



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-04-2015 @ 0900

“How Deeply Do You Really Trust God?”

Daniel 6:21-24

### Trust and Obey!

When we walk with the Lord in the Light of His Word, what a Glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good Will, He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey!  
Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus...but to trust and obey!

### Daniel 6:21-24

“Daniel answered, “May Your Majesty live forever! God sent his angel to shut the mouths of the lions so that they would not hurt me. He did this because he knew that I was innocent, and because I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.” The king was overjoyed, and gave orders for Daniel to be pulled up out of the pit. So they pulled him up, and saw that he had not been hurt at all, **for he trusted God!** Then the king gave orders to arrest all those who had accused Daniel, and he had them thrown, together with their wives and children, into the pit filled with lions. Before they even reached the bottom of the pit, the lions pounced on them and broke all their bones!”

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Can you remember a “time of testing” in which crisis and/or tragedy struck? Did you allow the “unexpected events” and “fearful foes” of the day to shake your faith and trust in God?
- If you were honest with yourself, would you have to admit that your “trust in God” is a bit on the *conditional* side? Do you tend to whine, moan, and cry when “things don’t go your way”?
- Do you know “believers” like Daniel, whose trust is “prayer-primed”, “Grace-powered”, and “life-tested”? How do you think they developed such “God-centered” certitude?

Trust is tricky! Trust well, and you can build lifetime bonds with people you value, make a worthy “mark” on your world, and leave a legacy of which you can be justly proud. Trust unwisely, and you’re asking unscrupulous people to “take you for a ride”, afflict you with desperate poverty, and leave nothing but broken promises and a sad reputation in your wake. In the course of any given day, we use trust in people a thousand ways, driving on our roads, shopping in our stores, and even arranging special events or simple “get-togethers”. Trust is part of the air we breathe, and we often take the “unseen” for granted. We have plenty of experience to back up our expectations of our cars, planes, boats, elevators, etc. We can probably list several people we have come to trust...with good reason, because they’ve “been there” for us at key moments in life. But *trusting God* is different, at least to most of us. What do we do in the midst of a time it appears “Heaven has gone silent”? How firmly can most of us “maintain faith” in God when we’ve prayed and found no answer in sight? In such a moment, does God find your “trust meter” *pegged*, or “zeroed out”? (Are you “holding steady” in a confident “certitude” that “God’s got this”, or is your “trust factor” in a dizzying “free fall” since you can’t see anything happening?) Notice how Daniel survived the den of lions: “...he had not been hurt at all, **for he trusted God.**” Daniel was a “man of prayer”; (in fact, this is what got him into trouble in the first place!) So even when he was brought up on charges, found guilty, and thrown into a lion’s den, Daniel just “fell back” on his *faith* and *trust in God* for deliverance. God, grant us the Grace of Unconditional Trust! We may not face a “pit of lions”, but our world holds challenges of its own. Help us to see Your Divine Design with humble hearts and open minds. When You choose to deliver us “through” our crises, (instead of “from” them,) keep us “calm and steadfast in trust”. When the world would test our resolve, be our Refuge and Deliverance! Make us faithful in prayer, earnest in service, and ever ready to face sacrifice, “come what may”! When we trust completely, You deliver fully!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-05-2015 @ 0900

"The Value of a Good Testimony"

Daniel 6:25-28

### Trust and Obey!

When we walk with the Lord in the Light of His Word, what a Glory He sheds on our way!  
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Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus...but to trust and obey!

### Daniel 6:25-28

"Then King Darius wrote to the people of all nations, races, and languages on earth: "Greetings! I command that throughout my empire everyone should fear and respect Daniel's god. He is a living God, and he will rule forever, His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his power will never come to an end. He saves and rescues; he performs wonders and miracles in heaven and on earth. He saved Daniel from being killed by the lions." **Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.**"

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Can you remember "coming out the other side" of a difficult "time of testing", when you stayed faithful and maintained trust, to find suddenly that "the right doors opened" before you?
- Have you ever found yourself amazed at the blessings that "showered" upon some "persons of faith" to sustain them in life's "ups and downs" almost without their trying?
- How could you "testify" today to the Grace, Mercy, and Favor of the Lord? In what areas of your life do you still see need to "trust and obey" the Lord?

