

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church**  
**Des Moines, WA**  
**July 4, 2010**

*Daniel 6:1-23*

**Daniel: Faithful Subject of Two Kingdoms!**

1. Faithful to his earthly kingdom
2. Faithful to his heavenly kingdom

Hymns: 617 – 618 – America –  
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All Scripture quotations from the NIV

*Daniel 6:1-23 – <sup>1</sup> It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, <sup>2</sup> with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. <sup>3</sup> Now 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. <sup>4</sup> At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. <sup>5</sup> Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."*

*<sup>6</sup> So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! <sup>7</sup> The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. <sup>8</sup> Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." <sup>9</sup> So King Darius put the decree in writing.*

*<sup>10</sup> Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his*

*upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. <sup>11</sup> Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. <sup>12</sup> So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?"*

*The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."*

*<sup>13</sup> Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." <sup>14</sup> When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.*

*<sup>15</sup> Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." <sup>16</sup> So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" <sup>17</sup> A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. <sup>18</sup> Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.*

*<sup>19</sup> At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. <sup>20</sup> When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" <sup>21</sup> Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! <sup>22</sup> My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."*

*<sup>23</sup> The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.*

Imagine this situation: A new neighbor has moved into your neighborhood. You get to know their family and they are really nice people. One day as you're talking, the discussion turns to sports. He likes college sports so he asks you about the state's college teams. You tell him that you're a loyal UW fan. You mention that the Husky football team has undergone some major changes and that you look for them to have a great year. Your neighbor says that he'll certainly look for them in the news this fall and he'll cheer hard for them.

He asks about other state teams. You tell him that the other main state school is Washington State over in Pullman. They've had some changes in their program and didn't have the best year last year. He tells you, "I think I'll be fans of both teams." "No, no, no!" you tell him. "You can't do that! You either are a Husky fan or a Cougar fan. You can't be both." That's the way it usually works, isn't it? You can't be fans of two programs that are that closely related like that.

However, Christians don't operate in the same way that sports fans do. Christians pledge their loyalty to two different areas of authority. Today that lesson is taught to us as we look briefly at the life of Daniel.

**Daniel, on this July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, shows us: "We are faithful subjects of two kingdoms."**

- 1. We are faithful to an earthly kingdom.**
- 2. We are faithful to God's heavenly kingdom.**

**1** — We read this about Daniel in our text: "*It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might*

*not suffer loss. Now 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.*" We need to set the context of these verses to understand this. Daniel did not live in the Holy Land for most of his life. He lived in a land on the other side of the Fertile Crescent called Babylon.

Why did he live there? Because of what we read in chapter one of Daniel: "*Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand...The king ordered (the) chief of his court officials to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility - young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians... They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service. Among these (was) Daniel.*"

Daniel was born in Palestine and was a bright young man among his people. But when the king of Babylon, whom the Lord was using to bring his people to repentance, defeated them, he took many of their bright young men. So Daniel went to Babylon.

**There he served his government faithfully.** That's saying something! After all, Daniel wasn't "one of them." He was a foreigner. How would you react to someone doing this to you? If you were deported to Japan, would you have no bitterness or resentment at simply serving the Japanese government faithfully, even if you were taken there against your will? We note that Daniel did not change his God, but as far as

servicing the government where he was, **he did it faithfully!**

Daniel even served during times of great change in his government. We read the name Nebuchadnezzar before. This was the first king Daniel served under. If you have ever read the book of Daniel, you know that Daniel interpreted two very important dreams for Nebuchadnezzar. After him came a king called Belshazzar. Daniel also faithfully served him. You may remember a famous story where Belshazzar was throwing a huge party to his gods, and the Lord caused a human hand to appear and write mysterious words on the wall. From this account we get the familiar saying about “seeing the handwriting on the wall.” Daniel was able, through the grace of God, to interpret this writing for Belshazzar.

