

Small Group Guide



Key Takeaways

- Integrity is inseparable from identity. Daniel's exceptional character at work was a direct result of knowing who he was as a child of God. His behavior flowed from that identity, not from his circumstances.
- Persecution of the faithful is not a surprise. Those who bring light into dark places should expect pushback. This is not a sign of failure but of faithfulness.
- Prayer is not a last resort. Daniel's victory in the lion's den was the fruit of a lifetime of daily prayer. The real battle was won long before the crisis arrived.
- Culture shapes identity if God does not. Babylon was constantly working to assimilate Daniel. His daily habit of prayer was his anchor to the source of his true identity.
- Knowing God's faithfulness produces steadiness in crisis. Because Daniel had walked with God for decades, he did not crumble when the decree was signed. He simply kept doing what he had always done.

Discussion Questions

1. Think about a time when your circumstances changed significantly, whether a new job, a move, a shift in leadership, or a cultural moment. How did that change affect the way you lived out your faith? What stayed the same, and what shifted?
2. The sermon opens by noting that a new king and a new kingdom had arrived, but the same old issues remained. Where do you see that pattern playing out in your own life or in the world around you today?
3. Daniel's enemies could find no corruption in him. If the people around you at work, in your neighborhood, or in your family were looking for a reason to discredit your faith, what would they find first? What would they be unable to find?
4. The sermon makes the point that Daniel's integrity was not determined by where he lived, who was in power, or the character of his supervisors. What does it look like practically to live that way? What makes it difficult?
5. The sermon says, "We are offering ourselves up to the examination of the world." Does that idea feel more like an opportunity or a burden to you? Why?

6. The sermon raises the question: what made prayer something worth dying for? Before hearing the answer offered in the sermon, how would you have answered that question yourself? How did the sermon's answer shape or challenge your thinking?
7. The sermon describes Babylon as a kind of quicksand and says, "The only way to maintain his identity was to constantly stay close to the source of that identity." In your own life, what are the forces that most consistently pull you away from your God-given identity? How do you recognize when that drift is happening?
8. The sermon suggests that there is a spiritual battle specifically around prayer because prayer puts us in the presence of the source of our identity. Do you experience that resistance? What does it look like for you?
9. Daniel gave thanks to God even after the unjust decree was signed. He was not thanking God for the decree but for God's goodness and faithfulness. How do you practice gratitude toward God in the middle of unjust or painful circumstances? What makes that hard?
10. The sermon describes a cycle in Daniel's life: knowing his need, staying close to God, knowing who he was, walking by faith, coming to know God's faithfulness, not crumbling in crisis, and bringing God glory. Where do you see yourself in that cycle right now? Where do you feel most stuck?
11. Polycarp said, "86 years have I been his servant and he has done me no wrong." What would it take for you to be able to say something like that in a moment of crisis? What experiences of God's faithfulness have already begun to build that kind of confidence in you?
12. The sermon closes with this quote: "The miracle of the story is not that God shut the mouths of the lions. The miracle of the story is that God empowered a man so that not even the threat of lions could pry apart his praying hands." What does that reframing of the miracle change about how you read the story? What does it change about how you think about your own faith?