

**Lenten Midweek Sermon**  
**For the Fifth Week in Lent**  
**Luther Memorial Chapel, Shorewood, Wisconsin**  
*Pastor Michael Larson*  
*4/1/2020*



*Daniel In The Lions Den by Briton Riviere*

*Readings: Dan. 6:10-23 / Luke 23:26-56*

Today we have the account of Daniel in the Lion's Den side by side with the crucifixion and death of Our Lord Jesus. The parallels between these two accounts are stunning: the persecution of a righteous man, the sealing of a tomb with a rock, followed by a mighty deliverance and rescue!

In our day and age it's a good time to reacquaint yourself and your loved ones with the book of Daniel. It's a book for our time giving instruction

and encouragement on how to live a godly life by faith in the Gospel while living in a sub-pagan world. Daniel and his three friends, renamed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were among those brought into captivity by the Babylonians and refused to worship those false Babylonian gods. Even when threatened with incineration Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They spoke right to the king, “If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace...and even if not (that is, even if we are burned alive!), be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

They refused to worship any God but the true God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When the king’s men bound them and threw them into the burning furnace, what happened? All saw a fourth man walking in the midst of the fire, one like the son of the gods, one who indeed WAS the Son of God, Christ our Lord! By God’s merciful protection they walked out of that furnace without a single hair singed, without even the smell of fire touching them, because God was with them.

Even Nebuchadnezzar had to acknowledge that this was the work of the true God, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were actually promoted to places of greater authority within the province of Babylon.

Daniel was a teenager when he was taken from Jerusalem into captivity by the Babylonians, and now in our reading tonight, he’s serving faithfully under Darius, King of Persia. An excellent spirit was within. He’s successful. He’s talented, loyal, and trustworthy. Therefore, the king has special plans for him – to set him over the whole kingdom! But the haters come out, perhaps mostly because he’s excelled in a culture that isn’t his own (we can learn from this!). But like our own time, it’s political season, and after unsuccessfully trying to find dirt on faithful Daniel, they have to resort to other means. They make a law forbidding prayer, essentially requiring that all bow down and worship a pagan

king. Now, let's be clear! Daniel would have given his life up if called upon by Darius his king. He'd serve him faithfully with every thing he's got! But deny His God in the process! No way!

Daniel continues to do what he's always done. To pray toward Jerusalem - toward that place where the redeemer of the world would come to save fallen man. When Daniel was thrown to the lions, a pit of death and destruction, what did he have to fear? He trusted in the God who rescues from death and destruction! He trusted in the God who walked in the fire to rescue Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Just listen to the 23<sup>rd</sup> verse here "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." Daniel trusted in the mercy of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the destroyer of death.

Folks, these events are a preview of God's ultimate triumph over all the forces of evil. As you saw this past Sunday, Jesus laid down on the altar that Isaac escaped from. Today we see Jesus gasping for breath between two criminals on the cross absorbing the fiery furnace of God's wrath for all sinners, all so that we would be forgiven, set free, and find refreshment by His words of pardon. He is placed in the pit of death, but those lions of destruction couldn't consume Him, and so the stone was rolled aside, and He was vindicated by His Father, with death and hell all lying at His feet.

Deliverance and rescue is EVERYWHERE in the Bible. It's big, bold, and permeates everything. Your life too! Whatever it is—you'll get through. Pandemics? God delivers. Famines? God feeds. We fear the depression will never lift but it will. The anxiety never end but it will. The pain will never leave but God gives relief. We wonder, will this gray sky ever brighten? But it will!

It was out of the whale's belly for Jonah. It was out of the lions' den for Daniel. It was out of Goliath's shadow for David. Out of the storm for the disciples, the disease for the lepers, doubt for Thomas, and the grave

for Lazarus. It was out of the prison for Peter and the shackles for Paul. Folks, God gets us through! He saves and delivers!