Now, in our text, Daniel faithfully serves the king that came after Belshazzar, the conquerer of the Babylonians. His name was Darius. Look how faithful Daniel was to Darius. Darius, in organizing his government, put three administrators over his whole kingdom and 120 satraps under these administrators, so his kingdom was well regulated. Daniel was one of the three administrators. This is even more remarkable when we realize that Daniel was most likely over 80 years old at this time. Even at this age he was superior to others in wisdom!

Daniel’s wisdom and faithfulness even made the king think about making him the head of the other administrators! This caused jealousy among the other administrators and satraps. Perhaps his Jewish-ness was not so well received by everybody! So these men conducted a secret investigation into Daniel’s governing of the past. Surely there were some skeletons in his closet somewhere! But

remarkably, we see there were none. **Daniel’s record of faithfulness was flawless.** Imagine this being true of our politicians today! It’s almost laughable.

How about our faithfulness and loyalty to our earthly kingdom? Is it similar to Daniel’s? Is it remarkable and faithful? Consider this letter someone wrote tongue-in-cheek to the IRS about their quarterly tax payment:

Dear gentlemen of the IRS,

A few comments about my quarterly payment are probably in order. My quarterly payment is \$1875. I recently read that the president paid \$575 for a toilet seat used on his personal jet, so I am enclosing two toilet seats in this package. That leaves my balance at \$725. I also read that the US army on the base in our town was purchasing common work hammers for \$105 apiece. I have also enclosed 7 hammers, worth \$735 to you, in this package, bringing my total to -\$10. You can send me a check or money order for the \$10 that you owe me to the address on my voucher.

Happy to do my part,

John C. Doe

Obviously, this person had some humor in mind writing that. However, we might be tempted to dishonor our government in a sinful way. This might happen because we see situations that really turn us off at times. Perhaps these are with everyday laws:

- Maybe we don’t care to wear our seat belt when we drive
- Perhaps we want to talk on our cell phone or text as we drive
- Maybe we have strong opinions against building a tunnel instead of a new viaduct

We can be more turned off when issues conflict with our faith:

- Support in our government for abortion

- Promotion of unchristian world religions in the public school system
- Atheists that make their life's mission to prove our country was not built on Christian roots

But why would we be faithful citizens in our country?

- *“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.” (Romans 13:1)* God commands our submission to our government. Your opinion on immigration doesn't give you the right to disobey traffic laws or withhold your taxes.
- *“Seek the peace and prosperity of the city. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” (Jeremiah 29:7)* Our country prospers when it has the proper support of its citizens.
- *“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)* Support of our government is a witness of faith.
- Jesus submitted to the Roman government of his day and paid taxes. Sometimes people picture Jesus as a man who bucked the system or who fought the institution. This was not true of his attitude toward governmental authority.

Perhaps a disclaimer is proper at this point. It's important to note that submission to our government doesn't mean:

- That you can never speak up about issues
- That you accept any and every legislation up for discussion, no matter what it is

- That your voice should never be heard if we have opinions on current issues like health care and immigration

God's people should, by all means, be involved as private citizens! In fact, I'll go so far as to say it would be wrong if you didn't! This is important because it is not the Church's mission to make laws. The Church is here to change hearts by preaching the Word of God and using his sacraments. However, all of God's people can individually become involved on a personal level in their nation's business to let their light shine! This is why, if I want to voice my opinion as a citizen, I will not use my church e-mail address that has "pastor" attached to it, but my home e-mail address.

How else are we faithful citizens?

1. *“I urge, then, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (1 Timothy 2:1)* We pray for our country and our leaders in the government.
2. Jesus said, *“Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.” (Matthew 22:21)* We pay our taxes faithfully.
3. *“He who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.” (Romans 13:2)* We obey the laws of the land. After all, our Lord who saved us from our

sins has put our government over us for our protection!

