

Drawing the Line

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[0 : 00] I'm going to turn now to the Bibles and invite you to do so likewise. We're going to be reading this morning from Daniel chapter 1. You'll find that I think on page 737 if you have one of our church visitors Bibles.

And Terry is going to be leading us through this exciting chapter this morning. And we'll read together the whole of Daniel chapter 1. So beginning then at verse 1.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand with some of the vessels of the house of God.

And he brought them to the land of Shinar to the house of his God and placed the vessels in the treasury of his God. Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, youths without blemish, with good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding, learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace.

And to teach them the literature and the language of the Chaldeans. The king assigned him a daily portion of the food that the king ate and of the wine that he drank.

[1 : 32] They were to be educated for three years. And at the end of the time, they were to stand before the king. Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah.

And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names. Daniel, he called Belteshazzar. Hananiah, he called Shadrach. Mishael, he called Meshach.

And Azariah, he called Abednego. But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, nor with the wine that he drank.

Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of eunuchs.

The chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, I fear my lord, the king, who assigned your food and drink. For why should he see that you are in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age?

[2 : 34] So you endanger my head with the king. But Daniel said to the steward of the chief of the eunuchs, that he had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. He said, test your servant for ten days.

Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you. And deal with your servants according to what you see.

So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. At the end of ten days, it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food.

So the steward took away their food and their wine and gave them the vegetables. As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom.

And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

[3 : 39] And the king spoke with them. And among all of them, none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore, they stood before the king.

And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.

And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus. Amen. May God bless to us his word.

I invite you to take your Bibles and to turn with me again to Daniel chapter 1. Daniel chapter 1, which you will find in page 737 of the Pew Bible.

And as you turn up that page, a moment of prayer. Father, what we know not, we pray that you would teach us.

[4 : 49] What we have not, we pray that you would give us. And what we are not, we pray that you would make us. For our good and for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Amen. By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the potlard trees we hung our harps.

For there our captors asked us for songs. Our tormentors demanded songs of joy. They said, sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land? It's a good question, isn't it? How can we sing the Lord's song while in a foreign land?

As we come to the book of Daniel, amongst other things. This is one of the questions that the people of the exile, the people of Psalm 137, the people of Daniel's day. This is one of the questions that they were asking.

[5 : 52] Can I live faithfully for the Lord while in a foreign land? And that too is a very contemporary question for us too, friends. For us who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul says that we too are an exiled people. We are citizens of heaven. And from there we await a saviour. And we also too ask questions like, How can I faithfully live for the Lord? How can I faithfully live for the Lord in the situations that I find myself in? Situations at home, in my neighbourhood, in my school, in my university, at my place of work, amongst my family, and amongst my friends.

Is it possible for me to sing the Lord's song in these environments? In these environments that are hostile to Him and hostile to everything I believe?

Well, as we come to the book of Daniel this morning, we will see that the answer to those questions, both then and now, are a resounding yes.

[7 : 00] Yes, it is possible to sing the Lord's song. And yes, it is possible not only to live faithfully, but also to live fruitfully for God in a foreign land.

The book of Daniel, amongst other things, records the spiritual testimony of Daniel from the beginning of the exile. To the end of the exile. Covering Daniel's life from a teenager, aged maybe about 14, until he was a much older man in his 80s.

Did you know that about chapter 6, when Daniel was in the lion's den? That he wasn't a young man. He was almost certainly a man in his early 80s. So this book has much to say to us by way of encouragement.

That we can never be too young, nor can we be too old to live faithfully for the Lord in a foreign land. And this book also comes by way of great challenge.

Challenge to the younger generation. That faithful, fruitful living is not just something for the older folks. And challenge to the older generation.

[8 : 07] That you must continue to live faithfully and fruitfully, even though you may have done so for years. You can't take your feet off the gas and leave it to the younger generation.

No, you must continue to the end. For your good, and for the good of all those who come behind you, you must finish the race. And finish it well. Well, let's get into the text of Daniel chapter 1.

There are many things in this chapter that will enable faithful living in a foreign land. But the first thing I want us to see in this chapter is from verses 1 and 2. Remember, the Lord is King.

Remember, the Lord is King. These verses set the scene that really are the key to understanding the big theme of the book. That the Lord is King. The Lord reigns.

Verse 1 thrusts us into the year 605 BC. To the beginning of the exile of the people of God. The Exodus. The Exodus had been the blockbuster event of the Old Testament.

