

WEEK 34 | SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 2026

Daniel: Trusting God No Matter What

Primary Scripture: Daniel 6

Supporting Scripture: Daniel 1:1 to 8 | 1 Kings 8:46 to 49 | Acts 5:29 | Matthew 28:1 to 10 | Hebrews 11

Memory Verse, Daniel 6:26: "He is the living God."

BIBLE TIMELINE PLACEMENT

By the time we reach Daniel 6, Daniel has been walking with God for many years. He was young when he was taken to Babylon, but by chapter 6 many decades have passed and he is probably an elderly man. Scripture never gives his exact age. His courage in the lions' den grew from a lifetime of ordinary faithfulness, prayer, honest work, and steady trust in God.

1 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Daniel 6:3 tells us that Daniel "so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom."

A satrap was a government official who helped oversee part of the kingdom, and Daniel had risen to a place of great responsibility. That tells us something about the kind of man he had become, because rulers who did not share Daniel's faith still recognized that he could be trusted with important work.

The government around Daniel had changed, but the way Daniel lived had not. Some of the other officials became jealous, so they began looking for something they could use against him. They searched through his work and watched how he handled responsibility, hoping to find dishonesty, laziness, or corruption.

Daniel 6:4 tells us, "They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent."

I suspect most of us would become uncomfortable if people who disliked us were allowed to examine our work this closely, especially if their only purpose was to find something wrong. Daniel was not sinless in the way Jesus is sinless, and we should never place him in that category. He was still a man who needed God's grace like the rest of us.

What the passage does show is that Daniel's faith reached into the ordinary parts of life. He did not pray faithfully and then work dishonestly, because his trust in God had shaped the way he lived when no miracle was happening and no lions were nearby.

THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL

Daniel's enemies eventually realized that they were unlikely to trap him through corruption, so they decided to use the most dependable part of his life against him. Daniel 6:5 records their conclusion: "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

There is something almost painful about that sentence. The men who hated Daniel knew that his faithfulness to God could be counted on.

So they went to Darius and appealed to the king's pride, persuading him to sign a law saying that for thirty days no one could pray to any god or person except the king. Anyone who disobeyed would be thrown into the lions' den.

The law was not really about protecting the king. It was about trapping Daniel.

I think this is where the lesson can easily become louder than the passage if we are not careful. Daniel was not a man searching for a fight with the government, and he was not trying to prove that he was braver than everyone else. He had served rulers faithfully for decades.

A line had simply been crossed, because the king was now being given something that belonged to God alone.

DANIEL'S RESPONSE TO THE LAW

Daniel 6:10 says, "Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem."

Daniel knew the law had been signed, and he knew what the punishment would be. Then he went home and prayed.

There is no speech recorded here, no public demonstration, and no insult toward Darius. Daniel does not gather supporters or try to embarrass the people who had trapped him. He simply continues walking with God.

That may be one of the most beautiful parts of the chapter. Daniel respected human authority, but he understood that human authority has limits. Scripture teaches us to respect governing authorities, yet no king, president, ruler, or government ever becomes God.

When human beings require something God forbids, or forbid something God commands, God remains our highest authority. Daniel does not become harsh or disrespectful when that line is crossed. He simply remains faithful.

WHY DANIEL PRAYED TOWARD JERUSALEM

Daniel 6:10 also tells us that Daniel's windows opened toward Jerusalem. That detail may seem small until we remember an earlier prayer in Scripture.

When Solomon dedicated the temple, he looked ahead to the possibility that Israel might someday rebel against God and be carried away into another land. In 1 Kings 8, Solomon asked God to hear His people if they turned back to Him and prayed toward the city He had chosen.

Daniel was living through the very exile Solomon had described. He was not worshipping Jerusalem, and the direction itself was not magical. Daniel was remembering God's covenant promises and turning his heart toward the place God had chosen for His people.

I have often thought about what Jerusalem must have meant to Daniel after so many years away. The city had been damaged, the temple had been destroyed, and much of the life he once knew was gone. Yet Daniel still prayed toward home because his hope was not really in the buildings. His hope was in the God who had made the promises.

PRAYER THREE TIMES EACH DAY

Daniel 6:10 says Daniel prayed three times each day, which gives us a helpful picture of the regular rhythm of his life. I do not think the main lesson is that every Christian must follow Daniel's exact schedule. The deeper point is that prayer had become part of who Daniel was.

He prayed before anyone threatened him, and he continued praying after the threat became real. He prayed when he had influence and when his life was in danger.

