

## **Stand Stand in Faith**

If you are here today the you are joining us for part four of a five-part message series on the Book of Daniel, where we're looking at selected stories from this amazing Old Testament book.

So, if you have your Bibles, let's open them to Daniel chapter 10, or you can always follow on the YouVersion Bible app. And let me start off by giving you the context of where we are.

If you were with us last week, you'll remember Daniel was in his eighties or so, in the story of "Daniel in the Lions' Den." He's older than that this week. He's an old man, and literally, for decades upon decades, he's been standing firm in the faith, believing that God would do some miracles.

Because if you'll remember, in week one, we saw how King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple, captured so many young men, made them into slaves. And Daniel, for decades, has been praying that God would restore the Temple that was destroyed, and that his Jewish brothers and sisters, who've been in bondage for all these years, would be released to go back to their homeland. And there were some signs that this might actually happen.

But, all of a sudden, he received a vision from God that was so disturbing to him, all he could do was seek God in prayer. He saw a vision of more war, and hardships, and is like, "I've been praying for decades, and now I see more hard times are coming. I can't even take this." And so, Daniel did what Daniel always did: He sought God in prayer. For 21 days, he went on a fast.

Daniel fasted for 21 days... It says he wore no fragrant lotions, which means he didn't take a bath. I bring this up, because if anyone of you decide to go on a fast.... PLEASE BATHE! I just want that to be said.... But he sought God. And at the end of the 21-day period, he had a vision of this angelic being.

Now, as we read about this, in Daniel 10, let me just tell you, we're not totally sure who this angelic being is. I believe, along with a lot of biblical scholars, that it was probably the pre-incarnate Christ.

And so, here's the vision –

### **Daniel 10:5-8**

Now, it's really interesting to me that Daniel is the only one that saw this vision. The other guys there didn't see it. Why is that? We don't know for sure, but what we do know is, there are, often, times when God will reveal something special to someone, and not someone else.

In fact, for those of you who've been followers of Christ, chances are, at some point in your life, God showed you something that was really powerful. It might be, you know, you were reading through the Bible, and there was a verse that you'd seen, like, 10 times before, but this time it was like the verse just jumped out – you're like, "Oh, my goodness! This is amazing! This just so speaks to me!"

And so, you tell your friends, "Look at this verse! Isn't it amazing?" They're like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah – want to go get some coffee?" "No, no, don't you see?" ... It could be a song, or a message, or a moment with God, and you're just like, "That was the most amazing thing!"

And this is what happened to Daniel. They didn't experience it. And I believe, with all my heart, there are some of you today, you're going to have a moment like that, where you're going to hear from God. It's like heaven opens up, and God is speaking directly to you, and the reason you're going to hear it this way is because God has something to show you. And that's how good and special our God is.

Daniel has a moment like this. In verse 8 – the middle of the verse – he says this. He's in the presence of Christ, or this angelic being, and he says, "My strength left me, my face grew deathly pale, and I felt very weak." Watch what happens...

### Daniel 10:9

That's powerful. "I heard the sound of His voice, and I could no longer stand, and fell face down." What is that all about?... Listen, the strongest of men cannot bear the weight of the glory of God. The strongest – If you've ever had a moment, deeply in the presence of God - you lose strength. You don't want to stand.

Some of you who've been followers of Christ, I hope you've had moments like this, where you're so in the presence of God, you may simultaneously be grieved over the depravity of your own sinfulness, and yet, rejoicing over the beauty of His grace, knowing that you're forgiven. In a moment with God, you're overwhelmed by His comfort, and by His presence, and by His assurance. And you just don't want it to end. If you haven't had a moment like that, if you seek Him, He will reveal himself to you.

So, what I want to do, in the rest of our time together, is move into what I call the "application." In other words, I don't want to just read God's Word, and then you don't do anything with it. I want to talk about, how does it apply to our life? How do you stand firm in faith, when you're praying, and you don't see anything happen? We're going to see **three things to remember, when you're standing in faith.**

The first thing, if you're taking notes, is this: **You always need to remember that God cares about you more than you do.** Our good God cares about you more than you do.

### Daniel 10:10-11

Now, if I could sing, like some people can, about right now an organ would start playing in the background, and I would sing the words from an old and famous hymn. But since I can't sing, I will not do that, because if I did, you would not come back. But what I am going to do is, I'm going to read the words from this hymn... ***"From sinking sands He lifted me, with a tender hand He lifted me. From shades of night to plains of light, oh, praise His Name, He lifted me!"***

The hand of God never extends to condemn. It always extends to lift. And this is what Daniel says in verse 10 – some of you are going to sense the hand of Christ lifting you today.

Some of you, this is your moment. This is what you must hear – this is why you're here today – that you are highly esteemed by God. **Esteemed – Repected and Admired**. You are valuable to God. He loves you. He cares about you. There's nothing you can do to make Him love you more, and there's nothing you can do to cause Him to love you less. He loves you because that's not just what He does, but it's who He is. You are highly esteemed by God.

Three things to remember, when you're standing firm in faith. The first thing is that God cares about you, more than you do. The second thing, is this: **God is doing more than you understand**. He's doing way, way more than you understand.

This is about to get really cool...