[9 : 11] For God's people having been led out of Egypt and slavery by God. Under the hand of Moses. To the promised land. But what we have here in these verses.

Is the catastrophic event of the exile. God's people. God's people. Beated. Dispersed. And carried off into a foreign land.

Well, who or what was behind the exile? Well, if we look to verse 1 and to the history books of the world. They will tell us that it was the military might of the Babylonian Empire.

But if we look to verse 2. God's word tells us that it was the Lord. It was the Lord who delivered Jehiakim into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

That over evening the earth shattering events of the exile. The Lord was sovereign. And in total control. We see God's sovereign hand all over this chapter.

[10:10] Verse 2. God giving Jehiakim into Nebuchadnezzar's hand. Verse 9. The official showing favor to Daniel. And also verse 17. God giving learning and skill and wisdom to Daniel and his friends.

You see friends. Daniel had learned from the scriptures. And most undoubtedly from the godly instruction and teaching of his parents. Daniel had learned that he must view all of life's events. Not just through the verse 1's of life. But also through verse 2. That all of life's events. All of life's events. Are under the loving hand of a sovereign God.

Well you might say. If God is both loving and sovereign. Why did he allow the exile to happen? Why did he allow this to happen to his people?

Well friends. If you read the books of Chronicles and Kings. You would read of the downward spiritual spiral of the people of God. Into sin and apostasy.

[11:14] Turning away from the God who loved them. The God who had saved them. So the exile was an act of judgment from God. But ultimately.

It was an act of mercy. Mercy in order that God would heal them. By drawing them back to himself. Daniel knew that God's sovereign hand had been the cause of the exile.

And Daniel knew that if God had ultimately been the cause of the exile. Then God could keep him during the exile. Protect him. And use him for God's glory.

All throughout the exile. And it's the same for us too friends. Whatever the situation or the circumstances in your life. They are all under the Lord's sovereign hand.

And we can live for him. Amidst these things. The second thing we learn from verse 1 and 2. Is that there is a war going on. There is a war going on.

[12:12] A war between Babylon and Jerusalem. Between the literal places that are Babylon and Jerusalem. But these literal places are also symbolic.

Babylon is symbolic for the city of man. The city of man that is opposed to God. And to his ways and purposes. Jerusalem is symbolic for the city of God.

Where people dwell under his word. And under his rule. And there is a war going on between these two cities. And friends. It has been this way since the very beginning.

In Genesis chapter 11. The building of the tower of Babel. Built in the land of Shinar. As in verse 2 of Daniel chapter 1. Built in opposition to God.

Built that the builders would build a city. And a name for themselves. Built for their own glory. And not for the glory of God. Built so that they would not be dispersed over the face of the earth.

[13:11] Totally against the purposes of God. Who had commanded them to multiply. And to subdue the whole earth. But this is in total contrast. To what we read in the next chapter of Genesis.

Genesis chapter 12. And the story of Abram. Abram who was called out from. Or of the Chaldeans. To follow the Lord. And Hebrews chapter 11.

Gives comment on this. By faith. Abraham obeyed. When he was called out. To go to a place. That he was to receive. As an inheritance. And he went out.

Not knowing where he was going. By faith. He went to live in the land of promise. As in a foreign land. Living in tents with Isaac and Jacob. Heirs with him of the same promise.

For he was looking forward. To the city. That has foundations. Whose designer. And builder. Is God. Abraham was looking for the city.

[14:10] That was built by God. Not by man. Like those in Genesis chapter 11. It's the tale of two cities. One that is opposed to God. And rages war against him.

And another. That is at peace with God. And is also hated. By the world. And as we will see in this chapter. This battle is for the hearts and minds of men.

And friends. We need to understand this. We need to understand. That as the people of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will be involved in a battle. A battle.

Right to the very end. God will build his city. As Daniel was told in chapter 9. And as the apostle John writes in Revelation 22.

The victory is secured. But until the very end. The battle will rage. Just as the apostle John writes in Revelation 12. The apostle John writes.

[15 : 06] All those who keep the commandments of God. And hold to the testimony of Jesus. The dragon will make war on. It's exactly what the apostle Paul writes in Ephesians chapter 6.

We are in a spiritual war. And we need to clothe ourselves with the full armor of God. Just like Daniel and his friends. And we also need to remember.

That the Lord is king. And Daniel and his friends. Well they certainly needed to remember that. As they were off to university. Verse 3 to 7. Off to university.

