



Simple Faith, Big Impact

Daniel 6:16-28

Speaker: Colin Robeson

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Good morning, y'all, how's it going?

Our scripture today comes from Daniel 6. So the king gave the order and brought Daniel and threw him into the lion's den. And the king said to Daniel, may your God, whom you continually serve, rescue you. A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the lion, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring, and with the ring of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him, and he could not sleep.

At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lion's den. When he came near, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?

And Daniel answered, may the king live forever. My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight, nor have I ever done any wrong before you, your majesty. The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and their children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples in every language of the earth, May you prosper greatly. I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom, people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and endures forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed. His dominion will never end. And he rescues and he

saves. He performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. And he has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.

And so Daniel has prospered in the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Holy God, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be worthy in your sight. You are our rock and our redeemer. This is the day that you have made. Help us to rejoice and be glad in it. And become more fully the people you made us to be. May the world look a little more like heaven because of how we live from today. It's in your name we pray, amen.

Well, for those of you who don't know me, my name is Coline Robeson and I am the Kids and Students Pastor here at BelPres. And what that means is I basically spend a lot of time with our kids and our students and the leaders who disciple them. And other staff members can fight me on this, but I think I have the best job on staff. Because my job is consistently about having fun, not about other stuff.

But last week, I had the opportunity to teach our elementary kids and I found it really funny in God's timing that somehow I ended up teaching about this very same passage last week. And so I was like, great, I can be efficient and prep. And I came in ready to talk about how scary the lions were and how powerful and gracious God is and how we can trust him even when we're in trouble and he will save us.

But as I started teaching, something unexpected happened. See, when we get together with our kids, we always begin with three simple rules. We say that we are safe, that we are kind, and that we have fun. And it's a really normal thing to do with kids in any space, whether school, sports, here at church or home, because those kind of structures help kids to give clarity so they know how to engage and be in a space.

And so as we had done that, then we turned to open our Bible story and we started reading Daniel 6, and it hit me. I was about to teach a Bible story where doing the right thing meant breaking the rules. And nothing I had planned was ready to address that tension. And so my first instinct was to clarify quickly, which is kind of a throwaway of like, well, you know, also it's not okay to break the rules whenever we don't want to. Like, you know, something, because we have a value with here that we try not to hand parents problems. And I didn't want people to go home, kids to go home. And I was picturing this one little girl saying, Pastor Collins said, I don't have to listen to you because we can break rules when we don't want to. And I was like, wait a minute, this is not what it will be.

And so as I started to explain, I realized something else, something deeper was going on. I realized that this story wasn't just a story about defiance for the sake of it, but it was about obedience to God, especially when the rules of this world tell us not to be. And so I pivoted. I asked our kids, what should we do when someone makes a rule that goes against what God says?

And without hesitation, I was so proud of them, our kids say, we follow God. And I'm like, okay, Sunday School Answer, I've trained you well, appreciate it. But like, let's come on. Like I press them, what if we get in trouble? Like, what if it costs something? What if we're thrown into a kind of lion's den? And they said, we still follow God because that's what's right. And we trust that God will help us.

And I kept pressing, I was trying to introduce doubt. I'm like, I'm gonna break you. You're gonna realize this. Trying to complicate it, but they would not budge. When the world's values clash with God's, they said, we follow God. I was so proud of them. It was so simple. It was so clear.

And then on the way home, something else surfaced for me. Sadness. I thought about the times of my own life where I felt that same tension and I didn't hold the line. Where I remembered moments where I chose my own comfort over courage. Where I rationalized going along with what was happening instead of standing firm. I told myself at the time and I was trying to then to be like, well, it's complicated. I mean, if they understood, right? Like, but deep down, I knew.

And I don't think I'm alone in that feeling. I think a lot of us start out like our kids. Certain that we're going to follow God no matter what. And then things get more complex. The pressure sets in. We try to fit in. We try to avoid conflict. We want to keep the peace. Whatever it is, it piles on. And slowly, surely, those compromises start to feel reasonable, normal, prudent, wise.

But that moment with our kids left me thinking, what if they're right? And what if I didn't just chalk it up to their inexperience in their youth? What if I actually chose to saw it as faith? What would it look like for all of us to live like Daniel? Not loudly or dramatically, but steady, courageously, unshaken by the cost.

