



# Potomac Hills

## Presbyterian Church, PCA



By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.  
Daniel 10:1-11:1

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English Standard Version

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### ***“A Man Who Gives Strength”***

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> sermon in the series on the book of Daniel entitled,  
***“A Broken World and a Sovereign God.”***

#### **Daniel 10:1-11:1**

*“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.*

*<sup>2</sup> In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. <sup>3</sup> I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. <sup>4</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river ( that is, the Tigris) <sup>5</sup> I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. <sup>6</sup> His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. <sup>7</sup> And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. <sup>8</sup> So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. <sup>9</sup> Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.*

*<sup>10</sup> And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. <sup>11</sup> And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. <sup>12</sup> Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have*

come because of your words. <sup>13</sup> The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, <sup>14</sup> and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.”

<sup>15</sup> When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. <sup>16</sup> And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, “O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. <sup>17</sup> How can my lord’s servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.”

<sup>18</sup> Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. <sup>19</sup> And he said, “O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.” And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” <sup>20</sup> Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. <sup>21</sup> But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

<sup>11:1</sup> “And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.”

*Heavenly Father, today we have come to Your Word and we find a passage, difficult to understand. Lord, once again open our ears to truly hear. And we ask that by the power of the Holy Spirit, this Word would be spiritual food and great encouragement to stand firm in desperate days. Give us the grace and strength to believe and reveal to us the lessons which this divine messenger brought to Daniel. Do this for each of us, this morning, in Jesus’ name, and for His glory, Amen.*

### **INTRODUCTION: *False Expectations***

Is anything worse than arriving at a party wrongly dressed? It’s worse if you’re underdressed, because then you can’t do anything about it. I don’t know exactly how women handle it, but for a guy, if you’re overdressed, that’s easy — you can lose the tie or the jacket and dress down. But if everyone’s in a suit and tie, and you show up in jeans and a sweater, **you’re just stuck**, and you have to make the best of it. You can only smile when people smirk and say, “Guess you didn’t get the memo.” I remember getting invited to a Christmas party when we lived in Alabama, and that very thing happened. I thought, “Christmas Party — no big deal.” And so I wore jeans and a bright red sweater. Everyone else ... dark suit and tie. One word — **awkward**. I looked like a bright light on a bare tree.

I mean, people have nightmares about this stuff.

Of course, when we turn up for some event wrongly dressed, it usually means that we didn’t really understand what kind of function it was going to be. The event was different from our expectations. Now is the problem with the event? Or is it with our expectations? Obviously we had false expectations.

And since this is a somewhat common experience, I think there’s a principle we can learn about life here. Many Christians have a **false expectation of life** that results in being wrongly dressed. I’m not talking about what people wear to church. I’m talking about what people wear to **face life**. Many of us go through life expecting it to be a picnic on a bright, sunny day. But

when we discover it's actually cold and rainy ... and nobody brought any food ... it becomes clear that something's gone very wrong.

And, truth be told, we're simply unprepared for things to go wrong, and when they do, we immediately start muttering about life being hard and unfair. You know what it's like. The kids get out of bed in a foul mood, no one can seem to find what they need for school, the dog gets sick on the carpet, and when you finally get out of the house, the car won't start. And right away we start thinking, "It's not fair. This shouldn't be happening to me. Life just shouldn't be this hard."

Now ... where does that thought come from? Who says that life shouldn't be hard? I think that way too often, the real problem is that we **have false expectations** of what life should be like.

Daniel 10 is written to help us understand **that life is hard** and help us to understand **why** life is hard. But it's also written to help us understand that we're not alone in **any** of the struggles of life. It's part of this larger concluding vision to the Book of Daniel, which runs from the beginning of Daniel 10 to the end of the book. Daniel is informed here in this chapter that this vision concerns a great conflict. We'll see that conflict in more detail in chapter 11, but chapter 10 is instrumental in preparing us to understand that conflict. In short, it's going to show us that the conflicts we experience here on earth are the counterparts of a great spiritual conflict that's presently ongoing in the heavenly realms.

And so, with that in mind, let's continue our study of the Book of Daniel, since we're not following this in chapter order but chronologically, we've moved ahead to chapter 10. Over the last few weeks, we've been looking at how Daniel survives these years "***in the midst of a powerful, idolatrous culture.***" This week we're going to really start getting into the theme of this series, "***A Broken World and a Sovereign God.***"

And the first thing we see is that Daniel, and all the Jews, are facing ...

#### **v. 1-3: A DIFFICULT TIME**<sup>1</sup>

*"In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision. <sup>2</sup>In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. <sup>3</sup>I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks."*

In the first year of Cyrus's reign, the first group of Jewish exiles had returned to Jerusalem in response to Cyrus's decree, but they had found life there to be far more difficult than they expected. They rebuilt **the altar** of the temple, but almost immediately ran into opposition from their new neighbors, which we see in Ezra, chapter 3.

