

w/b 18th August 2019

THEME: BIG ISSUES - TO SPEAK OUT OR REMAIN QUIET - LIFE APPLICATION

PASSAGE: **Daniel Chapter 6**

1. What stirs up the jealousy and envy of the administrators and satraps?

How would they describe Daniel? (goodie two shoes, too good to be true, outsider, a threat)

Are these prejudices still at work today?

2. Have you ever found that when you begin to excel, other people look for ways to hold you back and tear you down? How should you deal with those who would cheer at your downfall and even try to hasten it?

3. Why did the king issue his decree? (he was outnumbered, he was stupid, he had an inflated ego, he believed everybody would obey, he wanted to be God)

4. How would you describe Daniel's response to the edict? (rebellion, perseverance, faithfulness, disregard, plea for help, courageous, throw down the gauntlet, stupid)

5. Are there times where a better strategy might be to close the windows, draw the curtains, and pray to God in secret? (John 3:2)

(We like to think that proclaiming support for God publically and openly is always the best thing to do, but in fact Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. In Russia under communist rule and in China following the Cultural Revolution the church survived and grew by means of worship and prayer behind closed doors. At the time and in retrospect, this seems to have been the best thing to do and certainly reflects the faith, courage and deep devotion of Christian believers.)

6. By continuing to pray openly three times a day, both believers and unbelievers witnessed Daniel's consistency. From observing you, what can unbelievers determine about your life?

7. If someone who knew my innermost thoughts were to rate my ethics, I would score:

At work 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

At home 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

With outsiders 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. When the king discovered the implications of his decree, he felt: (anger toward his advisors, stupid, despair, frustration, trapped, repentant)? In his position what would you have done?

9. What saved Daniel? (his faith, his innocence, God's faithfulness, sleeping lions, the king's prayers) Think about this before answering. Are God's servants always saved when in desperate circumstances? Why or why not?

10. Because of the Persian custom of vindication (an eye for an eye), Daniel's accusers received the same punishment that they demanded that Daniel receive. Is this supported anywhere in the Bible? (Deut 19:21, Isaiah 3:11, Jeremiah 21:14) What do you think about punishing (innocent?) family members of the accusers?

11. In your own life, have you ever experienced God in the midst of a 'lion's den' (of sceptics, critics, persecutors, etc.)? Has your lifeline ever been only God and God alone?