There is also a small detail in the verse that deserves our attention. Daniel gave thanks. The law that could cost him his life had already been signed, yet Daniel still found reason to thank God.

That does not mean Daniel enjoyed what was happening, and Scripture never tells us that he felt no fear. It means the danger in front of him had not changed what he knew to be true about God. Trust like that usually grows slowly, and it is formed through ordinary days long before we know we will need it.

LIONS IN DANIEL'S WORLD

Lions were real and feared animals in the ancient Near East, and ancient Mesopotamian artwork often shows kings hunting them. That background helps children understand that the danger in Daniel 6 was not imaginary.

At the same time, we should be careful about claiming archaeological evidence the passage does not give us. Ancient artwork showing lions does not prove that archaeologists have found Daniel's den, and we do not have remains that can be identified as the lions from this account.

What the historical background does show is that lions belonged naturally within the ancient world Daniel describes. The Bible tells us what happened once Daniel was placed among them. God shut their mouths.

DARIUS THE MEDE

Daniel identifies the ruler in this chapter as Darius the Mede, and his exact identification in surviving records outside the Bible continues to be discussed.

I think this is a good place for honesty. We do not currently have an ancient inscription that simply identifies a ruler as "Darius the Mede" and removes every question about his identity. Several explanations have been offered, and faithful Christian scholars continue studying the evidence.

What we do know clearly is that Babylon fell to Persian power in 539 BC, and the political world around Daniel changed in the way the closing chapters of the book describe.

An unanswered historical question is not the same thing as a contradiction. Ancient records are incomplete, and names, titles, and offices can be difficult to match when we are working across languages and cultures that disappeared long ago.

We can admit what remains unclear without becoming uncertain about the God who has spoken.

2 WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PASSAGE

Daniel 6:4 tells us that Daniel's enemies searched for corruption and could not find it. That quiet fact sets the whole chapter in motion.

Daniel has become one of the most trusted men in the kingdom, and the king is considering giving him even greater authority. The other officials become jealous, and when they cannot find wrongdoing in Daniel's work, they decide to turn his faithfulness to God into the weapon that will destroy him.

They persuade Darius to issue a temporary law saying that no one may pray to anyone except the king. Daniel learns that the law has been signed, then goes home and does what he had been doing for years. He kneels before God, gives thanks, and prays.

His enemies are waiting for exactly this, so they report him to the king. Only then does Darius understand what has happened. The men around him were never really trying to honor him. They were trying to remove Daniel.

Darius spends the rest of the day searching for a way to rescue him, but the men insist that the signed law must stand. Daniel is taken to the lions' den.

Before he is lowered inside, Darius speaks words that reveal how much he has watched Daniel's life. Daniel 6:16 says, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

That word "continually" tells us something. Even a king who did not begin this chapter worshipping Daniel's God had noticed that Daniel's faith was not occasional.

A stone is placed over the opening and sealed, while Darius returns to the palace unable to eat or sleep. When morning finally comes, the king hurries back to the den and calls out, wondering whether Daniel's God has rescued him.

Then Daniel answers from inside. He is alive.

Daniel explains that God sent His angel and shut the mouths of the lions, and when Daniel is lifted from the den, no wound is found on him. Daniel 6:23 explains why: "Because he had trusted in his God."

That sentence does not mean Daniel earned a miracle by believing hard enough. It means Daniel had placed himself into God's hands without knowing beforehand what those hands would allow. That is a much deeper picture of faith.

3 WHAT THIS REVEALS ABOUT GOD

Daniel 6:26 says, "For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end."

Those words come from Darius after Daniel is rescued, and they become especially meaningful when we remember how much Daniel had watched change during his lifetime. He had seen Jerusalem fall and had been carried away from home. He had served Nebuchadnezzar and watched other rulers come after him. He had lived under Babylonian power and then lived long enough to watch Babylon itself fall.

Everything around him seemed temporary. God was not.

I have wondered whether Daniel understood that truth differently as an elderly man than he did when he first arrived in Babylon as a young captive. There are truths we learn because Scripture tells us they are true, and then there are truths we carry differently after walking with God through enough years to watch His faithfulness hold.

Daniel had lived long enough to watch human strength fade. He had watched powerful men disappear and mighty kingdoms change hands, while the God he trusted remained exactly who He had always been.

That is a truth children need long before they understand why. The people around them will change, circumstances will change, and parts of life they thought were permanent may not remain that way forever. God remains faithful through all of it.

