



SUNDAY SERMON

RECAP

30 August 2026

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Sermon Notes

Sermon Title: Be Steadfast

Pastor: Bruce Taylor

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV) and key Scriptures from Daniel.

Introduction

1 Cor 15:58 (ESV)

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

Can you imagine if every Christian around the world, endeavoured to live out this one verse. Be steadfast. Immovable. Always abounding in the work of the Lord. We will turn the world upside down, just like the apostles did in the early church.

So many believers have lived faithful and steadfast lives. They have stepped into glory ... but for they are also in that great cloud of witnesses urging us to keep living a life of faith, hope, and love.

Now, there is someone in the Bible, who was steadfast and immovable and who abounded in the work of the Lord ... someone who offers us a sterling example. And that person is Daniel.

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was God's chosen people. He loved them and cared for them. God's heart was, "I will be your God, and you will be my people, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed because of you".

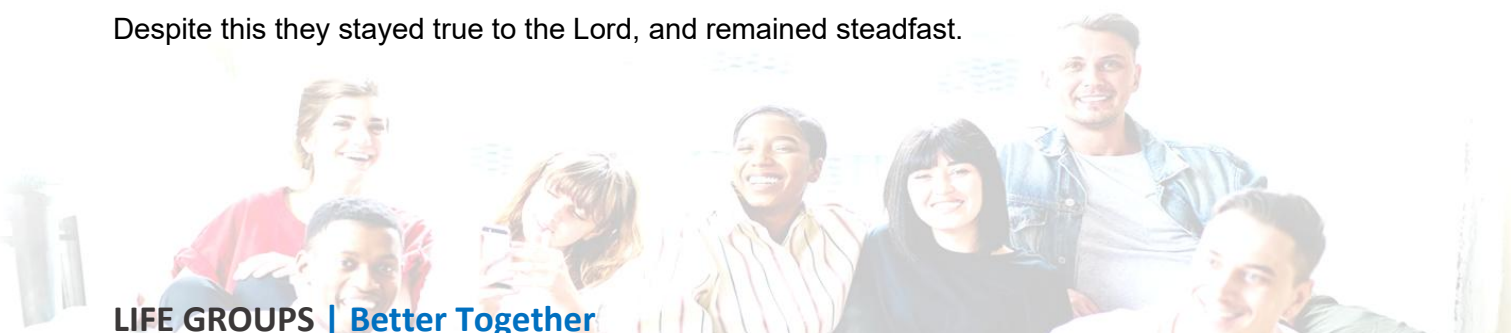
But Israel wasn't faithful to the Lord. They strayed, they rebelled, they worshipped other gods. So, God allowed them to be taken captive by the Babylonians. And they were carried off as exiles.

Among the exiles were Daniel, and his 3 friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (more commonly known by their Babylonian names of Shadrack, Meshack, & Abednego).

Most Bible scholars agree that these 4 young men were in their teens, somewhere between the ages of 14-19. Yet they were carried off to a foreign land, with foreign customs.

Nebuchadnezzar, a wicked and ungodly King, had ordered for them to be trained up and assimilated into the Babylonian culture, so that they could serve in his government.

Despite this they stayed true to the Lord, and remained steadfast.



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1. The immense value of spiritual depth.

Daniel 1:8 (NIV)

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 in this way.

The chief official was worried at first, but agreed to a ten-day experiment where Daniel and his 3 friends only ate vegetables and drank water. And by the end of the ten days, the Bible tells us that they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the other young men who ate the royal food.

In Jewish culture at the time, a boy was generally expected to have studied (and memorised) the entire Torah—the first five books of the Bible—by the age of 10. They might have been young, but Daniel and his friends knew the living God. The Almighty God. The Creator of heaven and earth. They knew the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of Joseph, of Moses and the Exodus out of Egypt. They would have read the Psalms of David.

They loved God. They knew that God is a HOLY GOD!

If God had said certain food was unclean, they would not touch it. If God said don't bow down to idols, they were not going to bow down to an idol.

They may have been young, but they already had spiritual depth.

When we have spiritual depth we have courage to say No!

By saying no to the king's food, Daniel and his friends set themselves up to say no to the king's entertainment, which would have included wine and debauchery. In the book of Daniel, when the king was celebrating, Daniel and his friends weren't there. When the king needed to consult with Daniel he always needed to call for him.

If Daniel had compromised at the beginning, he could quite likely have found himself in unsavoury situations.

