Just “lion” around!

Lesson for Sunday, April 21, 2024

TEXT: Daniel 6

INTRO:

* Have you ever faced an animal that you feared? Maybe a snake or something crazy that happened on a hunting trip? Allow the class to share…
* Of all the wild animals, there is only one that we refer to as “The King of the Jungle.” It’s the lion. On TV they just look like a big cat. But in reality, they are to be feared.
* The Bible teaches us that God created it all – even the King of the Jungle. But Daniel reminds us that the King of the Jungle is no match for the King of Kings!
* Once again, we will see that Daniel had a fierce loyalty to his God, and it seems like nothing could intimidate him to be silent about his faith.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. The King’s Rule (vs. 1-9)
   1. Darius the Mede had now come to the throne and established the Medo-Persian empire.
      1. This kingdom was much different from Nebuchadnezzar’s. The first two verses describe a great division of power in the kingdom.
      2. As usual, Daniel had the position of power next to the king. How did this always seem to be the case with Daniel?
      3. Discuss “an excellent spirit.” Where does that come from? How do we obtain it? Can we have “an excellent spirit?” Are any of us known for this?
   2. The presidents and prince’s underneath Daniel looked for a way to hurt him.
      1. There are always jealous people who will try to hurt you if you follow God. As Christians, we should expect opposition and not be surprised by it.
      2. How impressive is it that they could find no fault as they examined Daniel’s life?
      3. The only thing they could use against him was his unswerving devotion to God.
      4. DISCUSS: If your enemies conspired against you, what angle would they take? Would their only opportunity be to attack your faith?
   3. These men flattered King Darius and influenced him to sign a decree that the people could only pray to him for 30 days or be cast in the lion’s den for a certain death.
      1. How can listening to flattery get you into trouble?
      2. “A long time ago I discovered that I am not as bad as my enemies say and I am not nearly as good as my friends say that I am.”
      3. Following their bad advice, the King signed the law. Now not even the King could change it.
2. Daniel’s Response (vs. 10-17)
   1. Daniel was consistent. He did exactly the same thing he had always done.
   2. Discuss:
      1. What if he would have closed his windows to have prayer – any problem with that?
      2. How do we sometimes compromise our beliefs and actions to “save face” with the world?
   3. Daniel’s enemies saw him and “turned him in” to the King. The King was now trapped – he had to put Daniel in the den of lions.
   4. Notice the king’s feelings about the situation. It seems he hadn’t thought his decision completely through.
   5. The King made the comment, “The God you serve will deliver you.” What had he seen in Daniel’s life?
3. God’s Deliverance (vs. 18-28)
   1. The king had a long, sleepless night worrying about Daniel.
      1. Who slept better that night, Daniel or King Darius?
      2. Do you think he really expected Daniel to answer him when he went to the lion’s den?
   2. Daniel responds, “My God hath sent his angel…” What a beautiful testimony of God’s deliverance!
      1. Consider: Was Daniel ever really in any danger? “There is no safer place to be than in the center of God’s will.”
      2. From an eternal perspective, who was in more danger that night – the King in the palace or Daniel in the den? How do we maintain an eternal paradigm in the midst of troubling circumstances?
   3. The tide turns on Daniel’s enemies as they were thrown into the den. The miracle of Daniel’s protection was confirmed with how quickly they were destroyed (vs. 24).
   4. The account ends with the King’s decree.
      1. Notice the impact of Daniel’s willingness to stand: The King found God, just like Nebuchadnezzar.
      2. Could we affect others as Daniel affected these pagan kings? What will it take for us to do so?

CONCLUSION

* Closing thought: Daniel would rather die than skip his time with God.
  + What does it take for us to miss our time with the Lord?
  + What changes do we need to make?