4 WHAT THIS REVEALS ABOUT PEOPLE

Daniel 6:10 tells us that Daniel prayed "just as he had done before."

We often remember Daniel because of one frightening night among the lions, but the strength of that night was built through years nobody celebrates. Daniel had learned to work honestly when there was no danger, pray when there was no crisis, and give thanks before anyone threatened to punish him for doing it.

Then the crisis came, and Daniel continued living the way he had already been living.

There is something here for us as teachers. Children will face difficult moments, and most of us would love to hand them enough courage today to carry them through every painful situation tomorrow. I do not think courage usually grows that way.

Faith grows as children hear God's Word, pray honestly, watch adults tell the truth, learn to confess sin, and slowly discover that Jesus is trustworthy in ordinary life. Those small choices may not seem dramatic while they are happening. Years later, they may become the very things God uses when a child faces something much harder.

5 TRUSTING GOD DOES NOT GUARANTEE AN EASY OUTCOME

Before Daniel is placed in the den, Darius says in Daniel 6:16, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

We already know how the chapter ends, and that can make it easy to teach the account backward. Because we know Daniel survives, we may begin speaking as though Daniel knew it too. Scripture never tells us that.

Daniel trusted God before he knew whether the lions would touch him. That distinction matters.

Hebrews 11 later describes faithful people who experienced remarkable rescue, while the same chapter also describes faithful people who suffered terribly. Both trusted God.

I think this is especially important for children because some of them already know that prayer does not always end with the answer we hoped to receive. Someone they love may still be sick, their parents may still be separated, or someone important to them may have died.

We would fail those children if we taught Daniel 6 as though enough faith always guarantees an easy ending. The better truth is also the harder one.

Trust does not mean we know what God will do next. Trust means we know who God is, and we place ourselves in His hands even when the outcome remains hidden.

6 PRAYER AND DAILY FAITHFULNESS

Daniel 6:10 gives us a picture of an elderly man returning to the place where he had probably prayed countless times before. He knows people are watching him, knows what the law says, and knows what may happen if he continues. Yet he still speaks with God.

There is a tenderness in that picture that I do not want us to rush past. Prayer was not an emergency tool Daniel discovered because lions were waiting. Prayer was already part of his relationship with God.

Sometimes we treat prayer like something we reach for after every other option has failed, but Daniel gives us a different picture. Prayer belongs in ordinary mornings, quiet evenings, good news, disappointment, gratitude, confusion, and fear.

When the crisis finally comes, we are not suddenly trying to speak to a stranger. We are talking with the God we have already been learning to trust.

7 GOD AS TRINITY

Matthew 28:19 records Jesus telling His followers to baptize people "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Daniel knew and worshiped the one true God, and the rest of Scripture helps us understand more fully who this one God is. God eternally exists as three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and yet there is only one God.

The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father, while each is fully God.

For children, we keep the language simple and faithful: "God is one God in three Persons."

Daniel 6 says God sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths, and we should not tell children that this angel was definitely Jesus because the passage does not say that. There is no need to force more into the chapter than God placed there.

Daniel shows us the one living God, and the whole Bible reveals that this one God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is enough.

8 HOW THIS POINTS TO JESUS

Matthew 28:6 records the words spoken at Jesus' empty tomb: "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said."

There are details in Daniel 6 that naturally cause Christian readers to think about Jesus. Daniel's enemies searched for something they could use against him, and in the matter being charged against him, he was innocent. He was condemned because of a plot, placed behind a stone, and sealed inside a place of death. At dawn someone hurried to see what had happened, and Daniel came out alive.

Those similarities are worth noticing, but the differences matter even more.

Daniel was a faithful man, but he was still a sinner who needed God's grace. Jesus never sinned. Daniel was rescued from dying. Jesus actually died.

Daniel came out of the den because God saved him from death, while Jesus came out of the grave after defeating death itself.

This is where Daniel's account becomes more than an example of courage. Daniel points our eyes beyond himself. He needed rescue. Jesus became ours.

9 THE GOSPEL CONNECTION

Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Children understand the idea of rescue because they understand what it means to be in trouble they cannot fix. Daniel was placed in a situation where he could not rescue himself, and God rescued him.

That gives us a doorway into the greater rescue every one of us needs. Our greatest danger is not a lion. Our greatest problem is sin.

We have all chosen our own way instead of God's way, and none of us can erase our guilt by promising to behave better tomorrow. God did not leave us there.

