

Advent 2020

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Week 1 - God in the Lion's Den, Daniel 6:6-27

Introduction:

One year ago.

What did I think my life would look like one year ago?

I had a plan for ministry that involved gathering a lot of people together.

I thought my family was complete with two boys and two girls.

I had no idea there would be a plague that would rattle the world.

Two weeks ago I watched our online service with most people that attend our church from a hospital room where I held my new baby girl and was told we had the coronavirus in our family. We are just now emerging from quarantine.

I'm not going to lie. I have had a few days where I was overwhelmed, tired and in need of help.

This year for Advent we will take a look at the theological concept of "Immanuel." It literally means, "God is with us."

God is with us.

He is with me when my professional plans fall apart. He is with me when my family planning falls apart.

He is with me when my family and I are sick.

He is with me when the church I love can't gather.

God is with me.

History is full of stories of very strange, unexpected and sometimes scary times and God being right there with His people.

God is with you.

Where today do you need God to be present?

Today we will look at the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den, but we are going to change the title of the story to; God in the lions Den.

God will be in your lions Den.

To the text:

Daniel 6:6-10; 16-23 (ESV):

6 Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! 7 All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." 9 Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

10 When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

16 Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!"

17 And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. 18 Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

19 Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. 20 As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

21 Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! 22 My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm." 23 Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

- The lens of chaos vs. the lens of divine intention.
 - God was with him in the loss of his family.
 - God was with him in his enslavement.
 - God was with him in his ability to impress his captors with his work.
 - God was with him in the lion's den.
 - God was with him when the whole nation turned to God (vs.26).
- Remember your story isn't done. God was with Daniel in his losses and everything the enemy meant for destruction was going to crescendo in glorious victory.
- Immanuel, God is with us. This isn't really a story about Daniel in the lion's den. It's a story about God in the lion's den. It's a look into the nature of God. He is with you. God is in your lion's den.
- Your greatest moments of victory may be moments that begin feeling like failure.

Final Thoughts:

Where do you need to believe God is still moving?

We need to pray and practice God awareness.

Let's do this liturgical response together. I will say: "The Lord is here." You will respond with: "His Spirit is with us."

Now imagine the places you need to believe He is with you. When I say "The Lord is here," think about the the lion's den places in your life where you need Immanuel, God with you. When you respond with "His Spirit is with us", make it a spiritual decree!

"The Lord is here, His spirit is with us."

Next Steps Cards:

What is God speaking to you?