Testimony can be a "win-win-win" process! As those who "testify" glorify God, He "wins" renewed hearts and souls to the "cause" of His Kingdom. The "testifiers" win by deepening their own faith as they share the hope in "favours received". The "hearers" win as they listen with open minds and hungry hearts, and decide to take up the challenge(s) of discipleship. Still, this topic of "testimony" is among the most difficult elements of our "walk of faith". As blessings manifest, we must make them known to glorify God, for He is worthy of praise and thanks. Yet, we must be careful in the telling, lest we unconsciously take on a "spirit of entitlement" or "elitism", in which others see us as "special cases" and "favored friends" in fellowships that hold no place for "sinners", "fools", and "lost souls" like them. Testimony must include invitation and inspiration. There is a vital need to communicate to our "hearers" that they, too, can be among "the favored"...if they will "take a chance" on God who loves *them* also. Good testimony requires prayerful preparation with a humble, grateful spirit. To be a living testimony requires a complete and total commitment to our God. It requires a complete surrender of selfish ego, merely human hopes and secular dreams, any worldly goals and vain ambitions, so the Lord is free to "shape character" and "form mind" to "align with the Divine Design". Life no longer "revolves around me", but centers upon God. Notice how Daniel rises to "the top of the realm" in four different kingdoms, all with no "strain" or "agenda" of his own. God directs each and every "move". Daniel even tries to decline positions, since the information he is sharing comes from God. Daniel continually gives all of the glory, honor, and praise to God, taking for himself no credit whatsoever. Then it is God who elevates Daniel to every position he receives. This enables Daniel to become a living testimony to the awesome Grace and Power of "The Living God". God, grant us the Grace of "Living Testimony"! Continue to assure us of Your Love and Fidelity, so that any "position" or "award" we receive reflects Your Glory, celebrates Your Grace, and reveals Your Favor. Let our "promotions" spur us to do "better work" for You, so others come to know You truly, love You fervently, and serve You eagerly! As You continually go "all-out" for us, make us readily go "all-in" for You!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-06-2015 @ 0900

**“When the Future Seems Shaky, Seek God!”**

Daniel 7:15-18, 28

### Trust and Obey!

When we walk with the Lord in the Light of His Word, what a Glory He sheds on our way!  
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And with all who will trust and obey!  
Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus...but to trust and obey!

### Daniel 7:15-18, 28

“The visions I saw alarmed me, and I was deeply disturbed. I went up to one of those standing there, and asked him to explain it all. So he told me the meaning. He said, ‘These four huge beasts are four empires which will arise on earth. And the people of the Supreme God will receive royal power and keep it forever and ever. ...The power and greatness of all the kingdoms of earth will be given to the people of the Supreme God. Their royal power will never end, and all rulers on earth will serve and obey them.’ This is the end of the account, I was so frightened that I turned pale, and I kept everything to myself.”

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever found yourself “falling into a funk” when you note the course of “world events” as presented in most newscasts? Do you wonder where it all will “end”?
- Does the “way of the world” appear to you to be getting so “out of control” and “spiritually bankrupt” that you fear for your children, and agonize over what they may have to face?
- Do you know “people of vision” who face the same future with calm assurance, good humor, and a “can-do” attitude? From what source do you think they draw strength and wisdom?

News travels fast...especially today! And most of those reports dwell on tragedy. If we are not careful, one sure fire way to start off any given day on the wrong foot is to turn on the world news. According to most reporters, there is no such thing as “good news”. In fact, they seem to “work overtime”, explaining in painful detail the hopeless state of affairs we are enduring. Daniel’s dream sets a pretty “desperate stage” at first glance. We see nations rise up against each other, kingdoms passing away, and people suffering a series of crushing losses. We see cruel rulers gripped by an insatiable greed, fueling ruthless desire for more and more power in order to achieve absolute domination. (Does that sound familiar?) But, as we look more closely, there is a promise tucked into the dream which fits very neatly with what we have already been seeing in Daniel. The people of the Supreme God are going to win. God’s people are going to receive everything the rest of the world has been fighting for: “royal power”! The royal power of the secular world is “tenuous treasure” at best, often very quickly gained...and even more quickly lost, especially when compromised or taken by another. God’s Realm is a very different sort of “kingdom”. Its “citizens” are beloved children of an “Eternal King”. The royal power of the people of God will never end. They will be the “last ones standing” when the dust clears. Also, like God’s people in Daniel, there are times when God’s people today have to endure some pretty difficult moments, but they know God always wins in the end, and He shares His victories with His faithful. The future may often look “shaky”, if not downright gloomy, but God’s people know how to take the “long view”. So, even when God’s people appear to be stuck on the losing side, victimized by foes whose monstrous ambition and ruthless pride terrify the weak-minded and faint-hearted, they know the crucial battle has already been won. God, grant us the Grace of Enduring Confidence. As Your people, O God, we are to “stand fast” on Your Promises, keep believing in You as our “Wisdom” and “Strength”, realizing You have gone “all-out” for us. Make us willing to go “all-in” for You, confident of Your Ultimate Victory. In fullness of time, You always win.



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-07-2015 @ 0900

**"When Wind and Waves Assault Us from All Sides"**

Daniel 7:2-4

### Trust and Obey!

When we walk with the Lord in the Light of His Word, what a Glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good Will, He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey!  
Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus...but to trust and obey!

### Daniel 7:2-4

"Winds were blowing from all directions, and lashing the surface of the ocean. Four huge beasts came up out of the ocean, each one different from the others. The first one looked like a lion, but had wings like an eagle. While I was watching, the wings were torn off. The beast was lifted up and made to stand up straight. And then a human mind was given to it."

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever had "one of those days", when you found yourself thinking, "If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all"? How did you "weather the storm"?
- Can you remember a "time of testing" in which you were sure the "hostile forces of life" were coming at you from all sides, at every possible angle, and all at the same time?
- How were you and God relating during those times? Were you falling back on reserves of faith, or was "fear driving the train" of your thinking and feeling?