Remember most of these folks were born in exile, so they'd never lived there before; and on top of the difficulty of scratching out a basic living in their new home; this unexpected opposition caused the returning exiles to **stop** working on the temple. They probably thought they would get back to the work soon, but it turned into a hiatus that would last for more than **15 years**, until the time of Haggai and Zechariah. So by now, the third year of Cyrus would have been a time of discouragement for God's people — both in Judah and Babylon.

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<sup>1</sup> The Introduction, Exposition of the text, Application, and Conclusion are adapted from *Daniel: Reformed Expository Commentary* by Dr. Ian Duguid, pages 176-190; *The NIV Application Commentary: Daniel* by Dr. Tremper Longman, pages 244-266; *ESV Study Bible*, Daniel study notes by Dr. Duguid and Dr. Paul Wegner.

The excitement that surrounded the initial return had faded and the challenges of remaining faithful over the long haul in the midst of great opposition would have weighed heavily on the Jews in general and on Daniel in particular.

There's probably many of us here this morning that can think back to an earlier time in our Christian life when following God seemed easier and more exciting. But now things have gotten harder, or perhaps we're in a dry time spiritually, all of us are facing more challenges and difficulties, and that joy we once experienced seems like a long time ago now. What word does God have for us that will help us to remain faithful over the long haul?

Daniel's response to these events was to begin the year with an extended period of prayer and fasting. The fact that his fast persisted through the first month would mean that, according to the Jewish calendar, it continued through Passover, serving as a sign of the seriousness of his commitment. It also served as a way to identify with the difficulties and hardships faced by those who had already returned to Jerusalem. Additionally it was a cry to God for their deliverance from persecution and imploring God to save His people once again.

Daniel's solidarity with his brothers and sisters in the Lord, even at a great distance, should serve as a challenge to us. The church around the world is one family made up of all God's children. When one suffers, we should all sorrow, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12. None of us can know what's going on everywhere, but each one of us can know what God is doing **somewhere**, and we can play our part in supporting and encouraging those whom God has called to hard places.

Quite frankly, it's easy to preach the gospel to you. I'm not particularly worried that one of you might be undercover secret police waiting for the right moment to arrest me. But there are preachers out there this morning who are worried about **that very thing**.

If Daniel can remember and pray for the Jews in Jerusalem facing opposition and persecution, then surely we can remember and pray for the believers in those parts of the world who suffer severely for following Christ. **Hebrews 13:3** tells us to "*Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.*"

We can certainly do what Daniel did, which is to fast from time to time. And I'm not talking about the normal fast from food, which would certainly be appropriate, but fasting from some of the luxuries that we view as a routine part of our lives, and use the time instead to pray for those who are hurting, to pray for those who are battling health issues, and to pray for those who are suffering persecution.

Daniel didn't give up eating, but he gave up eating delicacies, he gave up drinking wine, he gave up anointing himself with oils and lotions. Normally the season for fasting is Lent, which we're in the middle of right now. There's a movement in the American church to give up **electronic things** for Lent. Some people are giving up Facebook for Lent ... and they've created a Facebook group about it. Honestly, I don't think that's working too well for them. Others are giving up their iPods, their Blackberry's, their laptops, and even if they have to use that stuff at work, they're not using them at home.

But two caveats, giving up things for Lent or in some sort of fast, can easily become a point of pride for us, which defeats the whole purpose. And also, if during this fast we forget to **actually spend time with God**, in greater study and prayer, then it just becomes another exercise in self-discipline.

But fasting from some of those routine luxuries, which are so readily available to us, and

using the time to pray instead, enables us in some small way to identify with those believers who have no prospect of ever experiencing such things. It's good for us when we're tempted to grumble about how hard our life is, to remember that we've got it incredibly easy compared to the majority of believers around the world. Fasting from stuff also helps us to understand that this world is not our home, and we're just as much strangers and aliens as Daniel was. Finally, we're reminded that we're engaged in a profound spiritual battle against powerful opposition.

And that spiritual battle is the focus of the rest of the chapter. And we see that as Daniel's fast comes to an end, he has a vision of ...

**v. 4-6: A HEAVENLY BEING**

*“On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) <sup>5</sup> I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. <sup>6</sup> His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.”*

Who is this heavenly being? Apparently there's three options. Many commentators, comparing this with the description of the glorified Christ in Revelation 1, think that this is a vision of Christ. But there's some problems with that view. One, verse 11 says that this being was sent by someone else. Two, verse 13, says that this being was delayed by satanic forces and he needed help from the Archangel Michael, which seems to lead away from this being the pre-incarnate Christ. The second view says that there's two beings in this chapter, the one in these verses being divine, and then a different being later in the chapter, but that seems to go against the plain reading of the chapter which indicates just one heavenly being showing up.