### Daniel 10:12

Now, verse 13, I've got to warn you. If you think it's been weird so far, you ain't seen nothing yet. We're about to go supernatural, Star Wars weird. Get ready, because this is really cool.

**Daniel 10:13...** Let's talk about this, because this is really interesting.

Let me first talk to those of you who've been praying for a long time about something. For those of you who've been praying so long that you even wonder if it's worth it, those of you who've been praying so long, you hear the voice in the back of your head that says, **Why even bother?** God doesn't care. I mean, if God were going to do something, He would have done it a long time ago. You're praying, and you're just wasting your breath. God's not listening, and He's not going to do it. It must not be His will.

Those of you who have that in your heart... what I want you to understand is, the first time you prayed... **God heard you**. The first time you prayed for healing for that person you love, God heard your prayer. The first time you prayed for your child, and begged God to do a miracle, God heard your prayer. The first time you prayed, our good God heard your prayer. And God loves a persistent prayer. He loves when we continue to cry out to Him. He loves the faithful, persistent prayer of His saints. But the first time you called on Him, heaven heard your prayer. The first time you cried out in faith, believing, heaven opened, and God heard your prayer.

Verse 13 is so cool. I just want to talk about it – “but the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days” Wait, wait, wait, wait, how many days was that? Twenty-one days. How many days did Daniel fast? Twenty-one days. That’s interesting. “but the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days”

Now, who is the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia? Again, we’re not totally sure. What most Bible scholars believe, and I totally agree, is that this is a demonic force. If you’ll remember, some of the angels rebelled against God, in the early days, and they’re known as “fallen angels.” Many believe those were the demonic forces that do battle in the Kingdom world today.

What we have to remember is that we battle not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities of this dark world. In other words, what you see with your eyes is not all there is. Don’t ever believe that just this physical realm is all there is.

“For twenty-one days after you prayed, Christ was sent, and was doing battle in the heavenly realms with this evil force. Then, Michael, one of the archangels, came as backup. He came to help Me out.” So, this angelic being says, “I left him there – ‘You deal with this prince from Persia. I’m going to Daniel, as an answer to his prayer.’”

Here’s what’s so powerful to me. Think about this: Daniel prayed, and he continued to pray, and he continued to pray. And what did he see? Nothing. Not a thing. He didn’t see anything. But just because he didn’t see anything did not mean God was not doing something.

The first time you cried out to God, He released His angelic beings, and they’re doing warfare for you, in a way that you don’t even understand. And you just keep praying, and you just keep believing. And you may not see anything, but you have no idea what kind of battle is going on in the heavenly realms, from a God who loves you so much that He’s working behind the scenes to do things you can’t see, and you wouldn’t even understand, because He cares about you. **And the Kingdom of light will overcome the kingdom of darkness.**

Twenty-one days earlier, when Daniel still saw nothing, there’s a battle raging in heaven. Because heaven heard His prayer the very first time he prayed.

How do you keep standing in faith? Because you remember that He cares more about you than you do, because He’s doing way more than you understand.

And number three, if you’re taking notes, is, **God’s strength is made perfect in your weakness.** His strength is made perfect in your weakness. In fact, that’s a New Testament principle; Paul actually said that. In your weakness, His strength is made perfect.

Some of you, you're going to come to a place in your faith where you feel like you've got nothing left; you're at the end of your string. Let me tell you... that's when you're strongest! Not in your own power, but that's when His power becomes most real.

Listen, until you fully embrace your weakness, you will never appreciate and experience His strength. When you recognize, I've prayed, and I don't have any more faith, and I physically don't have any more strength, and I'm at the end of myself, that's when His power becomes more real than ever before. Until you embrace your weakness, you'll never fully understand His strength.

This is what Daniel says to Christ, or the angelic being... **Daniel 10:17**

Some of you right now, that captures exactly where you are right now – My strength is gone. I've been hanging on for this marriage, been hanging on for my kids. I've been fighting for this. Financially, I just don't think – My strength is gone. I can hardly breathe.

#### **Daniel 10:18**

Don't miss the power of this. **"When He touched me, I felt my strength returning."**

Some of you, this is all you need.....right there! There it is, for you. There's your God moment. One touch, and your faith is restored. One touch, and you're coming back to Christ. One touch, and you're believing God for that thing that you stopped believing God for years ago. One touch, and it's enough to keep on going. One touch, and your strength is returning. One touch from the presence of Christ, and everything changes. "I have no strength" – one touch – "and I felt my strength returning."

#### **Daniel 10:19**

Let me just be real honest with you. He may do exactly what you're praying for, or He may not. But just because you don't see anything doesn't mean He's not doing something. And people are going to look on and wonder, "How are you still standing, hanging in there? And how come you haven't given up?" You're going to say, "Because you don't understand... I **realize this**: God cares about me, more than even I do, and He's doing way more than I understand. His strength is made perfect in my weakness. I've embraced my weakness, therefore I've tapped into His strength. And what you need to understand is, I continue to believe, with everything in me, because the first time I prayed, heaven heard my prayer. And I trust in a God who is good, working in all things to bring about good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. That's how I continue to stand...just because we don't see anything doesn't mean my God isn't doing something."

**Stand & Pray.**