

Honoring Correctly

Manuscript

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Sunday Sermon: Daniel 1:8-21

Purpose: Church Revitalization

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Introduction

Today God would like to communicate to each and everyone of us on the importance of doing what is right. We should not only concern ourselves on doing what is right before man to earn their approval and affirmation but shift our attention and focus on God. Doing the right thing or what's correct is being an example in our conduct, in what we say, do, and even think. All this we know; it is not foreign unto us! Yet, what is it that keeps us from doing what is right before man and God? Doing what is right should not be a burden to us if we have been born again. 1 John 5:3 says "In fact, this is love for God: to keep His commands. And His commands are not burdensome." It is God who commands us to do what is right! If we struggle to be the light and salt of this world than we have not found joy in God's word and what He asks of us. It does not matter what obstacle we are wrestling with our condition or how difficult our situation is and trials we face. I know, believe me that they are many! Nevertheless, we can still do what is right in the midst of opposition because God is with us and He will give us the strength we need to do what is right.

Biblical Text: Daniel 1:8-21

Daniel 1:8-21; " 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 this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

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.

At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and he found nonequal to Daniel,

Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so, they entered the king's service. 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. And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.”¹

Daniel's turning point.

We read of a turning point not only in the life of Daniel and his friends, but in the nation of Israel. When we are at a turning point what direction will we choose to go? Daniel decided to walk in the direction that honored God even though it was a difficult time and point in his life. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquers Jerusalem and orders his officials to set apart young Israelite men for his service in the palace. Young men of a royal family, handsome, without physical defect, quick to learn, and who are qualified to serve. The qualifications for a job opening during that time were radically different than what we have now. Yet, it seems in those days they made sure those who occupied a position were qualified for it. Not what we see so much now these days. Four Israelites were chosen. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were taken from their homes and families for a new way of life. These four young men had been called to study and train for three years in Babylonian literature and language.

Daniel testifies of a holy God

¹ Holy Bible “*NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*,” (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2018), 1491-1492.

With that being said, I believe that Scotsdale Baptist Church is also at a turning point just as Daniel and his friends were. The question that arises is what direction will we choose to go? Will we choose to go where God wants us to go or will we go where we want to go? Everyone selected for this training were obligated to eat the food and drink the wine served from the Kings table. King Nebuchadnezzar did not worship the same God; Daniel and we worship. Just like Daniel we know we shall have no other gods before the true and living God. The God of Israel. Daniel pleaded the chief official to not allow them to be defiled with the food of the King. "Not only was the food not prepared according to Levitical ordinances but could also have been an animal that was unclean. Above all else it was a sacrifice offered up to the gods of the Babylonians"². In other words what was demanded of them was contrary to the word of God.

Daniel's heart

In this story we can clearly see what the correct thing to do is not the status quo or of popular demand. If we struggle to discern what is the right thing to do, we should look to Jesus. The road he paved is the one less traveled because it is a narrow path. The right thing to do will most of the time be the most difficult thing to do. Daniel chose not to follow the crowd are fit in with everyone else. He decided to go against the grain. Isn't that what Jesus asks of us? So, what is right? What is the correct thing to do? I love asking this question, and even more hearing the responses. The right thing is honoring God and honoring His word. That is what

² Delitzsch, F. & Keil, C. F., *Commentary on the Old Testament Vol. 9 Ezekiel, Daniel,* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1980), 80.

Daniel did and then only thing he wanted to do. Which is to honor God and His word at all times. So, what do we want to do?

Honoring correctly with obedience

I must ask, do you believe in honoring God? Honoring God correctly is to be obedient to His word. Literally, Daniel begged the chief official to allow them to be obedient to God. He was not ashamed beg before man if it allowed him to be obedient to God. Not only the chief official heard his cry but God himself. Because the ears of the Lord are inclined to our heart like the psalmist wrote. Psalm 116:2 Daniel did not want to sin against his God. James 4:17 says “he who knows to do what is good and does not do it, sins.” Daniel chose to be obedient and for that reason God caused to show favor towards him and have compassion. This is not only interesting but important especially if we are struggling to honor God. If we make the effort to do what is right and not what man or the world obligates or demands us to do. God in the same way will show favor to us fulfill what He has asked of us. Those who are obedient to God will surely not lose their reward.

Honoring correctly with love

Honoring correctly is loving God and loving people. Even though God caused the chief official to show favor and compassion towards Daniel. The chief did not grant him his petition. Because he was not only worried but afraid of losing his life if the young men were not in condition they needed to be in when presented before King Nebuchadnezzar. In this story I can

see how Daniel had love for God, his friends but also the Babylonians. When we have love for someone, we speak for those who have no voice and protect them from harm's way. We are not called to minister and love those who we choose to, but all who God places in our path. That is why doing what is right does not come easy. This is what Daniel did, because he was not only concerned for the well-being of his friends but the well-being of the Babylonians in his path.

Honoring correctly with faith

Honoring Correctly is placing our faith in God! It was not the chief official who granted Daniel's request but the guard. "Please test your servants for ten days with vegetables and water to drink. Then compare us to the others who eat from the King's table." Daniel believed that God would help him that is why he did not give up when his request was not granted. Faith does not give up when the doors are closed, and times are tough. Daniel took a risk, in rejecting the King's food. He could have been severely punished or even had lost his life. But that's what taking a step of faith is all about, if we are not taking risks we are not walking by faith.

Blind eyes see

After the ten days were up the four Israelites looked healthier and better nourished than the other young men who ate the royal food. Those young men were not set apart by King Nebuchadnezzar, but by God himself. The officials did not only see what the vegetables and water do for them. No, they saw God in the lives of those young men. Do the people around us see God in our lives? Only when we choose to honor God will those around us truly see God in

our lives. We must never forget that God honors those who honor Him. That is what happened in the life of Daniel and his friends. Because they chose to do what is right God gave them knowledge and understanding in all kinds of literature and learning. To understand visions and to interpret dreams. Not only that but God gave them a place of honor in the palace of the king. Also, ten times more wisdom and discernment than the magicians and enchanters in the kingdom.

Chosen to glorify God

Those young men were placed they're on purpose to glorify God with their lives without a doubt. Brothers and sisters, you are not here by accident but on purpose. God has placed you here and everywhere else He has you to glorify Him with your life. God has chosen you and set you apart like he did those four young men, but to serve the King of kings in His kingdom. God has us where He has us to do what is right to honor correctly. To honor Him and His word above all things and all people. God will not forsake you nor leave you. He will honor you and bless you to be in places of honor you never expected to be. For just honoring Him correctly and doing what is right.

Conclusion

Imagine for a second, what these young men would have lost if they chose not to honor God. Now let's put ourselves in their shoes and think what we would lose if we chose not to do what is right and honor God. Is that a risk you and I are willing to take? I hope not. Let us choose to do what is right and honor God today this morning to see Him glorified in our lives

and in our church. Let us honor Him correctly by being obedient to His word, choosing to love Him and those around us, and finally by placing our faith in Him alone. Is there someone here that is brave enough to make that choice? If that is you raise you honor God correctly with your obedience, love, and faith. Then you will see God hand in your life as the Isrealite young men did.

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