We are told here in these verses. That Nebuchadnezzar had taken the cream. Of the crop from among Israel's youth. Verse 3 and 4. And he planned to send them to university for three years. For three years to be engaged in a training program. To teach them the literature. And the language of the Chaldeans. And after this time they were to stand before the king.

[16 : 10] To be enrolled in the king's service. Well what a prestigious opportunity. This was a much bigger opportunity. Than giving a scholarship maybe to someone from a poor background.

Nebuchadnezzar had given this opportunity to some of the exiles. Some of the captive Jews. Some of the captive Jews were to enter into his training program. What an opportunity.

It would have come with great fame. Great acclaim. And also great rewards. Food and drink. And this was not just any food and drink.

This was Marks and Spencers. No. It was much better than that. It was food and drink from the table of the king himself. What an opportunity. And that's certainly how some of the parents of these boys would have viewed it.

You can just picture the scene can't you? Parents discussing the matter and saying. Oh well. Captivity in Babylon is not quite so bad after all. Nebuchadnezzar is going to do something with our boys.

[17 : 15] I mean. The University of Babylon. It wouldn't have been in my top ten. But after all. A degree is a degree. And they would have encouraged the young folks on.

To make the most of their opportunities. But friends. This was no ordinary three year stint at university. There would be no UCCF workers calling.

There would be no visits from Peter Dixon. Or from Scott Hamilton. Encouraging you on in the faith. No. This was a three year program of indoctrination.

Nebuchadnezzar had taken them out of Jerusalem. And he was now going to put Babylon into them. Listen to this from Mr. James Philip.

Our minister's father. Let us look first of all at Nebuchadnezzar's plan and purpose. In choosing the young Hebrews. Was this merely a whim?

[18 : 13] A caprice on his part? Was he simply playing himself? Wiling away the idle hours. With all his conquests for the moment at least. Completed.

One can hardly think so. And when one realizes something of the trouble he was prepared to take with them. One begins to see that this was no passing fancy.

But something with a very decided purpose. Look at what he is doing. He is laying his hands upon the youth. The coming generation of Israelites. He is not concerned with the older generation.

No. For they will soon die off. And will no more be a thorn in Babylon's side. It is the coming generation that will be a problem for Nebuchadnezzar in the future.

And he is going to take very good care that that will not happen. For he is going to make them into Babylonians. Into Chaldeans.

[19 : 14] It was a sinister plan. A sinister plan that was ever so subtle. Orchestrated to take their identities. Without them even knowing it was happening.

A battle for their minds. Which was really a battle for their hearts. If you change how people think. Then you will change how people act. And friends the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar is alive and well today.

It may not be a three year plan. Maybe a ten year plan. But it is going to get its message over. By every means possible in its power. And friends the Chaldean language and literature.

Has had its way. Even with us. Society has changed so much in the past 50 years or so. But we are so used to it. We don't even notice. The sin that used to slink down the back alley.

Now struts down the main street. And no one even bats an eyelid. There is a war. An assault on morality. And on the laws of God. And on his people.

[20 : 21] And friends this is focused especially on the young. Who are well taught the language and the literature of the Chaldeans. In our schools. Their abortion. Homosexuality.

Are all taught as normal. Just this week. I was reading on the Christian Institute website. That some LGBT campaigners have backed a new initiative.

That involves drag queens. Reading and singing to primary age children. This new initiative is called. The drag queen story time. Men dressed as women.

Reading from a book that they enjoyed as a child. Followed by a song. With a drag queen twist. They say it's a fun and colorful way of. Challenging gender stereotypes.

But friends this has nothing to do with helping children. It's all to do with teaching our children. That they can change their gender. A propaganda tool to further the agenda of those who wish to do away.

[21 : 22] With the God given distinctions. Between men and women. The language and the literature of the Chaldeans. Is everywhere in society. It's in film.

Magazine. Theater. Medicine. Education. Politics. Internet. Even in music. And it all consists of a subtle assault on our minds.

To accept sin as normal. And sadly friends. The language and the literature of the Chaldeans. Has infected some areas of the church. Some areas of the church have.

Taken on some of the world's teaching. And in so doing have. Lost all their distinctiveness. And as far as the gospel is concerned. They have become neutralized.

And totally ineffective. Now seeing sin as normal. And calling holy. What the Bible calls sin. So friends. When you are on the lookout for.

