

# STANDING STRONG

Sunday, July 22, 2018  
10:30 AM

## Daniel 1 New International Version (NIV)

### Daniel's Training in Babylon

**1** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

**3** Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— **4** young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. **5** The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

**6** Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **7** The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

**8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.** **9** Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, **10** but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

**11** Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, **12** "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. **13** Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." **14** So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

**15** At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. **16** So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

**17** To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

**18** At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. **19** The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. **20** In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

**21** And Daniel **remained there** until the first year of King Cyrus.

In c. 605 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took control of Judah and began the destruction of Jerusalem and the southern Kingdom as had been prophesied. At this time he carried away some of the Jews including those who had royal ties.

Daniel was among those taken... But what stands out about Daniel is the strength of his faith in spite of his circumstances, in spite of hardship, in spite of worldly pressure, in spite of compromised religion. Within the court of a pagan king his faith flourished. It stood strong.

In fact, that is why Chapter 1 begins and ends the way it does. Throughout his life (from the age of 15 well past 80) he stood strong

I want to begin a sermon series on the book of Daniel, but I am not going to focus so much on the prophecy even though there is plenty of that in the book of Daniel, and direct tie ins to the book of revelation and the last days. What I want to focus on is this thought... **STANDING STRONG**

We have all seen the pictures of houses falling off the sides of cliffs because the foundations upon which they stood were eroded out from underneath them. It is no different with our faith. There are forces at work eroding the foundations upon which we would stand.

In order to stand strong, we must first deal with those things that undermine the foundations of our footings. Until we recognize and deal with these issues we will never stand strong

## **CHAPTER 1 - ERODING FOUNDATIONS**

### **1. Internal Desires**

#### **Romans 8:5**

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

**James 1:14**

but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.

Do you think that Daniel didn't have to fight internal desires that were contrary to what God wanted for him

**Psalm 37:4**

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

**Galatians 5:16-25**

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

## 2. The Flow of Cultural Pressure

**Exodus 23:2**

“Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd,

**Romans 12:2**

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will.

There is a great deal of Biblical illiteracy which leads to us giving in to the pressures that f cultural flow

**Ezekiel 44:23**

They are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.

### 3. Carnal Christianity

It amazes me how much the world has invaded the church. Whether we are talking about issues of modesty or sexuality, or marriage, or ho homosexuality, or just plain worldliness in its various forms. And YES some of these things are more trivial issues that may not send us to hell but certainly do impact the strength of the foundati9ns upon which we stand.

#### **1 John 2:15-17**

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

#### **James 4:4**

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

#### **2 Timothy 4:10**

for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

#### **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**

**14** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

**15** What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? **16** What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” **17** Therefore, “Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.” **18** And, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

### 4. Fear of Failure

What if this doesn't work... What happens if we fail... These are real questions that we must deal with and which if left unchecked will undermine our ability to stand strong

### **Isaiah 41:10**

**10** So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

## 5. Cost Compromises

### **Luke 14:25-33**

The Cost of Being a Disciple

**25** Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: **26** “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. **27** And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

**28** “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? **29** For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, **30** saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’

**31** “Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? **32** If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. **33** In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

### **Hebrews 11:24-26**

**24** By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. **25** He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. **26** He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

*Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjacks' wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. Grace is represented as the Church's inexhaustible treasury, from which she showers blessings with generous hands, without asking questions or fixing limits. Grace without price; grace without cost! The essence of grace, we suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance; and, because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite. What would grace be if it were not cheap?...*

*Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.*

*Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.*

*Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock.*

*Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: "ye were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God."*

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

**So what do I do?**

I **ask** the Holy Spirit to transform me every day and give me the strength to control my internal desires and conform them to the will of my Heavenly Father.

I recognize that there is a constant flow of cultural pressure that will take me in the wrong direction if I don't make conscious decisions to **resist** it.

I weed out the **carnality** in my own life and family and support my church when it takes a stand for biblical righteousness and Godliness.

I **refuse** to give in to the fear of failure and believe that God will honor my stance for Him.

I willfully agree to **pay** the price, take up my cross and follow Jesus no matter the cost