Life's disasters give little warning! First, the alarm didn't go off for some reason, and now you are running late. Then, of course, your shower water's cold, or you're out of shaving cream, or shampoo. As you're toweling off, you remember you've forgotten to pick up your cleaning, and have nothing new or clean to wear. You're hurriedly tying your shoes, and break a lace. Finally, when you do make it outside, one of your tires is flat, or you just missed the bus, or they picked today to do road construction, or because of your hurry, you get pulled over and given a ticket for speeding, and now you are *very* late, for the biggest meeting all month, and you are going to "catch it" from the boss. Really!?! (And this is without the various world crises, which only deepen our sense of being hit from all sides. Is God truly in control? Because you're in a moment that seems totally "out of control"!)

In today's passage, Daniel illustrates God's "take" on situations in which the entire world can appear out of control. Through his dreams, he receives divine insight into the apparent chaos of the present world. However desperate things appear, God is still "in the driver's seat". No matter how "wild" and "beastly" the secular powers manifest themselves, God is still the One "positioning all the pieces" to bring about His grand Plan. In this particular storm of events, "Winds were blowing from all directions and lashing the surface of the ocean." Lashing winds coming from one direction can do some really terrifying damage; now imagine lashing winds coming from all directions at the same time. The most experienced sailors would not know which course to steer, or which direction to orient their ship. Now imagine in the midst of this fearful time "Four huge beasts came up out of the ocean, each one different from the others." Life was already fearful and unsure, a completely chaotic, terrifying time, and just when you thought, "It couldn't get any worse!"...it *does*! (Can you remember such a time?)

God, grant us the Grace of "Chaotic Confidence"! In life's crises, when we are not quite sure how You'll do it, keep us secure and "faith-full"! This is what Your servant, Daniel, reminds us in a very unique way. No matter how fierce the storms of life, even if "hostile winds" blow at us from every side, and all possible angles, keep us certain You are still in control, and confident of Your inevitable Victory! You bring Your Faithful through "life storms", unscathed in spirit, and confirmed in grace!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-08-2015 @ 0900

**“When Hostile Events Seem Unstoppable”**

Daniel 8:1-4, 13-14

### Trust and Obey!

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### Daniel 8:1-4, 13-14

In the third year that Belshazzar was king, I saw a second vision. In the vision, I suddenly found myself in the walled city of Susa, in the province of Elam. I was standing by the Ulai River, and there beside the river, I saw a ram that had two long horns, one of which was longer and newer than the other. I watched the ram butting with his horns to the west, the north, and the south. No animal could stop him, or escape his power. He did as he pleased, and grew arrogant. ...Then I heard one angel ask another, ...“How long will the army of Heaven and the Temple be trampled on?” I heard the other angel answer, “It will continue for 2,300 mornings and evenings, during which sacrifices will not be offered. Then the Temple will be restored!”

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever experienced a “season of disaster”, in which relentless and brutal opposition undid all your effort and frustrated your plans, leaving you feeling powerless...even hopeless?
- Have you ever witnessed events in which worldly organizations, movements, or even “armies” appeared for a time to be “undoing the Divine Design” and completely unstoppable?
- During such “times of challenge”, did you ever notice “believers” and “disciples” who “stayed on task”, continuing a testimony to the Presence and Power of God Almighty?

God never promised us “Easy Street”! To those who accept the “Covenant Life” the Lord offers, this world holds many painful puzzles and mysterious messes. In the face of such tests and trials, it's so understandable to ask, “What's the use?” “What difference does it make?” “Why should I even try?” “Would I make any difference anyway?” (How many times have you heard such comments, or even made similar ones yourself?) There are times when the dismal events of the wider world, or even the tragedies and losses of our own lives, can “put us in a pickle”; our situation looks desperate, if not downright impossible. Wars around the world, natural disasters, widespread poverty and disease, some “extreme” social movements, whether “radical” or “authoritarian”, factions and cliques that form where we work or live...all can awaken in us a sense of fatalism, that they are irrational, dangerous, and unstoppable. Living through these times, and facing these terrifying forces with resources that seem pitifully “weak”, “misguided”, and “foolish” can leave “believers” with a sense that “nothing we do matters”, (or at least, there is nothing we can do that would ever make any difference in the face of all that need and/or conflict). But notice the Promise God's angels give Daniel: “I heard the other angel answer, ‘It will continue for 2,300 mornings and evenings, during which sacrifices will not be offered. Then the Temple will be restored!’” God is still “large and in charge”! In no way is the “Lord of Lords” out of touch, or off the throne. God, grant us the Grace of Enduring Confidence! Keep our inner vision centered on You when “oppositional events” unfold before us. When it would be so easy to lose sight of Your Presence, refocus our attention. When “Anti-Heavenly Events” appear larger than life, and therefore completely beyond our control, remind us they are still within Yours! Through Your servant, Daniel, prepare us and teach us to face all the most difficult times of our lives. Show us we can be “people of enduring hope”, for You, O God, are always in complete control!