I'm getting ahead of myself though, so let's go back to looking at the text that we read. So Daniel 6 shows us, I believe, what simple courage looks like. When the law of the land demanded that Daniel stop praying to God, he didn't protest or try to negotiate. He just simply doing what he had always done. Daniel wasn't loud, but he was resolute. His obedience to God, it stood in clear contrast to the demands of the empire. And he chose to obey God anyway.

And this wasn't this one time act of defiance. This wasn't some dramatic moral stand that was formed in the heat of the moment. It was the natural outflow of a life that had already been shaped by prayer, by trust, and by integrity. The text doesn't say that Daniel started praying because of the law. It says he kept praying just as he had done the day before. His courage wasn't reactive. It was rooted.

And that's what struck me when I was with our kids last week. Faced with the hypothetical choice between following God's commands or the king's, they didn't hesitate. They said, we followed God. I pushed. What if it leads to trouble? What if you get thrown into the lion's den? And they said, we trust God. It's what's right.

And I believe that kind of clarity, it doesn't come from knowing how the story ends, but it does come from knowing the one who holds it. See, Daniel didn't know that he would be rescued, but he stayed faithful. And that faith didn't just sustain him. It unsettled those in power. King Darius couldn't eat or sleep.

He was disturbed, not just by the injustice, but by Daniel's unwavering trust. I think this text teaches us that when faith is lived consistently, even simply, it gets noticed. And we see that same kind of faith in Rosa Parks.

Her simple no on a bus in Montgomery in 1955 became a turning point for the civil rights movement. But that moment, it didn't happen in isolation. Ms. Parks was deeply formed by years of faithful obedience. She was a devout Christian shaped by the black church's history and tradition of justice and courage. She served as the secretary of her local NAACP chapter. She trained in nonviolent resistance. She was grounded in prayer. Her no that day was the fruit of a long and faithful yes to God.

And like Daniel, she had no idea what would happen next. She wasn't promised safety. She had seen others punished for resisting injustice, beaten, arrested, some killed. And she didn't take her stand because she knew it would change the world. She took it because she knew it was right.

When others demanded something unjust, she didn't shout. She just simply didn't comply. And her faith, her simple faith could not be ignored because it disrupted the system. It stirred the consciousness of our nation. And it echoed far beyond that bus.

But like Daniel, Ms. Parks didn't set out to make history, she just lived faithfully and kept doing so. And in a moment of pressure, that faith became a public witness. The world may not always understand our obedience to God, but it cannot ignore it. Simple faith lived with conviction speaks louder than fear, and sometimes, sometimes, it changes the story.

If Ms. Parks reminds us that simple faith can disrupt unjust power, Daniel's actions show us why he was able to stand firm in the first place. See, when the king runs to the lions the next morning, he's anxious, he's exhausted, he's hoping for a miracle. He doesn't just find a man who survived this hell, this harrowing night. He finds a man who has already been shaped long before the lions ever showed up.

Daniel's faith doesn't emerge in a crisis. It was formed in the simple, in years of prayer, in daily obedience, in choosing integrity even when no one was watching. Daniel didn't have to summon boldness or find it somewhere. He simply kept doing what he'd always done. And it grew over time through humble rhythms, simple trust, and small acts of faithfulness. And all of those train us to choose God when it counts.

And I think that's also exactly what we see in Corrie Ten Boom. Most people know her for her incredible bravery. She hid Jews in her home during the Nazi occupation. She was

arrested with her family. She survived the concentration camp at Ravensbruck even when her sister didn't.

But what gets overlooked so often is the formation behind that courage. Corrie didn't set out to be heroic. She was a watchmaker in her father's shop. Her faith was shaped around a dinner table, through hospitality, through prayer, through scripture and service. And when the crisis came, she didn't suddenly become brave. She simply did with her life what God had already been preparing her to do.

And even after the war, when most people would have turned inward, Corrie kept living her faith. She forgave her captors. She opened her home to Holocaust survivors and former Nazi collaborators. Her faith wasn't just wartime courage. It was also post-war grace.

That's the invitation that this text gives us, to become the kind of people whose courage isn't reactive but rooted, not performative but persistent, not loud but unshakable. So how do we live? How do we become people who do this? I think first we start now. We don't wait. It's not a later problem. We cannot wait for a crisis to come to begin building our faith.

