

March 16, 2020

Good afternoon ladies.

Karen Jensen wanted to share the following with you.

During this time, we must remember our theme for church right now: Power, love and a SOUND MIND 2 Tim. 1:7 - For God hath not given us a spirit of fear; but of power and of love and a sound mind!

Finding Peace When We're Tempted to Panic, Lysa Terkeurst *{Editor's Note: It's been a strange week in the world, with all of the discussions and decisions around the COVID-19 virus. And so we wanted to share an extra "bonus" devotion today, just in case you, like our team, have felt a little on the anxious side. We don't often share two devotions the same day, but these are unprecedented times. We pray these thoughtful reminders from Lysa TerKeurst help guide your heart in the days and weeks ahead!}*

"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." Daniel 6:10 (ESV)

Nothing can throw me into a pit quite like circumstances I can't control. It's that place where anxiety threatens to swallow me whole as my mind races through all of the fear-inducing what-ifs and unknowns.

That's why I'm so thankful for the example set by Daniel in Scripture. Daniel 6:1-15 gives us such a clear picture of what we can do when all that feels safe and secure in our lives begins to come under attack.

In Daniel 6:10, Daniel has just learned that anyone caught praying to someone besides King Darius will be thrown into the lions' den. Can you imagine the level of fear this edict could have stirred up in Daniel? He easily could have found himself in a pit of despair before he ever came close to that pit full of lions. But Daniel's reaction is amazing.

Daniel goes home, throws his windows open and prays anyway. I wonder if I could have been so brave?

And do you know what he chose to pray?

"God, save me!"

"God, it's not fair!"

"God, this is too much!"

"God, smite my enemies and wipe them out!"

No. None of the above.

Daniel 6:10b tells us Daniel spoke prayers of gratitude. *“He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.”*

Since Daniel’s response is so opposite of the way most of us would react, it makes me stop and ponder. And what I discover are three powerful truths I want to both remember and live out.

1) Thankfulness must become a habit. Our initial responses are usually a by-product of the rituals we’ve established in our life. Since gratitude-filled prayers were Daniel’s reaction, that tells me *gratitude and trust in God were front and center in Daniel’s heart*. Daniel was able to give thanks, even in the midst of uncontrollable circumstances, because it was a habit he’d already formed in his life.

2) Fighting fear begins the moment we start giving thanks. Being a thankful person seemed to help Daniel combat fear. Never once does the story mention Daniel trying to hide. He didn’t set about trying to control or manipulate his situation. He simply threw his windows open and prayed where anyone and everyone could see. This wasn’t Daniel living in denial of his circumstances. This was Daniel turning to God in the midst of his circumstances.

3) We can’t always fix our circumstances, but we can fix our eyes on God. Daniel’s posture during prayer is revealing. First, we see Daniel was praying toward Jerusalem — a posture based on King Solomon’s words in 1 Kings 8:35-51 during the temple dedication. Daniel knew where his help and his hope came from — it came from God, and God alone.

Daniel’s deep level of trust is also revealed in that he was kneeling as he prayed. Prostration is a sign of both self-awareness and God-awareness. (1 Kings 8:54, Ezra 9:5, Luke 22:41, Acts 7:60) It’s an act of deep humility. We may not always be kneeling when we pray, but we can always choose the posture of Daniel’s heart.

Let’s ask the Lord to help us humbly and gratefully fix our eyes on Him instead of fixating on our problems today. And let’s allow Daniel’s life to be proof to our hearts that the words of Isaiah 26:3 are indeed true: God is able to keep in perfect peace those whose minds are fixed on Him, because they trust in Him.

Father God, I know it is normal for us to sometimes find ourselves in a pit of fear and discouragement. But we don’t have to stay there. Today, we’re choosing to fix our eyes on You. And we’re remembering that each thing we verbalize our thankfulness for is like a steppingstone out of the pit we’ve been in. Thank You for providing Your timeless truths that prove to us over and over again how powerfully capable You always are. With You by our side, we have no need to fear. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

TRUTH FOR TODAY

Deuteronomy 7:9, *“Know therefore, that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.”* (NIV)

Psalm 27:1, *“The LORD is my light and my salvation — so why should I be afraid? The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble?”* (NLT)

Psalm 119:90, *“Your faithfulness extends to every generation, as enduring as the earth you created.”* (NLT)

Lamentations 3:21-23, *“Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.”* (NLT)

Psalm 33:4, *“For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does.”* (NLT)

1 Timothy 1:17, *“All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God. Amen.”* (NLT)

Psalm 146:5-6, *“But joyful are those who have the God of Israel as their helper, whose hope is in the LORD their God. He made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them. He keeps every promise forever.”* (NLT)

Hebrews 13:6-8, *“So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?’ Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”* (NIV)

<https://youtu.be/f8TkUMJtK5k>