[22 : 22] For teaching that contains the language. And the literature of the Chaldeans. Don't forget to look in the pulpits. Which is why friends. When you are in church.

You should always have the Bible open in front of you. And checking from the scriptures. That what the preacher is saying is. Firstly in the Bible. And secondly. Is true.

The language and the literature of the Chaldeans. Is everywhere in society. And focused especially on the young. And that's why friends. In every generation.

In every generation. The people of God. Must give special attention. To teaching the young. All over the country. And all during this summer. Scripture union camps.

And contagious camps. Have been committed to that very task. Teaching God's word. And ways. To thousands of youngsters. That's why here at the Tron.

[23 : 17] We have Sunday school. Bible class. Activate. And Tron youth. Not just to give our kids somewhere to go. And something to do. But in order that the Bible.

Would be taught faithfully to our children. Maybe you've heard someone say. Or maybe you've said it yourself. Oh we don't want to put the young folks off.

I wish we just had a wee bit less teaching from the Bible. Well if that's you friend. What you need to understand is this. Babylon is relentless in its teaching.

Absolutely relentless. Taking every opportunity to teach the language. And the literature of the Chaldeans. And we the church of Jesus Christ.

Must also be relentless. Taking every opportunity. To teach our children. The ways and the word of God. That's why Moses writes as he does.

[24 : 13] In Deuteronomy 6 verse 7. You shall teach God's word and ways. Diligently to your children. And you shall talk of them. When you sit in your house.

And when you walk by the way. And when you lie down. And when you rise. And friends. You need to take this seriously. If you're a parent.

If you're thinking about becoming a parent. If you're a grandparent. The work that the scripture union camps. And contagious camps. And the children's things here at the church.

They are only a supplemental work. They are only an add-on work. The fundamental work. Involved for your children's spiritual progress.

Needs to take place at home. And done by you. Don't force your kids. That's what people say. Isn't it? Or they say. Or they say.

[25 : 08] Adopt permissive parenting. Let your children make up their own minds. Friends. Don't let your children make up their own minds. They're not smart enough. They struggle to know what color of shoes goes with what color of top.

No. We are to do as instructed by Proverbs 22 verse 6. Train up a child. In a way that he or she should go. And even when they are old.

They will not depart from it. I read just the other week this quote from David Robertson. Minister of the Free Church in Dundee. And this is what he says.

When will the Christian church understand. That if we don't make the education of our children. A primary. And a secondary priority.

We fail. Not only them. But also ourselves. That's indoctrination you might say. Well that may be so friends. But take a look at Babylon's indoctrination program.

[26 : 08] Look at verse 6 and 7. Daniel and his friends. They have their names changed. Maybe some of us would like our names changed. My full name is Terence Andrew Patrick.

Murphy McCaffrey McCutcheon. You may laugh. But I love my name. I wouldn't change my name. But look at the names here. Daniel. Mishael. Hananiah. Azariah. These names all contain.

One of the Hebrew names for God. El. Or Yah. But these names are changed. So that they included names of the Babylonian gods. The Babylonian gods.

Bel. Or Nebo. So what was done with their names. Was symbolic of what was hoped. The training program. Would accomplish in their lives. God had been put out of their names.

[27 : 05] As a symbol that Nebuchadnezzar intended. To put God out of their lives. I'm sure you know the rhyme. Sticks and stones may break my bones.

But names will never hurt me. Well friends. I would change that. Sticks and stones may break my bones. And names will finish me off.

That's what the language. And the literature of the Chaldeans. Intends to do. Both then. And now. That as far as God goes in your life.

To finish you off. Well friends. How do you think. You would have. You would have feared. In this environment. Where the teaching.

And the name calling. Were relentless. Like the drip drip dripping. Of a tap. Silent voices. Every day. Saying to you. You don't belong to the Lord.

[28 : 02] You belong to this pagan world. And friends. The great crisis is this. Who am I going to be? And who. Am I going to serve?

And friends. This great crisis is alive. In the lives of our teenagers. And all of our lives. Day after day. Am I the Lord's? Or am I the pagans?

But Daniel and his friends. They could see. That this is what was going on. Which is why we have in verses. 8 to 16. Drawing the line. Drawing the line.

It seems that. No one else noticed. What was really at the root of. Nebuchadnezzar's training program. Except these four young boys. We need to remember friends.

That these weren't mature men. Like the leadership we have here. At the Tron church. They were mature spiritually. But they were only 14 years old. The age of someone.

