

Sermon Notes:
September 25, 2016
Guest Speaker - Gary Semenyna
Living Counter Culturally
Daniel 1:1-8

I. INTRODUCTION

Book of Daniel -
1-6 Daniel's life
7-12 Daniel's visions and prophetic words

3 difficulties in first 6 chapters. In each of these, Daniel and his friends won the victory. The first was the foundation for the other victories.

The Jews had been refusing to obey God. Babylonians took over and took the best of the youths back to Babylon for training in the king's court.

King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to force them to conform to the ways of Babylon. We face the same trial; satan wants us to conform to this world.

Romans 12:1-2 - "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

II. LIVING COUNTER CULTURALLY

1. A DIFFICULT TRIAL - Daniel 1:1-7

a) New home

Dan 1:1-2 - "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god."

2 Kings 24:14-16 - "He carried away all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained,

except the poorest people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officials, and the chief men of the land he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon all the men of valor, 7,000, and the craftsmen and the metal workers, 1,000, all of them strong and fit for war."

Is 39:7 was the prophecy. God was in control. They went into captivity because of their idolatry.

2 Kings 25:9-10 - "And he burned the house of the Lord and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem."

Oftentimes God will use a difficult trial in our life to reveal Himself as capable to deal with that trial.

b) New knowledge

Dan 1:3-4 - "Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans."

An attempt was made to assimilate them into the culture of the court for they were forced to learn both the language and the literature of the people among whom they were living. Nebuchadnezzar could teach them all those things but he would fail if he could not change their heart language.

Canada has three official languages - English, French and political correctness. Political correctness is a dangerous language that many people are buying into and it is indoctrinating our mind into the secular humanist way of thinking.

Homosexuality – “alternative lifestyle”

Abortion – “pro-choice”

Drug addiction – “chemically dependent”

Mention of God is removed from schools and political arenas.

As a church we are to be more concerned about being biblically correct than being politically correct.

c) New diets

Dan 1:5 - "The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king."

The king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies. Contrary to the dietary laws of the Jews.

d) New names

Dan 1:6-7 - "Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego."

All four had names that honoured the God of Israel. Changed to honor Babylon gods:

Daniel – “God is my judge”
Belteshazzar - Bel's prince - god of creation

Hananiah – “beloved by the Lord”
Shadrach - “sun God”

Mishael – “who is as God”
Meshach - “who is like Venus”

Azariah – “the Lord is my help”
Abednego – “servant of nego”

Satan wants us to identify ourselves in reference to the world.

2. A DARING DECISION – Daniel 1:8

Dan 1:8 - "But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself."

The Babylonians could change Daniel's home, textbooks, menu and name, but what they could not change was his heart. They did not compromise. They dared to believe God's word and trust Him for the victory.

It may have seemed like a little thing, but the only way to go on with God is by being faithful in little things.

The reason Daniel stood up is because he realized that his relationship with God touched every area of his life, even what he ate.

Rejecting the menu was like rejecting the king and could result in severe punishment. Jeremiah 39:6-7 - "The king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah at Riblah before his eyes, and the king of Babylon slaughtered all the nobles of Judah. He put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon."

Jeremiah 29:22 - "Because of them this curse shall be used by all the exiles from Judah in Babylon: "The Lord make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire"

Not a nice guy!

Refusing the food might have branded them as uncooperative and spoiled chances of advancement.

It was easy to think God had let them down by allowing them to be carried away to Babylon.

Defile - polluting, staining. Daniel was up-front about the spiritual basis for his request.

Why did Daniel and his friends reject this food?

- sacrificed to idols
- not kosher
- ?

III. CONCLUSION

Atheism is declining because there is no opposition to this thinking.

"We don't have the old repressive religion that stimulates atheism, and they don't preach hell-fire and Jonah in the whale anymore. They go in for this cheer-them-up religion. That's not the old-time religion. It may be that this new sort is not so bad but they don't let it interfere with their lives. They spent more time in the old days pleasing God. Now they try to please their fellow men." Charles Smith

We need more Daniels. And parents and grandparents involved in their lives, teaching and modelling.

Influence our culture instead of letting it influence us.

Church should not be a thermometer but a thermostat.

Principles of living counter culturally:

- Our children will do as we teach them. Our attitudes and actions speak volumes to our kids (and our actions speak louder).

Prov 22:6 - "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

Eph 6:4 - "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Deuteronomy 11:18-21 - "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when

you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth."

"The school will teach children how to read, but the environment of the home must teach them what to read. The school can teach them how to think, but the home must teach them what to believe." Charles A. Wells

- Where the Bible speaks, stand and stand firm. Daniel knew where to draw the line. Wise men from the east? Daniel staying true to his God? The Messiah would come. Dan 2:48 - "Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon."

Psalm 119:9-11 - "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."