



Sunday 23rd August 2020

Notes from our Sunday Morning
Pre-recorded Worship

Welcome

Song

King Of Me

Chorus

My God's the king of the giants
My God's the king of the lions
My God's the king of the creatures of the deep
My God's the king of me

Verse 1

Have you heard the story
About my friend King Dave
Wouldn't let the giant stand in his way
He said hand me my sling 'cause he's not that tall
My God is bigger and I'll watch him fall

Verse 2

Have you heard the one
About this guy called Dan
Yes he was a mighty holy praying man
They said throw him to the den of the scary beasts
But God saved our hero from the lion's teeth

This is more than history
He will do the same for me
Like Jonah and the whale at sea
When I'm lost and afraid all alone in the dark
You're with me
Oh You're with me

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Reading: Daniel 6:1-10

6 It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, 2 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. 3 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. 4 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. 5 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."

6 So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: "May King Darius live forever! 7 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 human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den. 8 Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." 9 So King Darius put the decree in writing.

10 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.

Talk by Toby Nicholls – “Stop and Rest”

I love the story of Daniel – he is an inspirational man, taken captive into exile by Judah’s enemies the Babylonians. Daniel has lost his home, his people, the Temple – the place of God’s presence has been destroyed. There is that well known Psalm 137 that says ‘By the Rivers of Babylon we sat, and we wept when we remember Zion’. God’s people are in an awful situation, all hope is seemingly lost, God has seemingly abandoned them. But we discover Daniel living in this awful time with the most amazing faith and hope and in doing so showing the world that his God is real, his God is faithful and his God is supreme in power and authority. Daniel’s faithfulness to God has led great blessing and he is about to be made one of the most powerful people in Babylon.

If worshiping and living for God among those who do not and are even your enemies is not hard already, Daniel’s faithfulness to God is now putting his life in danger. Jealousy is driving the other leaders and advisors, and it is not fair what they are doing him, it is not just, it is just downright mean, spiteful – we could even call it evil. But that is just the actions of men, we know that another is at work, the devil is also in this, he wants to take Daniel out of the game, to strip the hope away, to crush God’s people even more – because that’s what he does right? He is out to steal, kill and destroy. To keep people from discovering the goodness of God and the wonder of a life of worship to him.

How would you feel in that moment, can we put ourselves in Daniel’s shoes? You have just been told that if you continue to worship Jesus or go to church on a Sunday, or read your bible and pray, will lead to your immediate death in a pit of torture – fed to hungry lions. How would you feel and respond? Anger, unjustly targeted, scared, panicked, overwhelmed, defiant?

Thank God you and I will probably never face exactly what Daniel is facing, but we do all still face overwhelming situations in our lives. Situations that challenge our faith, or situations that just challenge us as humans. That feeling of being dropped into a pit with no obvious way out is not that unfamiliar. In these moments of life we’re always trying to find solid ground when we feel like we are sinking. We run to what we know is comfortable and safe even if we also know it not necessarily the best thing for us.

Daniel is amazing, it is not what he does that amazes me – because I think all of us in Daniel’s situation would lock ourselves in a room and pray like we have never prayed before. But it is the last 6 words of our passage today that strikes me and challenges me “Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before”.

Just as he had done before, Daniel did not change one thing about his life, his actions or his relationship with God. He didn’t call in a human rescuer, he didn’t hide from it or ignore, he didn’t even try to buy or pursue his way out of it. There is no doubt his prayers that day may have had a new sense of urgency about them. But Daniel had already established his safe place and his solid ground. When the world came crashing in and the enemy was out to kill him he just did what he always did.

If that were you in this story would those 6 words be written about you?

As I said to my POD group this week, if God has reminded me of anything over the last few months it is that I am not in control – as hard as I try to be – I am not in control, my life, my finances, my future are in his hands. I am not in control of whether or not I have a job, I am not in control of this pandemic and even though I did all I could not to catch it, I was not in control of whether I got sick. I just have to be faithful with what I have and am today, and then tomorrow and then the day after that – I can plan and hope for the future but they are in his hands and today I must be faithful to him who has never failed me.

The best thing we can do today is to develop that solid ground so when the challenges come we know exactly where to go and what to do – and it will be the same as yesterday and the same as we will do tomorrow.

Peter Scazzero in his book *Emotionally Healthy spirituality* defines this as : Discovering the rhythm of rest and discipline (*my paraphrase*).