[29 : 03] Who would attend Bible class. Or Tron youth. Here at the church. But despite their lack of years. They saw the danger. They saw what was going on.

Verse 8. Daniel resolved. Or Daniel purposed in his heart. This was principled action. That was taken here by Daniel. It was not thought up in the moment.

There had been fixed points. Established in Daniel's heart. And Daniel's mind. About what he would say yes to. And what he would say no to. About what he believed.

And how he would behave. And there is a real lesson here friends. We just can't simply make it up. As we go along. Or when the fight is upon you.

By then it's too late. I came across this quote from. Arguably one of the best boxers of all time. Muhammad Ali. And here is what he said. The fight.

[30 : 01] Is won or lost. Far away from witnesses. Behind the lines. In the gym. And out there on the road. Long before I dance. Under those lights.

You see what he's saying. The fight is won or lost. Far away from the fight itself. It's won or lost. In the resolutions that we make. Or we don't make.

In our hearts. Well what was the issue. In which Daniel drew the line. Verse 8. Daniel purposed in his heart. That he would not defile himself. With the king's food.

Or with the wine that he drank. It's on this issue of. Food and drink from the king's table. And this would seem to be a strange issue. On which to take a stand.

There seems to be no indication. Of the text of Daniel chapter 1. That Daniel kicked up a fuss.

When he was enlisted in the training program. Or kicked up a fuss. When his name was changed.

[30 : 58] Why not? Why did he accept any of it? Well our good friend Alistair Begg. Is very helpful here. Begg says. Daniel was willing to cooperate.

Without compromising. Now I'm sure some of the exiles. That were taken to Babylon. Would have been totally absorbed. In the Babylonian culture. They would have settled down. Thinking and saying to themselves. Oh well. When in Babylon. Do as the Babylonians do. Losing all their distinctiveness. Maybe revealing that their love of the Lord. Was only a matter of mere external religion. And not internally of the heart. Others. May have withdrawn from the culture. Deciding that they would have. Absolutely nothing to do with Babylon. They would create a holy huddle. Not being absorbed by the culture. But by totally withdrawing from it.

[31 : 56] But not Daniel. Daniel cooperated. Without compromising. He was in the world. But not of the world. He knew what to say yes to.

And what to say no to. And friends. This is the same for us. We are exiles in a foreign land. We must cooperate without compromising.

We must study our foreign land. And its ways. We must understand it. If we are to penetrate it. And affect it for God. Just like Daniel. Well why would Daniel say no?

No to food and wine from the king's table. Was he advocating vegetarianism? And B&T; total? Well no. I don't think so. Some of the commentators take the view that the food and wine would have been offered to idols before it was served.

Which is true. But others most notably Bob file. Note that this would have been also true of the vegetables. And remember in Daniel chapter 10. Daniel says.

[32 : 59] I ate no delicacies. No meat or wine entered my mouth. So he could have ate. But remember this wasn't peacetime. There was a war going on.

And not eating was a sign and a symbol that he was different. He belonged to the Lord. And he was reminding himself of this fact. And of the fact that he was going to impact the culture for the Lord. Studying Babylonian science and culture. And bearing a Babylonian name. Could have been undertaken with loyalty to God. Uncompromised.

But eating. Eating with all its implications of fellowship and solidarity. Could not. And you see once again the subtlety here. It's food and drink from the king's table.

We've invested so much in you Daniel. And here now is food from the king's table. But Daniel would not eat from the king of Babylon's table. As a reminder to him.

[33 : 58] That he did not belong to the king of Babylon. He belonged to the king of Jerusalem. And to the Lord alone. And friends we need to know. And we need to learn.

How to draw the line just like Daniel. There are some things that we must refuse. Lines that we won't cross. And places we won't go. The decision made here by Daniel.

Was fundamental to the rest of his life. And the rest of the story. There would be no chapters 2 to 12. Of Daniel. If Daniel hadn't drawn the line in chapter 1.

His early days in Babylon. Determined whose he was. And what he was. He nailed his colors to the mast. And this is a real lesson.

For all of his friends. But I especially want to address those of a younger generation. God may have great things for you to do. When you're 30.

[34 : 56] 40. Or maybe even 50. But God needs you now. God needs you now. To start drawing the line. To purpose in your heart. That you will not defile yourself.

With food and drink from the king's table. That you will nail your colors to the mast. Saying to the world. I am Christ's. And he is mine. And especially those of you.