Now when most of us hear Proverbs 31, we think of the wife of noble virtue. But that is only the second part of the Proverb. The first part is about a man of noble character.

Proverbs 31:1-5 (NIV)

The sayings of King Lemuel – an inspired utterance his mother taught him.

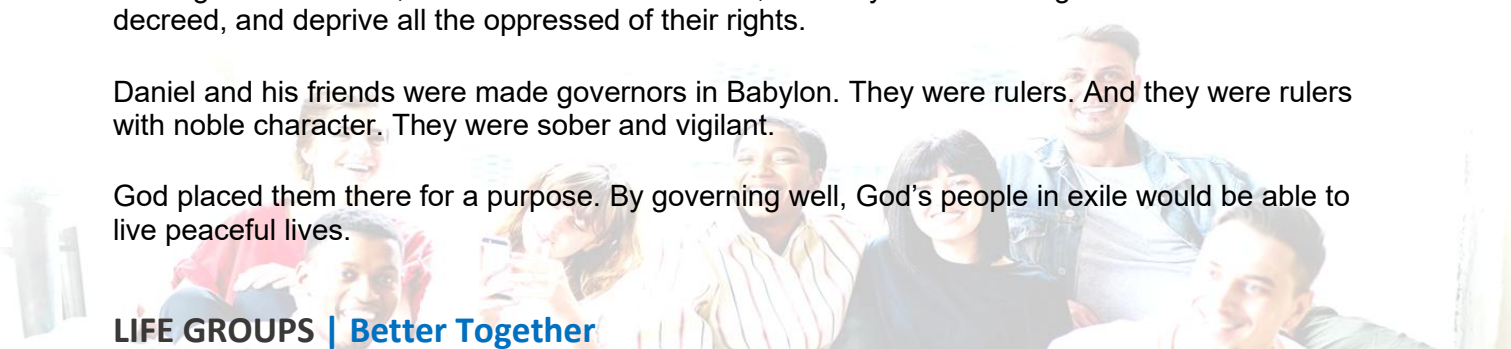
Listen, my son! Listen, son of my womb! Listen, my son, the answer to my prayers! Do not spend your strength on women, your vigour on those who ruin kings. It is not for kings, Lemuel – it is not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed, and deprive all the oppressed of their rights.

Daniel and his friends were made governors in Babylon. They were rulers. And they were rulers with noble character. They were sober and vigilant.

God placed them there for a purpose. By governing well, God's people in exile would be able to live peaceful lives.

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Jeremiah 29:4-7 (NIV)

4 This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. 7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.'

Vs 11 ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a hope and a future.

Daniel and his friends were students of God's Word. They knew God's heart for the exiles. And because of this they governed faithfully year after year after year.

Can you remember Nehemiah. He was one of the exiles that returned to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He was born in Babylon. 65yrs after Daniel died. Praise the Lord that Daniel and his friends had governed in a way that the exiles were esteemed. Nehemiah was the cup bearer to the king.

What an encouragement to people who work in Government roles or in the Public sector. An encouragement to be students of God's Word, and to have spiritual depth so that you can be steadfast in your work. Your work is important for the peace and prosperity of God's people in our nation. You never know who is going to be building on your legacy one day.

And to all the rest of us, our role is to pray for them.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (NIV)

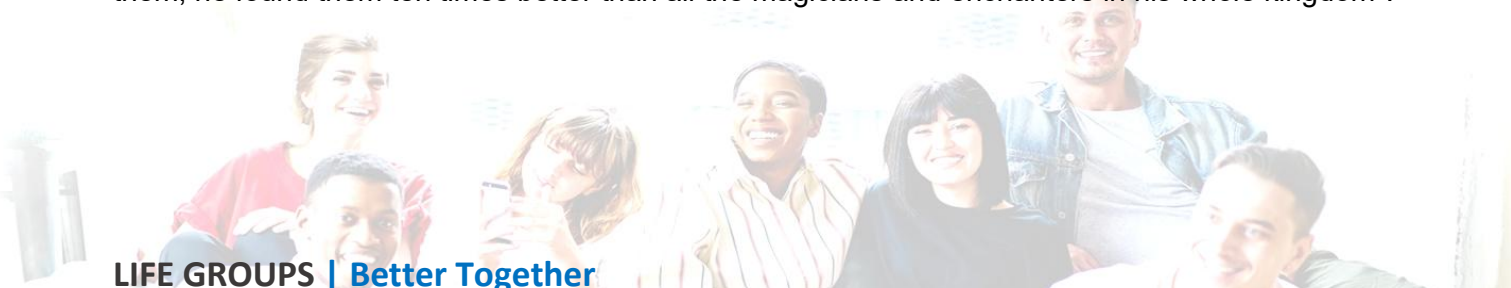
I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

Daniel, Shadrack, Meshak and Abednego would have started their studies of the Torah at the age of 5. Within 5 years they were well schooled in the Word of God. We can enjoy spiritual depth and maturity within a few years of diligently reading and loving God's Word. Read. Make notes. Highlight. Underline. Be expectant, "I wonder what the Lord is going to reveal to me today."