That means paying attention to the small spiritual habits that are forming us right now. And if you think you're not being formed by something, you are buying into a lie. Whatever we give ourselves to is shaping us. And I want to encourage you to give yourself to a life that God's calling you to.

Try setting a daily rhythm for prayer or beginning a simple act of service each week. It is important to stay faithful in the small things. Because I believe that big moments are built on small obedience. And if you've been tempted maybe to shrug off integrity because it feels insignificant, this is your invitation to choose to tell the truth even when it's hard. Or maybe to show up for somebody else without seeking or vying for credit for doing so.

Practicing any or all of these things builds a life that can bear the weight under pressure. Because like we see in Daniel, in Ms. Parks, in Corrie, courage isn't spontaneous, it's cultivated over time. We learn from each of them that to build a faith that will stand the test, we need to engage in habits that will build a strong foundation.

My advice to you is keep it simple, keep it sustainable. Figure out something that works for you. Commit to prayer. Stay rooted in scripture. Or invest in consistent community. It does not have to be flashy. It doesn't have to be what someone else is doing. It just needs to be something you can do and be faithful at it.

Because when the lion's den moments come, and they will come, the question won't be whether we can find the courage in the moment. It will be whether or not we've been practicing it all along.

But here's the good news. We don't have to set out to be these extraordinary people. I don't know about you, but I don't think I'm going to be something great. What we get to do is just choose to be faithfully formed people. Like Daniel, like Ms. Parks, like Corrie. At their core, they're simple and resolute and ready. And we tell their stories because of what God did through them.

In the final verses of Daniel 6, we see the ripple effect of simple, consistent, courageous obedience. Because Daniel doesn't organize a rebellion, he doesn't start out with the goal of changing the law, he simply refuses to follow it because it violates God's command. And this simple act of resistance, it doesn't just save him, it shakes the system.

The king who had sealed Daniel's sentence now issues a decree that honors Daniel's God. The story flips. An empire was changed from the inside out. And those kinds of transformations, they don't come from trying to grasp power. They come from long, steady, faithful, public obedience and faithfulness to God.

And I believe we've seen a story just like that here in Jubilee Reach, which was born here at BelPres. Some of you may have been a part of it from the beginning, but others of you may not know that Jubilee didn't begin as this big program or set out to be what it currently is in our community. It was just a vision for presence.

Years ago, Brent Christie, a BelPres member who was managing hotels at the time, was moved during a worship service that was featuring Eastside Academy. And so he chose to start serving there, volunteering. He was coaching and he started dreaming. What if there was a place to walk alongside students and families, especially in the Bellevue schools where hope feels just too thin?

And so that dream, it took hold, it caught fire. And Brent, along with others like Greg Stone and Gary Brooks, and other leaders from our church, Rich, they launched the ripple effect. And one of the goals from that was to build and find a community space that became Jubilee Reach.

And it began as a center for tutoring, for meals, for ESL classes and childcare. But then the Bellevue School District began to take notice. And so Jubilee was invited to run an after school program at Highland Middle School. And the results spoke for themselves. So the partnership grew.

And today Jubilee is embedded in almost every public school here in Bellevue. They're called site coaches. Trusted adults who mentor students, who lead teams, support families. They shape the culture of a school. And they don't preach sermons or carry signs. They bring the presence of Jesus. Peace, trust, and principles.

Many of them who do not share our faith will look you dead in the eye and say Jubilee is essential. And like Jubilee, or like Daniel, Jubilee didn't set out to fight the system. It entered it with faithful presence. And over time, that presence reshaped relationships. It

shifted environments. It built deep trust. And I believe that it had opened doors that churches alone couldn't have forced open if they wanted to.

Some of those names who helped build it may fade, but the fruit of their faithfulness keeps growing. What happens when we, like Daniel, choose obedience over comfort, when we live humbly, publicly, consistently, not to be noticed, but to be faithful?

God takes that kind of simple courage and he uses it to change the story. What once looked like a lion's den before becomes a testimony to God's faithfulness and his power. And that kind of faithfulness, believe it or not, it doesn't require a platform. You don't need a microphone or a title, and just like Daniel didn't preach, he persisted. And just like Jubilee Reach doesn't campaign, they simply show up.