His eyes were opened to this when he stayed with some monks and 7 times throughout the day and night they stopped their work and gathered together to worship, to pray, to study, to meditate. The helpful thing is that we already have rhythm to each day, Sleep, eat, work, rest and eat, work, eat, rest and sleep. If it is not something along

those lines then you are either very sleep deprived, starving or utterly exhausted. This rhythm of rest, God has designed into our bodies. If you look back all the way to the creation story you will discover that God's intent was that our physical rest was a returning to him. It was one of the first things he taught the Israelites when they came out of slavery, out of working and slaving 7 days a week with no rest. It is the longest of the 10 commandments – the 7th day you sabbath to God, you set apart one day a week and orientate it around him, rest in him, draw on him, worship him, centre your life on him.

I really recommend Jon Marc Commers book called the garden city – which is an easy read and a very eye-opening look at how we see work and rest and sabbath.

The monks Peter Scazzero stayed with took that pattern and applied it to each day, 7 divisions with time set apart to God between each, Daniel orientated his day around three times in God's presence, Jesus did it regularly withdrawing, resting, being with his father.

What we are talking about is not something to add into our day or into our week. It is meant to be something that our days and our weeks orientate around, something that is life-giving, out of which our labour and our relationships flow, out of which we can face the battles each day, somewhere we remember where the source of our blessings. It is the rhythm of stopping that gives us that mindfulness of God, it is the help we need to practice the presence of God in every moment of our days.

Imagine your day as one continuous swim in the ocean – you just can't swim all day – you have to return to solid ground to draw strength, to rest and refresh, to remember you're not actually a fish but a human in deep water. We spend most of our days thinking we are fish, being like everyone else, forgetting that we have be set apart – the sea is no longer our home.

In us God is defining what being human means, we need solid ground even when the sea is calm and easy to swim in, we still need rest, we need him, need to remember him and draw on him often. The reality is, that is what everyone else needs too because they are not actually fish either. So, our regular stopping to be with the father is not just for our benefit but also for theirs – to show them God's design for humanity.

Daniel was well known for his prayer and his faith, well known even though he hid himself away to pray, they knew what he was doing, recognised it's impact on his life and the amazing fruitfulness of everything he touched. It was so well known that his enemies knew he would never compromise on it. I don't know about you, but I find that challenging.

Peter Scazzero in his books suggests that those moments of resting with our father should compose 4 consistent elements. I want you just to do this as I talk them through, close your eyes if it helps.

1. Stopping

Stopping is about stillness, 'be still and know that I am God'. You can do that in the middle of a storm, in the middle of a night club, in the middle of an argument. It is not primarily a physical thing, you can do it while you walk, run. It's the inner stillness we need to master but often the physical stillness helps us to do that. Only when we are still can we be centred.

2. Centring

Centring is about becoming aware of the most amazing thing of being a Christian. God is here – I am in his presence. The holy Spirit has moved in and made his home in me and it is good – he is good.

This is the moment where we remember that we are tiny and he is awesome. He is in control; he is life for us to draw on and he cleanses us from all our sin.

Breath in his life and goodness,
Breath Out the filth and sin of our lives
Breath in his forgiveness, healing and restoration of our soul
Breath out the stress, chaos, the hurt and pain

Allow the depth of our gratitude to rise and we become aware of his amazing grace and how underserving we are of it. For me this is the key to God's presence through the cross of Jesus and all it means for me. I find him on the other side every time, waiting for me. This is not some new age spirituality, this is truth, this is the work of our father

Perhaps have a song in your head or some music to listen to, a verse to repeat that helps you centre on him.

Now that your centred – listen to the silence.

3. Silence

You could be on the noisiest place on the planet and know silence. But it definitely helps if your somewhere quiet. This is about stilling your mind and listening. For Elijah God did not come in the wind, or the earthquake or the fire he came in the silence.

Sometimes God will speak to us, sometimes I think we end up listing into a broadcast from God and sometimes there is just the silence. Mother Tereasa was once asked what she says to God in her prayers – she said "I listen". Then asked what does God say to you, she said "he listens".

Be silent, the longer you listen the more you hear sounds that you never even noticed were there until you stopped. The same is true of listening to God the more we listen the more our spiritual ears tune in.

4. Scripture

The final element of our stopping is food for our souls – the word of God. It does not matter how you get it but get some regularly. Reading the bible in a year, study notes, memory verses, meditating on a verse for weeks on end, pod casts – in the information age there is no shortage of help and resources to feed on God's word. I am sure you have found like me, that when you let his word in, it shapes you, it shaped your day. It finds it's way in situations and conversations.

Let a verse you remember this week be this one from Daniel 6 *"Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before"*.

Stopping, Centring, Silence and scripture.

Remember it is not something to add into your day. It is the solid ground from which you launch into deep water time and time again throughout your day. This is the day you need that enables you to be the person you want to be the other 6. If it is not life giving then do not do it, if it has just become a lifeless routine then stop. Switch it up, change the method, the place the time.

Intercessions

Father God, we want to thank you that our hope is in Jesus. We thank you that you are making all things new. Lord we praise you that we get to partner with you, to be your hands and your feet, as you bring your kingdom here on earth.