Jesus came for us, lived without sin, and willingly died on the cross in our place. He was buried, and on the third day He rose from the grave. Everyone who turns from sin and trusts Jesus can be forgiven and brought into God's family.

Daniel trusted God while he faced the lions. Our children need to see that Christian faith goes even deeper than that. We trust the God who has already come to rescue us through Jesus.

10 CMA ALIGNMENT AND THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL

Colossians 1:18 says of Jesus, "So that in everything he might have the supremacy."

That sentence captures the heart of the Christian and Missionary Alliance because Jesus remains at the center of everything we believe and everything we teach. The Alliance often summarizes the good news around four truths about Christ: Jesus our Savior, Jesus our Sanctifier, Jesus our Healer, and Jesus our Coming King.

JESUS OUR SAVIOR

Daniel needed rescue from the lions, while every one of us needs rescue from sin. Jesus died and rose again so sinners can be forgiven, which means our salvation never depends upon having Daniel's courage or becoming strong enough to save ourselves. It rests entirely upon Jesus.

JESUS OUR SANCTIFIER

Sanctification means that God continues changing those who belong to Jesus so their lives increasingly look like His. Daniel gives us a picture of what long faithfulness can look like, because he had spent many years learning to walk with God before the night of the lions' den ever arrived.

We do not make ourselves holy through determination alone. The Holy Spirit works in us as we trust Jesus, obey His Word, confess sin, pray, and surrender our lives to Him.

JESUS OUR HEALER

God completely protected Daniel's body, and Scripture tells us that no wound was found on him. That reminds us that God is powerful and compassionate, so we can bring sickness, pain, and fear to Him in prayer.

We should also speak gently here because not every faithful Christian receives immediate physical healing. Daniel 6 tells us what God did for Daniel, but it does not give us permission to promise the same earthly outcome in every situation.

We pray because Jesus cares, and we trust Him because He is good.

JESUS OUR COMING KING

Daniel spent much of his life watching human kingdoms rise and fall, yet Daniel 6 says that God's kingdom will never be destroyed. One day Jesus will return as King, and every temporary ruler will pass away while His kingdom remains forever.

That truth gives children something stronger than a promise of temporary safety. It gives them lasting hope.

11 WHY WE CAN TRUST THIS ACCOUNT

Daniel 6:28 says, "So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

Daniel places this account inside a recognizable period of ancient history, and Babylon really did fall to Persian power in 539 BC. Ancient records help us understand that political transition and show that Daniel is speaking within a real ancient world rather than an imaginary setting.

The exact identity of Darius the Mede remains discussed among scholars, and I do not think we serve teachers well by pretending every historical question has already been settled. It has not.

That does not mean Scripture has been disproved, because ancient history is filled with incomplete records, uncertain titles, and people known from one source but not another. We can be honest about what remains unclear while still trusting what God has given us.

The miracle itself cannot be excavated. No archaeologist can uncover the moment God shut the lions' mouths.

Daniel 6:22 tells us what happened: "My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions."

Our confidence begins with God's Word. Historical evidence helps us see that Daniel belongs in the real ancient world, but history does not sit above Scripture as though it has the final word over God.

12 QUESTIONS CHILDREN MAY ASK

WAS DANIEL A LITTLE BOY IN THE LIONS' DEN?

Daniel 6 shows us a man whose habits had been built over many years. He was young when he was first taken to Babylon, but by chapter 6 many decades had passed, which means he was probably an elderly man. Scripture never gives his exact age, so we should not pretend that it does.

WAS DANIEL AFRAID?

Daniel 6 never tells us exactly how Daniel felt, and I think we should leave room for that silence. Being brave does not mean a person never feels fear. Biblical courage means continuing to trust and obey God even when something is frightening.

DID DANIEL KNOW GOD WOULD SAVE HIM?

Scripture does not tell us that Daniel knew what would happen. What we do know is that Daniel continued obeying God before he knew the outcome. That is what makes his trust so meaningful.

WHY DID DANIEL BREAK THE LAW?

Acts 5:29 gives us the principle: "We must obey God rather than human beings!" Daniel had faithfully served the government for years and was not looking for a reason to rebel. This particular law tried to take something that belonged to God and give it to the king, so Daniel remained faithful to God while still treating the king with respect.

WHY DID THE LIONS NOT EAT HIM?

Daniel gives the answer himself in Daniel 6:22: "My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions." God performed a miracle, and the God who created lions has authority over lions.

WAS THE ANGEL JESUS?

The passage does not tell us that. Daniel says God sent His angel, so we should be content with what Scripture gives us rather than filling in what it leaves unsaid.