4. We vote at election time.
5. We become involved in politics as we are moved to.

**May God make us faithful citizens of our country and move us to become involved to let our personal voice be heard when it's appropriate.**

**2** — We learn another lesson about the authorities over us in our reading today. Daniel also gives us a wonderful example of how to be faithful in God's heavenly kingdom. By the way, this does not refer simply to heaven. God's heavenly kingdom is his rule in our hearts, and the authority over us right now also. We read, "*The administrators and the satraps went in a group to the king and said: 'O King Darius, live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den.'* So King Darius put the decree in writing."

This placed Daniel in quite a dilemma. Daniel knew what Hosea 13:4 said: "*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me.*" So what would he do now? What would you do?

Daniel also knew that this was a type of law known as the "law of the Medes and Persians." That meant that it could not be changed under any circumstances. You probably have heard the phrase, "It's not written in stone," meaning there's some flexibility. There was no flexibility when it came to this law. It could not be repealed.

It was written in stone. So what would he do now? What would you do?

Daniel's conscience would not allow him to pray to the king. That was out of the question. It would not allow him to stop praying to his Lord. Perhaps you would have just postponed your prayers for 30 days if you had to face this? It also would not even allow him to be secretive about his prayers to the Lord. That would be denying his Lord to the world around him! So we hear, "*When Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.*" Earthly decrees against his Lord made no difference to Daniel. **He was faithful to his heavenly kingdom.** He prayed as he always had, regularly and openly.

We see how the Lord in his mercy declared that Daniel had done the right thing. Even though the king gave in to this hateful plot and had Daniel put in the lions' den, as Daniel said the next morning, "*My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight.*" Daniel had done the right thing by obeying his Lord first and foremost!

The principle has not changed for us today. We support both institutions, our earthly and heavenly kingdoms, but where the two clash, it's clear which one wins out. If you play cards, you know what trump is. The Lord's commands "trump" any commands that men may put in place in worldly governments, which conflict with his Word.

For example, preachers may have to make a choice in future days in our country

on what they preach about. There is a current movement in our land to make any speaking out against homosexuality a “hate crime,” punishable by law. This is already a law in Canada. Preachers could be watched for allegiance to this. What will WELS preachers do? What will you do if this is required of the general public also? It’s so easy to say, “I would have done what Daniel did!” But realize that he had lions to face! Realize that earlier in the book of Daniel, when a decree was issued that the whole land was to worship a golden statue, all the people obeyed it, except for three men who were thrown into the fiery furnace. There were not many dissenters!

Just as Daniel was faithful – as were the three men thrown in the fiery furnace – we always need to remember that we are disciples of Christ. I read in a magazine of a girl who loved the TV show M\*A\*S\*H (that’s the show about a medical unit’s antics during the Korean War). This girl loved M\*A\*S\*H! She dressed in army clothes like the characters wore. She had posters all over her room of the characters. She slept in an army cot. She had dog tags. She watched the show’s reruns whenever they were on! And I’m sure she could even recite big parts of the dialogue on shows because she had seen them so many times! That’s discipleship! Now if a person can do that with a TV show, how much more can a Christian be a disciple of Jesus? That would mean thinking of him, reading of him, worshiping him, praying to him, acting like him, and loving him day and night. After all, this is your Savior! This is the one who gave his life for you! You have heaven because of him! Be his disciple!

This attitude should be ours no matter where we are! Remember how Daniel was a disciple of Christ even though he was in a far-off land! No matter where

we go, whether it’s to college, out of town to work, to military service, or just a family move, we are Christ’s disciples wherever we are!

**As we conclude our look at this faithful man, Daniel, today, and as we celebrate Independence Day in our country this week, may we be faithful to two kingdoms!**

- 1. May we love and support our land and pray that God would bless it.**
- 2. May we be faithful to our heavenly kingdom, for God has blessed us so much.**

May God give us wisdom and guidance when life circumstances make it difficult between the two kingdoms. And finally, we pray that God would guide this world’s circumstances so that his gospel can be preached freely and that all those around us might be faithful citizens of both kingdoms! Amen.