Father, we lift this whole pandemic up to you once more. As more than eight hundred thousand people have died and as there are greater surges in India, South Africa and Spain, the US and Brazil. As we see new waves closer to home in France, Austria, Croatia and the UK. Lord, would you break in and eradicate this virus. Lord would we see your kingdom come. Would we see a revival and would you call us to pray, to love, to care and to serve as you served, to be salt and light at this time.

God, as we look to the refugees around the world, let us not forget what is going on with more than seventy million people displaced globally, many of whom are children. God, would you break in and would you make your presence known to them. Lord as they risk their lives to cover land and sea, as they sleep in foreign lands, in shanty towns and tented villages, would you break in. Would they dream dreams of you their Lord and Saviour. Would you reach out to them in their darkness. Lord, would you challenge us, would you lead us into opportunity and challenge our hearts

to reach out practically, financially and prayerfully, to be your hands and feet, to be your salt and light and to be bringers of your kingdom here on earth.

Father, as we think about our own land, the United Kingdom. As the virus starts to kick up again in certain regions, as we see increasing redundancies and the economy seems broken. Lord, would we put our trust back in our Rock, our Salvation, our Fortress. Would we be still and know that you are God, despite the storms. As the teachers, parents and in particular the children, prepare to go back to school, would you give them a period of rhythm, clarity and continuity. Let this be a season of learning and creativity, but above all things would you bring good from this crisis. We pray that you would raise up new followers of Jesus. Would you revive our land through all of this. That these children would grow with a sense that the only foundation and solid ground is in you.

Father, we thank you that you have all of our prayers in your hands. We thank you that we can come before you and worship you. Thank you for all that you did Jesus on that cross and that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Thank you that in all things you are creating something new and our hope is in you.

Songs

New Wine

Verse

In the crushing in the pressing
You are making new wine
In the soil I now surrender
You are breaking new ground
(You are breaking new ground)

Pre-Chorus

So I yield to You and to Your careful hand
When I trust You I don't need to understand

Chorus

(So) Make me Your vessel
Make me an offering
Make me whatever You want me to be
(God) I came here with nothing
But all You have given me
Jesus bring new wine out of me

Jesus bring new wine out of me
Jesus bring new wine out of me

Bridge

'Cause where there is new wine
There is new power
There is new freedom
And the kingdom is here
I lay down my old flames
To carry Your new fire today

Before The Throne Of God Above

Verse 1

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea
A great High Priest whose name is Love
Who ever lives and pleads for me
My name is graven on His hands
My name is written on His heart
I know that while in heav'n He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart
No tongue can bid me thence depart

Chorus

Hallelujah
My life is found in Jesus Christ
Hallelujah
For I am His and He is mine

Verse 2

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end to all my sin
Because the sinless Saviour died
My sinful soul is counted free
For God the Just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me
To look on Him and pardon me

Verse 3

Behold Him there the risen Lamb
My perfect spotless righteousness
The great unchangeable I Am
The King of glory and of grace
One with Himself I cannot die
My soul is purchased with His blood
My life is hid with Christ on high
With Christ my Saviour and my God
With Christ my Saviour and my God

Verse 4

I bow before the cross of Christ
And marvel at this love divine
God's perfect Son was sacrificed
To make me righteous in God's eyes
This river's depths I cannot know
But I can glory in its flood
The Lord Most High has bowed down low
And poured on me His glorious love
And poured on me His glorious love

Family News

Our Wednesday Morning Liturgical Services continues this week at 9am. Do see the Sunday email with full details or contact the Church Office for more information. (01483 455333/ office@st-saviours.org.uk).

The Church will be open for private prayer from Monday to Wednesday this week, 10am to 1pm. Please wear a face covering (unless you are exempt) if you are visiting the church for private prayer or for any other reason. Do get in contact with the church office if you have any questions or would like to chat further.

If you're new to St Saviour's and are interested in joining our Welcome Course in the autumn or chatting further with one of the team, we'd love to hear from you! Do get in contact with us via the Church Office. We're really looking forward to getting to know you, and helping you get stuck in.

We're excited to be launching Daily Psalm from 1st September. These will be short video reflections with a Psalm-a-day filmed by you the church family and accessible on YouTube or via a daily email. Contact the church office to sign up to our mailing list to receive them, and if you'd like to film one, please do get in touch with Joy.

Furnace is back on Weds 2nd September at 8pm on Zoom. We will be praying for the term ahead, our town and our world, worshipping together creatively and seeking God's heart. Do bring along some paper, pencils and art materials if you have some. We'll be engaging in worship and listening to God in some creative ways. If you'd like to sign-up for specific email reminders and details about Furnace in the future, do contact the church office.