So ask yourself, where has God already placed you in your workplace, your school, your neighborhood? What might simple, consistent faithfulness look like right there? Don't underestimate the power of just being presence.

Influence does not come from being loud, it comes from being trustworthy over time. Maybe there's a classroom you could commit to, a nonprofit you could serve with, a neighbor who just needs someone to show up and keep showing up. I believe God works through that kind of presence.

And let's be honest though, I'm not gonna act like it's easy. I'm not gonna act like it's gonna guarantee some outcome. But you remember Daniel's obedience led him to the lion's den before it led to any kind of transformation. Faithfulness, many times, most of the time, it costs us something.

So we have to ask ourselves, are we, am I, willing to be faithful when no one sees? When it's hard, even when I'm not sure it will change anything. And maybe our prayer this week as we reflect on that is simply this. Lord, help us to be faithful where you've placed us. Use my, your, our presence to change the story.

Because when the people of God live that way, faithfully, publicly, without compromise, God doesn't have to tear a system down. He transforms it from the inside out. And he uses people just like you and me to do it.

So where does that leave us? Well, the truth is, I believe Daniel's story points beyond Daniel. He's not just a model for courage, he's also a glimpse of Jesus. Because think about it, Daniel was falsely accused, sentenced by unjust powers, sealed in a tomb-like space, and vindicated by the living God.

Does that sound familiar? Jesus, too, stood before an empire and a religion that refused to bend to the ways that are opposed God. And where Daniel risked his life, what's different is that Jesus gave his. But he didn't do it to prove a point, he did it out of love. Love for the vulnerable, love for the sinner, love for the world.

And like Daniel, Jesus didn't grasp for power, he humbled himself. He humbled himself unto death, death on a cross, and God raised him up. And that invitation is there for us, too. To be formed like Daniel and ultimately like Jesus Christ. To live with courageous, consistent faith that holds firm even when it costs something.

A faith that doesn't need a platform just a pattern. A faith that shows up simply, lovingly, over time. The world may not always understand our obedience to God, but it cannot ignore it. Simple faith lived with conviction speaks louder than fear, and sometimes, maybe, hopefully, it changes the story.

My encouragement for you this week is to reflect in prayer, both by yourself and with others who know you well, and ask God, are there rules spoken or unspoken in your world that conflict with God's call to mercy and justice or truth? Are there places where obedience to Jesus might cost you something? Are you being formed now for a faith that will stand firm when it matters most?

And then, based on what you hear from God, from others, pick something, anything, pick something, and do it. Set a daily rhythm for prayer. Begin a simple act of courage each week, something. Because remember, it's important to practice our faith, that staying faithful in the small things is important, because big moments are built on small obedience.

Because the world does not need louder Christians. Okay, the Mariners guys got that covered. It needs deeper ones. People who live like Daniel, like Miss Parks, like Corey, simply saying, I belong to God. People whose presence, like Jubilee Reach, reshapes the space around them with love. People whose lives point beyond themselves to a God that still shuts the mouths of lions.

Daniel didn't start a movement. He just refused to stop being faithful. And in that small act of courage, formed in prayer, lived in obedience, reshaped an empire.

May we be those people, formed in faith, firm in obedience, courageous in the simple ways that speak loudly of our God. And may our lives, like Daniel's, and like Jesus's, lead others to say, surely your God lives.

Pray with me. God, help us to be your people. People who live consistently and courageously. Help us to choose to follow you in the small and in the simple, so that we're ready when the time comes to testify about you with our lives and with our love. And may the world be reshaped because people who believed in you showed up.

It's in your name we pray. Amen.

Discussion Questions:

Read this week's scripture(s) & answer the below questions with your friends, family, or All In small group.

Opening Question: Looking back to last week's sermon and scripture... How did you live differently or practice what we talked about in your life this week? What did you do and how did it go?

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following:

- What do we learn about God (e.g., traits, personality, what matters, priorities) in this passage?
- What do we learn about people, and ourselves in particular, this week?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

- What habits are forming your faith right now?
- When have you felt pressure to compromise your faith?
- How can quiet obedience become a public witness?
- Who is someone in your life shaped by simple, courageous faith?
- What's one small act of faithfulness you can take this week?

Closing Question and Application: Given what we've discussed together today, how might God want you to apply these learnings to your life or in the life of your community this next week? Who might you share this with?

Closing group prayer: Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.