Through the wilderness, through the valley of the shadow of death, God delivers. “Through,” “out of”, and “up” are some of God’s favorite phrases. Thus says the Lord, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior” (Is. 43:2-3). In the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Hymn of the Day: 420 Christ, the Life of All the Living**



1 Christ, the life of all the liv - ing, Christ, the death of  
 2 Thou, ah! Thou, hast tak - en on Thee Bonds and stripes, a  
 3 Thou hast borne the smit - ing on - ly That my wounds might  
 4 Heart - less scof - fers did sur - round Thee, Treat - ing Thee with



death, our foe, Who, Thy - self for me once giv - ing  
 cru - el rod; Pain and scorn were heaped up - on Thee,  
 all be whole; Thou hast suf - fered, sad and lone - ly,  
 shame - ful scorn And with pierc - ing thorns they crowned Thee.



To the dark - est depths of woe; Through Thy suf - f'rings,  
 O Thou sin - less Son of God! Thus didst Thou my  
 Rest to give my wea - ry soul; Yea, the curse of  
 All dis - grace Thou, Lord, hast borne, That as Thine Thou



death, and mer - it I e - ter - nal life in - her - it.  
 soul de - liv - er From the bonds of sin for - ev - er.  
 God en - dur - ing, Bless - ing un - to me se - cur - ing.  
 might - est own me And with heav'n - ly glo - ry crown me.



Thou-sand, thou - sand thanks shall be, Dear - est Je - sus, un - to Thee.  
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5 Thou hast suffered men to bruise Thee,  
That from pain I might be free;  
Falsely did Thy foes accuse Thee:  
Thence I gain security;  
Comfortless Thy soul did languish  
Me to comfort in my anguish.  
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,  
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

6 Thou hast suffered great affliction  
And hast borne it patiently,  
Even death by crucifixion,  
Fully to atone for me;  
Thou didst choose to be tormented  
That my doom should be prevented.  
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,  
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

7 Then, for all that wrought my pardon,  
For Thy sorrows deep and sore,  
For Thine anguish in the Garden,  
I will thank Thee evermore,  
Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing,  
For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,  
For that last triumphant cry,  
And shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.

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## Litany of the Passion

Lord, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy.

God the Father in heaven,

**Have mercy.**

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

**Have mercy.**

God the Holy Spirit,

**Have mercy.**

Jesus, Son of the living God,

**Have mercy.**

From all evil,

**O Jesus, deliver us.**

From sudden, unprepared, or evil death;

From the snares of the devil;

From anger, hatred, or ill-will;

From everlasting death,

**O Jesus, deliver us.**

By the mystery of Your incarnation;

By Your most holy life and conversation;

By Your most bitter Passion and death;

By Your agony and bloody sweat;

By Your thrice-repeated prayer;

By Your bonds and stripes;

By Your sacred body, buffeted and smitten;

By the spitting upon Your adorable face;

By the false judgment pronounced by Caiaphas;

By Herod's disdain of You;

By the shameful stripping of Your garments;

By Your painful crown of thorns;

By Your purple robe of mockery;

By Your most unjust condemnation;

By Your bearing Your own cross;

By Your footprints to the place of death;

By the tearing off of Your garments;

By the cruel straining of Your sacred limbs;

By Your dread crucifixion;

By the anguish You did suffer;  
By Your prayers and tears;  
By the insults You endured;  
By the shedding of Your most precious blood;  
By Your patience and humility;  
By the love with which You loved us to the end:

**O Jesus, deliver us.**

We poor sinners implore You to hear us:

**O most loving Jesus.**

That being dead to sin, we may live unto righteousness;  
That we may take up our cross daily and follow You;  
That Your blood may cleanse us from dead works to serve the living God;  
That looking on Your example, we may follow Your steps;  
That being partakers of Your sufferings, we may be also partakers of Your  
glory:

**We implore You to hear us, O Jesus.**

To give comfort and relief to all affected by the scourge of pandemic;

**We implore You to hear us, O Jesus.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**Have mercy.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**Have mercy.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**Grant us Your peace.**

**Our Father ...**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus + Christ, the love of God and the communion of  
the Holy Spirit be with us all.

**Amen.**