Parents, we can take a lesson from Jewish culture. Let's help our children to read and study the Word of God, to get to know God, and to marvel at the stories of God moving on behalf of His people.

Daniel 1:17 (NIV) "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."

Daniel 1:20 (NIV) "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".



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2. The wonderful support of spiritual friends.

Have you ever thought how wonderful it must have been for Daniel and his 3 friends to have had each other. Let me remind you, that they were not exiles in Babylon for a few days, or a few weeks, or a few years. They spent the rest of their lives in Babylon. What a comfort it must have been for them to have each other. To have safe friends, friends that loved God and shared the same values.

They stood together in saying no to the kings food. They governed together.

At one point Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. He called his diviners in and asked them to tell him his dream and to interpret it. They couldn't do it, and told him that it was impossible. They wanted him to at least tell them what the dream was. So Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the wise men in the land to be executed. When the soldiers came to fetch Daniel and his 3 friends, Daniel went to see the king and asked for time to interpret the dream for him. Then he told his friends and asked them to pray for mercy.

See Daniel 2:17-19.

Another example of the power of friendship is when Shadrach, Meshak and Abednego are ordered to bow down to a huge idol of gold, or be thrown into a blazing furnace. They stood together and refused! The Bible tells us that king Nebuchadnezzar was furious, and the 3 friends were brought before him. Listen to their courage.

Daniel 3:16-18 (NIV)

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.'

They are thrown into the furnace, but the next moment Nebuchadnezzar looks up and sees 4 men walking around in the fire, and the 4th man looked like the son of the gods. He called them out. They were unharmed, not even a hair on their heads was singed, and they didn't even smell of smoke.

Who are your wingmen? Who would you go to war with? If you found yourself needing prayer or godly advice, who would you call?

A week ago I visited a men's life Group in our church. They meet early on a Friday morning. These

Proverbs 27:17 (NKJV) says:

As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

We need friends that will speak God's Word into our lives. Friends that know us well enough, and God well enough, to help us walk in God's paths and avoid the enemy's plans. Friends that are more interested in our character than our comfort.



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3. The importance of spiritual practices that help us depend on God.

In Daniel 6 we read the story about Daniel and the lion's den. Now interestingly, Bible scholars estimate that Daniel was in his early 80s when this took place. I know that some children's Bibles depict him as a young man in the lion's den, but the timeline points to an elderly prophet.

Daniel had served under king Nebuchadnezzar, then under his son, king Belshazzar. And this incident took place after that, when Darius the Mede had conquered Babylon. Daniel had been governing for 60+ years. That is a long time. And he is as steadfast as ever!

What was the key? The key was his spiritual practices that led to him depending on God.

Daniel had distinguished himself because he had an excellent spirit, and he was neither corrupt nor negligent. Because of this king Darius had planned to set him over the whole kingdom. The other governors were jealous and concocted a plan to trap Daniel. They convinced king Darius to sign an edict forbidding anyone to pray to any god or man, except the king, for 30 days.

But what does Daniel do?

Daniel 6:10-11 (NKJV)

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

We know what happens after this. Daniel is thrown into the lion's den. The Lord sends his angel to shut the mouths of the lions. And King Darius gains a revelation of the living God.

Three times a day, Daniel would get down on his knees and pray. This was his custom since early days. This is what Daniel had done since he was a teenager. Daniel was completely dependent on God.

There is so much value in having regular quiet times. But having a quiet time is not an end in itself. We shouldn't have a quiet time for the sake of having a quiet time, as something to tick off a religious to-do list. No, the end goal of a quiet time is a living relationship with God, and dependence on God. This is the motive for building a custom of Bible reading and prayer into our lives.

We don't know what the future is going to hold.

We don't know what we as believers are going to face in the years ahead.

We don't know what the Lord is going to ask you or me to do for His Kingdom.

But we do know that we are going to need God to help us.

And consistent spiritual practices will help us to live steadfast lives.



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