

Family Service

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Date: 18 August 2013

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[0 : 0 0] Right, well thank you very much. Thank you to all the children for all that you've been doing this morning. And before I forget, I was going to do this at the end, but I always forget things. So now that I'm remembering, I better just do it now. I want on behalf of everybody here to give a very big thank you to everybody who helped at the Holiday Club. Lots of people, lots of them are up here at the front that you've seen, others you haven't seen, but they've been busy working all week. And so I want to just say a very big thank you to you for all your hard work this week. Well, what about Daniel? There, that's good.

What about Daniel? What a great guy. What an amazing guy. All the exciting things that happened in his life. He had a very exciting life. It's a very dangerous life. Lots of times his life was in danger. And that's pretty scary, but it's also quite exciting, although I'd rather not have that kind of excitement. But he had lots of times when his life was in danger, when he was captured in Jerusalem and taken to Babylon so far away and his life was in danger. And then when he refused to eat the king's food, his life was in danger. And then when the king asked him to interpret the dream, or else. And you know what the or else is all about, isn't it? If he didn't get it right, he was going to die. And his friends and all the wise men. So it's very dangerous. And then when he disobeyed the law about not praying to any god other than to the king, and he said, no, I'm going to carry on praying to God. Well, that was dangerous. And it was so dangerous, he got sent to the lion's den.

So it was a very exciting life, but a very dangerous life. And what you've discovered and what you've been learning and you've been telling us a little bit about this morning is how on all of these occasions, even when his life was in danger, God rescued him. He was rescued by God even when he was in real great danger. Well, what a guy Daniel was. I think of Daniel as a hero. I think what a hero Daniel was. Trusting and obeying God even when it was very difficult and very dangerous. Well, that's what I think. I think Daniel's a real hero. But I wonder what Daniel thought about himself. Do you think Daniel thought that he was a great hero? What do you think? No, he didn't think that, did he? Not to be proud. That's right. It's not good to be proud.

I don't think Daniel was strutting about the palace in Babylon saying, what a brave guy I am. What a wise man I am. I can interpret all these dreams. And what a powerful man I am. Do you think Daniel would have been strutting about the palace in Babylon doing that? No, he wouldn't have done that. He didn't do that at all. That's not what Daniel was like. And you know, that's good to know because sometimes we can be a little bit proud. I'll tell you something that I did yesterday.

I went to Pitaudri, not quite the lion's den, but I went to Pitaudri to see Aberdeen play. And the result didn't quite work out as hoped for, perhaps as expected, but not as hoped for. But that made me think about footballers. I don't know if some of you like football. And some of you see what footballers sometimes do when they score a goal. And I'll copy what they do. They score a goal and they run up to the crowd and they go like this. Have you seen them? That seems a bit odd. If you don't know what I'm talking about, you think, that's strange. But what are they doing? Does that make me know what they're doing when they go like that? What have they got in the back of their shirt, Yoshi?

[3 : 28] I don't think you're a great big football fan. No, I don't think so. If it was about science, maybe. But football, they've got their name, haven't they? They've got their name. And what they're doing is they're pointing to their name and they're saying, look at me, what a great footballer I am. What a great goal I scored. Well, Daniel wasn't like that. He wasn't going about saying, what a great guy I am, even though he had such an exciting life and did such amazing things.

Daniel wasn't like that. In fact, there's a verse in the Bible that helps us see what Daniel was like, even though all of these amazing things happened to him. The very first time when Daniel was asked to interpret a dream by King Nebuchadnezzar, King Nebuchadnezzar said to him, okay, Daniel, what's the meaning of the dream? And listen to what Daniel says. We've got this in the Bible. I'm going to read this. It's straight from the Bible. And listen to what Daniel said. He said this, You see what Daniel was doing? He was saying, King Nebuchadnezzar, don't look at me. I'm not special. I'm not the one with all the answers. But there is a God in heaven who can give you the answers. There is a God in heaven. He can help you. He can interpret the dream, and he'll use me to do that. There is a God in heaven. Don't look at me, said Daniel, but look to God.

And what does this God do, this God in heaven that Daniel was speaking about? Well, we've read that in the Bible. It says there's a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. That's just a way really of saying a God who speaks, who speaks to us, who explains to us things that are maybe difficult that we can't understand. God does that. God speaks to us. Now, in the story of Daniel, we've seen how one of the ways that Daniel speaks, one of the ways he spoke to the king and to Daniel was through dreams.