Who are experiencing things for the first time. Like going off to secondary school. Going off to university. Or maybe going into the workplace for the first time. You must nail your colors to the mast.

In the earliest of days. Always take the first opportunity. To show yourself a decided committed Christian. It may not be easy. But the fact of the matter is this.

No easier opportunity will present itself. The second opportunity. Is always much more difficult to take. If the first opportunity has been refused.

[35 : 57] And friends. I want us just to note that. That Daniel drew the line. Using politeness and tact. Verse 11. He was careful. And he was firm.

But he wasn't arrogant. No need to offend people unnecessarily. As they often don't understand. Why we are doing. What we are doing. Fading are the world's best pleasures. All that's boasted pomp and show. Solid joys. And lasting treasures. None but Zion's children know. And there was danger also involved for Daniel.

He risked his life. He risked it being reported. That he didn't want to eat the king's food. And this would have offended the king. Verse 9. But even here.

God's sovereign hand of protection. Was on him. As the chief of the eunuchs. Showed favor and compassion to him. Friends. Is there anything.

[36 : 52] On which you are prepared to draw the line. In order that you may stand for Christ. And for his kingdom. Every time I think of the story of Daniel.

I am always reminded of the story of what I believe to be a modern day Daniel. The story of Eric Liddell. Who won the gold medal for the 400 meters in the 1924 Paris Olympic Games.

The film Chariots of Fire dramatized his story. And I'm sure you know the story. Eric drew the line. The heats of the 100 meter sprint of which he was supposed to be running in.

Were to be raced on a Sunday. And Eric Liddell being a Christian. Refused to run. And you may remember the scene in the film. When he was being pressurized to run.

And pressurized even by his future king. Eric Liddell refused. He drew the line. He was polite. He was firm.

[37 : 50] Even though they couldn't understand his convictions. Nonetheless he purposed in his heart. That he would draw the line. And he would not defile himself.

Are you willing to draw the line? And to stand up for the Lord Jesus Christ? Well if you are friends. Then you will find that through your stand.

Just like Daniel. And like Eric Liddell. God will advance his kingdom. God advances his kingdom. Verse 17 to 21. That was God's purposes.

Through the stand of Daniel and his friends. It was all for God's glory. All part of God's unfolding plan. Remember verse 2? Even the exile was under his control.

And God's sovereign hand. Verse 17. Was still upon them. God gave them learning and skill. In all literature and wisdom. And Daniel had understanding.

[38 : 51] In all visions and dreams. Which will come in very handy in chapter 2. God will use this gift to raise Daniel to prominence. In Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. God will use Daniel to advance his kingdom.

As God's plans and purposes unfold in Babylon. Daniel plays a vital role in Babylon for about seven decades. Verse 21. He accomplishes great things for the kingdom.

Due to the resolve that he had. To make a stand. To draw the line. Daniel stood for the city of God. Amidst the city of man. And friends.

We need to know. That every stand is for a purpose. No matter how big. Or no matter how small that stand might be. It is for a purpose.

To advance the kingdom of God. For the glory of Jesus Christ. Friends. Let that encourage you. In all the battles that you face. They are a battle for the glory of Jesus Christ.

[39 : 51] And for the advance of the kingdom of God. The battles will last right to the very end. But we must continue to stand. To draw the line. Standing may come.

At an exceptional cost. It may cost us everything. It will be deeply personal. And deeply painful. But we must continue to stand.

As the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is the only hope. For our communities. For our cities. For our country. And indeed. For our world.

Daniel purposed in his heart. That he would not defile himself. With a king's meat. What about you? Now is the time. There is no time to lose.

May God help you this very day. To take your stand for Christ. Dare to be a Daniel. Dare to stand alone. Dare to have a purpose firm.

[40 : 53] And dare to make it known. That's what it means to be a Christian. That's what it means to faithfully live. In a foreign land. May God grant us all.

His grace. And help to do this. Let us pray together. Father. Father.

Father. We thank you. That you are indeed. A sovereign God. Whose power and control. Is over all of our lives. Over all the situations.

And circumstances. That we find ourselves in. Father. We thank you. That you call us. To live. Different. Distinctive lives. Amid this broken. And sinful world.

Father. We pray that you would help. Each of us. To be clear about the issues. In hand. And to have the courage. And the conviction. To draw the line.

[41 : 50] To stand for the Lord Jesus. Just like Daniel. May you grant us your grace. And your strength. To do this. And we pray all of these things. In Jesus name.

Amen.