DOES GOD ALWAYS KEEP CHRISTIANS FROM GETTING HURT?

No. God is always able to rescue, but Scripture does not promise that faithful Christians will never suffer. Some believers in the Bible experienced remarkable rescue, while others remained faithful through terrible suffering.

Our confidence is not that nothing painful will ever happen. Our confidence is that God will never stop being faithful.

13 COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS**DANIEL WAS A YOUNG MAN**

Daniel was young at the beginning of the book, but by chapter 6 he had lived in exile for many decades and was probably elderly.

DANIEL WAS NEVER AFRAID

Scripture never tells us whether Daniel felt fear, so we should not give him emotions the Bible does not describe.

DANIEL KNEW THE LIONS WOULD NOT HURT HIM

The passage does not say this. Daniel trusted God without knowing the outcome, which is one reason his faith matters so much.

IF WE HAVE ENOUGH FAITH, GOD WILL KEEP BAD THINGS FROM HAPPENING

Daniel 6 does not promise that. Daniel was faithful and still ended up inside the den, which means trust is not a way of forcing God to remove every danger. Trust means placing ourselves in His hands.

DANIEL WAS THE HERO

Daniel was faithful and worthy of respect, but Daniel did not shut the lions' mouths. God did. The power and glory belong to Him.

THE ANGEL WAS DEFINITELY JESUS

The Bible does not identify the angel this way, so neither should we.

14 TEACHER HEART PREPARATION

Daniel 6:10 says Daniel prayed "just as he had done before," and this is the part of the passage I keep returning to.

Most of us will never stand beside a literal lions' den, but we still know what it feels like to face something we cannot control. We know what it is to receive news we did not want, to wait for an answer we cannot hurry, or to wonder what tomorrow may bring.

If we are honest, most of us have probably wished at some point that trusting God meant He would explain everything before asking us to follow Him. He usually does not.

Daniel teaches us something harder, but I think it is also something better. We learn to trust God because of who He is, not because He has promised to make every road easy.

That kind of faith grows over time. It grows when we pray on ordinary days, tell the truth when lying would be easier, thank God while something still hurts, and open His Word when nobody is watching.

Then one day something harder comes, and we discover those quiet years were not wasted.

As we prepare to teach these children, I hope we resist the temptation to simply tell them to be brave like Daniel. Some of them may already be carrying things that require more courage than we know.

They need something stronger than a hero to copy. They need Daniel's God.

They need to know about the God who remained faithful through every ruler, every change, every threat, every long night, and every lion. Then we can take them to Jesus, because the God who stayed with Daniel has come near to us in Christ.

That is where our courage rests.

TEACHER PRAYER

Father, You are the living God, and Your kingdom will never end. Thank You for Daniel and for the quiet faithfulness that marked his life through so many years.

There are times when we are afraid too, and there are times when we wish You would tell us what will happen before You ask us to trust You. Help us remember that Your character is enough, even when the outcome is still hidden from us.

Teach us to pray in ordinary seasons so that prayer is already part of who we are when life becomes hard. Help us work honestly, speak truthfully, and remain faithful when obedience costs something.

Thank You for Jesus, who did more than escape death because He entered death for us and rose again so we could be forgiven.

Holy Spirit, shape our hearts and the hearts of these children, and give us wisdom to answer their questions with honesty and tenderness. Help all of us learn, little by little and year by year, that You can be trusted no matter what comes.

In Jesus' name, amen.

15 TEACHER SUMMARY

Big Idea: We can trust God no matter what because He is the living God who remains faithful even when we do not know how our situation will end.

What God Did: God remained with Daniel in the lions' den, sent His angel, shut the lions' mouths, and brought Daniel safely out.

What Daniel Did: Daniel continued praying, working honestly, and obeying God in the same way he had been living before the crisis began.

What Children Should Understand: Daniel did not trust God because he knew the lions would leave him alone. He trusted God because he knew God.

How This Points to Jesus: Daniel was placed behind a sealed stone and rescued from death, while Jesus was completely innocent, died for our sins, was placed inside a sealed tomb, and rose again. Daniel was rescued from death. Jesus defeated death.

Error to Avoid: Do not tell children that trusting God guarantees they will never suffer, because Scripture does not make that promise.

Hope to Carry Into the Lesson: Daniel lived long enough to watch rulers change and kingdoms disappear, yet the God he trusted remained faithful through every season. The same living God has revealed Himself to us through Jesus Christ, and we can trust Him.