And God would send a dream, and he would give Daniel the interpretation of the dream. That was one way that God spoke. But, you know, that's not the best way of speaking. It's the way that God chose, and it was a good way, but it's not the very best way of God saying what he wants to say.

Listen to what the Bible says about that. Now, just listen carefully to what God says in the Bible about how God speaks to us. And it says this, in the past, when Daniel was alive and when others like Daniel were alive, in the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, by dreams and visions and all different ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, and God's son is Jesus. So what the Bible is saying is, yes, God speaks in different ways. He spoke in dreams and in visions and interpretations, but the very best way that God has spoken, the clearest way that God has spoken to us is through Jesus. That's the best message that God has sent for us. And if Daniel were here this morning, what he would say to you and what he would say to me is, don't look to me, look to Jesus. Don't listen to me, listen to Jesus. There is a God in heaven, and that God in heaven has spoken to us in sending his son. So Daniel was a great guy, but Jesus is way greater than Daniel. And I want to finish by just comparing something that happened to Daniel and something that happened to Jesus. And as we compare, we'll see how Jesus is so much greater than Daniel, even though Daniel was a great guy.

[7 : 22] Well, the best story or the most exciting story in Daniel, and you've been telling us about it this morning, was when Daniel was sent to the lion's den. And he was sent to the lion's den to die.

Well, we know in the story of Jesus that Jesus was also sent to die. He was sent to the cross to die. So there's some similarities. Daniel was faithful, so he was sent to die. Jesus was faithful, and so he was sent to die. Similarities, but two big differences. Now, when Daniel was sent to the lion's den, what happened? Did he die? What did God do? God saved him. God rescued him, so he was sent to die, but he didn't die. Now, what about Jesus? When Jesus was sent to the cross, did God rescue him so he didn't have to die? Is that what happened? No, he did die, didn't he? God didn't rescue Jesus.

Oh, now that's strange. Is that because God wasn't powerful enough to rescue Jesus? It was just too difficult to rescue Jesus? No, it's because Jesus came to die. Jesus didn't come to be rescued. Jesus came to rescue us. And the way he rescues us is by dying on the cross for us, in our place, for our sin.

That's taking the punishment that we deserve, so that when we trust in Jesus, we can be forgiven, and we can be rescued. So that's a big difference. Daniel was sent to die, but he was rescued. Jesus was sent to die, and he did die, because that's what he came to do. But one other big difference. Daniel was rescued from the lion's den, and then he lived, I don't know how long, maybe a few years, and then eventually, what happened to Daniel? You haven't learned about this in the story, but what do you think happened to Daniel? I'll give you a clue. At the end of his life, what happened to Daniel? He died. Of course he did, just like we're all going to die. But Jesus, he wasn't rescued from the cross. He died on the cross.

But what happened to Jesus on the third day? He rose again. That's right. He was dead, but he rose again. He was dead, but he really came alive again. That's a huge difference, isn't it? And by rising again, Jesus conquered death. You might look at it this way. Daniel, with God's help, escaped death, but Jesus conquered death. So Jesus is way greater than Daniel. Daniel's great, but Jesus is way greater. Daniel, you've been learning about Daniel, and that's good.

[9 : 59] But what I would say to you is this, and I would say it to everybody here. Daniel is an example that you can learn from, but Jesus is a Savior that you can trust in. So you remember that. Learn from Daniel. Be like Daniel. Pray like Daniel. Trust like Daniel. But don't trust in Daniel. Trust in Jesus. Okay? So let's pray and ask God to help us to do just that. Let's bow our heads and pray. Heavenly Father, we do thank you that you are a God who speaks to us. We thank you that you have spoken to us in many ways. We thank you for the way you spoke in Daniel's day, the way you spoke to King Nebuchadnezzar, the way you spoke to Daniel, for the dreams and the visions that helped them understand something of what you wanted to say.

But we thank you, our Father, for the most wonderful and the clearest way in which you have spoken to us all in sending your own Son, Jesus. And we thank you that he came not to live, but to die for us.

And we thank you for his obedience to you and his love for us that took him all the way to the cross to die in our place. But we thank you that we can celebrate and recognize that he rose again from the dead and conquer death in our place. And we thank you for that. We pray that you would help us to put our trust in your Son, Jesus, as our Savior. And we pray these things in his name. Amen.