylon
 - 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar invades and destroys Jerusalem
 Jeremiah is taken captive

- **Daniel: A man of firm convictions**

- His refusal to compromise his **obedience** to God (Daniel 1)
 - By eating meat not slaughtered according to Mosaic Law
 - By drinking wine offered to pagan gods
 - Daniel is 15-years old
- His refusal to compromise his **devotion** to God (Daniel 6)
 - By worshiping something other than Yahweh
 - He could have kept his prayer life a secret
 - He could have given in to the king's demands
 - But he refused
 - Instead, he decided to trust in God

But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed

three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. – Daniel 6:10 NLT

- Daniel is now 66-years old
- **Daniel: A man after God's own heart – Daniel 9**
 - It is now 583 BC and Daniel is in his early 80s
 - Darius the Mede is king
 - Daniel has been in Babylon 67 years
 - What kind of man has Daniel become?
 - A man of the Word (vs 2)
 - He hasn't retired
 - He is reading from the scroll of Jeremiah the prophet
 - Jeremiah was the last prophet to call Judah to repentance before the fall
 - A man who prays and fasts (vs 3)
 - He is reminded of the reason for Jerusalem's devastation

"Because you have not listened to me, I will gather together all the armies of the north under King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon...I will bring them all against this land and its people and against the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy you."
– Jeremiah 25:8-9 NLT

- Daniel has been in exile almost 70 years
- He has seen the Jewish culture destroyed by the captivity
- He has heard the cries of the people
- He is encouraged to know that the devastation will soon end
"You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." – Jeremiah 29:10-11 NLT
- It was almost time for God to return His people to Jerusalem
- He is driven to his knees in prayer (vs 3)
"In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you," says the LORD. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land." – Jeremiah 29:12-14 NLT
- Daniel acknowledges God
He is "great and awesome" (vs 4)
He "keeps His covenant" (vs 4)

He “maintains His lovingkindness” (vs 4)
He “is righteous” (vs 7)
He “is compassionate and forgiving” (vs 9)
He “brought us out of the land of Egypt” (vs 15)

- He confesses
“...we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled...” – Daniel 9:5 ESV

“We have not listened to your servants the prophets...” – Daniel 9:6 ESV

“...and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God...” – Daniel 9:10 ESV

- He pleads for mercy
“...let your anger and your wrath turn away...” – Daniel 9:16 ESV

“...we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake...” – Daniel 9:18-19 ESV

- A man after God’s own heart
 - Daniel had a fear of God
 - He knew how much God hated sin
 - He knew their captivity was a result of sin
 - He knew God expected obedience
 - Daniel understood God’s love for him
 - He knew God was faithful
 - He knew God’s lovingkindness was perfect
 - He knew God was forgiving and would deliver and restore
 - Daniel was devoted to God
 - He turned to God for help
 - He put God’s will first
 - He wanted what God wanted

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Our culture can make standing up for God difficult. How does Daniel’s example of “godly” living teach us to not compromise our convictions? How do you plan to stand firm rather than fear?

Much of what Daniel accomplished, he did on his own. Why is it important to take advantage of the brotherhood of believers and how can this strengthen our endurance?

Close your time in prayer, asking God to make us a band of godly brothers so that we can impact the world for Christ.