**Small Group Notes – 4 July 2021**

**Welcome -** What is your favourite film and why?

**Word - Lion King – Daniel 6:6-28**

* **Daniel’s Position – 6:3**

In Chapter 1 of the Book of Daniel he is a young teenage Jewish boy taken from his home in Jerusalem to Babylon to train in the courts of the King as one of his servants. By chapter 6 Daniel is around the age of 80 and is Prime Minister of Babylon under the rule of Darius. It is a remarkable story of God’s grace and faithfulness.

* **Daniel’s Problem – 6:4-5**

The other rulers of the kingdom were jealous of Daniel and sought to destroy him. They devised this plan to trap Daniel with a royal decree that no one could bow down and worship or even pray to any God except the King.

* **Daniel’s Prayer & Praise – 6:10**

Daniel’s response is not to run to the king and complain or retaliate, after all he is the Prime Minister. Instead he goes to his God in prayer & praise. Prayer was Daniel’s lifeline, we read that Daniel went to prayer as he always did.

* **Daniel’s Persecution – 6:15-17**

Daniel’s prayers and praise to his God did not stop him from being persecuted and thrown into the Lion’s den. In fact, sometimes it appears that faith makes life even more difficult. So what’s the point on praying and trusting in God? Like Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego in the fiery furnace, Daniel’s faith is not dependent upon God bringing him out alive from the lion’s den. He has the same faith as his three friend’s in God to deliver them from the flames.

*Faith is not dependent on God’s rescue. In both stories those facing death clearly believe that God is able to rescue them – but this is not the basis for their faith. They are loyal to God because he is God, and if they must die for their loyalty so be it. Faith is rooted in who God is, not in what he does for those who serve him.* **Gerrard Kelly**

**Open Doors estimate that currently around 11 Christians are martyred for their faith every day.** Jesus promised his disciples that they would have trouble in this world, but then repeatedly affirmed that they would never be alone, that he would always be with them. He says the same to us today. Nothing has changed and the promise of His presence with us is as true today as it was with the first disciples.

* **Daniel’s protection 6:19-24**

Because of the decree not even the King (the most powerful man on the planet) could save Daniel. However, like Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego, Daniel receives the Lord’s protection and deliverance. We don’t know what specifically happened in the lion’s den but we do know that Daniel was spared certain death not because the lions were not hungry at that moment but because God kept their mouths shut. When King Darius orders those who had tried to get Daniel killed to be thrown to the Lions, they and their family members are torn to shreds immediately. A very nasty end indeed!

* **Darius Proclamation 6:25-27**

Daniel’s enemies try to use his faith against him to entrap him and get rid of him. Instead Daniels openness to be known as a believer of Yahweh in public and private leads a foreign king becoming the mouth piece of Yahweh! Instead of punishment Daniel receives promotion.

May our love for Jesus be known in both the public and private place and may it influence those around us for His glory.

**Questions**

In Chapter 1 Daniel is a teenage boy being trained in the courts of the king and in Chapter 6 he is around 80yrs old and finds himself promoted to Prime Minister. Think about your own journey, the place where God has currently positioned you?

* Can you see God’s hand at work and give thanks for his faithfulness?
* Why were the various leaders jealous of Daniel? What did they do? Verses 6-9
* Can you remember a time when you were jealous of someone? How did you deal with it?
* How did Daniel respond? Verse 10
* Why is daily prayer and worship so essential and important?
* Can you remember a time when someone was jealous of you? How did you respond?
* Why was Daniel not eaten by the lions? V21-22
* Why don’t all believers who have faith and trust in the Lord experience the same deliverance and protection that Daniel did??
* What happened to Daniel’s accusers? Do you think it was fair?   
  What principle does this indicate? Verse 24
* In what way is Daniel’s deliverance like the one that Christ won for you, for the whole of mankind?

**Worship** – Spend time meditating on Jesus death on the cross and his resurrection.

**Prayers** – Go on the Open Doors website and use the information to pray together for the Persecuted Church around the world.