So who is it? There are several parallels between this passage and the Book of Ezekiel, in particular the vision Ezekiel had in Ezekiel, chapter 1. It seems most logical that Ezekiel and Daniel are describing the same angelic figure. It could be Gabriel, who previously appeared to Daniel in a vision back in chapter 9, but he's not identified here. Ultimately, we don't know for sure, but actually, I think that's a good thing. Because trying to figure out all the details of these visions tends to distract us from the main point. We learn all sorts of stuff about heavenly beings and nothing about what God's trying to teach us in this passage.

It might be safest to say that here we have an angelic messenger who represents God to the Prophet Daniel. This is important, because unlike Hollywood movies, Old Testament visions never appear simply to impress us with special effects. They seek to communicate through the vision some aspect of God's character or God's sovereignty that will be important for the message that follows. So it's almost always helpful to interpret visions as telling us something important about God.

And I think that's the case here. And what's being communicated to Daniel, and to us, is a lesson about God's ...

**v. 7-9: HOLINESS AND GLORY**

*Daniel's vision leaves him trembling and helpless, starting at verse 7, “And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. <sup>8</sup> So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. <sup>9</sup> Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.”*

This is sort of an introduction to the vision, but it begins to teach us about God. We saw

a description of the heavenly being's clothes back in verse 5, and certainly God's holiness is symbolized in the linen clothing, just as it the priest's garments when they were working in the Tabernacle in Exodus and Leviticus symbolized holiness. The holiness of God means that God's not like us. He is different, separate from us.

In addition to God's holiness, God's glory is very prominent in the vision. We see in this vision that God's presence is overwhelming. Verse 6 tells us that it pulsates with brightness and reverberates with sound. So much so that it crushes Daniel to the ground, verse 9, and sends men fleeing into hiding, verse 7. The prophet couldn't stand before such an awesome vision.

This is a very different depiction of God from what we see in the culture around us. We live in a culture that has placed itself on very friendly, very familiar terms with their god (small "g"), a mild-mannered deity who is far too mellow and nice to send anyone to hell. We've transformed God into a cosmic version of "Mr. Rogers," eager to welcome all comers to the neighborhood.

This god is too soft to judge anyone. And this is clearly not the God whose attributes Daniel sees reflected in his vision. This is the One True God whose holiness **blazes** with fire, whose glory is **blinding**, whose presence is **scarcely bearable**, even by those who, like Daniel, have devoted their lives to serving Him.

Whenever I read or hear someone talk about God like He's their best friend, or their best buddy, or they see Him in the mornings, walking around the neighborhood, or something like that ... I can only say "**Be very cautious**" ... because I don't see that in the Scriptures.

Whenever we have a **Theophany**, an appearance of God, in the Bible, the reaction of the people God has appeared to is inevitably to go face down in the dirt, pleading for mercy, begging for their own lives. Why is that? Because God is **so holy**, and that holiness is **so apparent**, that we become immediately aware of our own overwhelming sinfulness. And we know that holiness and sinfulness don't co-exist in the same place at the same time. And so the only words that can come out of our mouths are "**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**"

However, the reality of God's blazing glorious holiness is an important truth for us to remember in times of trial and persecution. Satan wants us to think that obedience to God's Word doesn't matter very much — that it doesn't make any difference whether we follow God or just assimilate into the culture around us. Life is hard — go with the flow, take the easy path, and enjoy yourself a little bit. Why endure opposition and persecution for a nice-guy version of god?

However, if the God we serve is blazingly and gloriously holy, then obedience to His will isn't a minor issue. He's passionately committed to our holiness and to saving a people for Himself, and thus He demands the same commitment from His church. And the inheritance that He offers His saints is an eternity experiencing the glory of that holiness. **A God like that** is worth leaving the comforts of Babylon for, to go and endure the difficulty of rebuilding Jerusalem. **A God like that** is worth struggling through the hard times for. **A God like that** is worth giving up our own lives for, if that's what it takes. After all, that's precisely what He was willing to do for us, in the person of Christ on the cross, in order to save us from our sins.

God's purpose in revealing Himself to Daniel in this vision was not to crush him but to encourage him. God wants us to see our own weakness before Him so that we won't trust in ourselves but will look to Him for strength. This vision, which we will see in chapter 11 next Sunday, is one that's intended to encourage Daniel in response to his mourning and fasting over the situation in Jerusalem.

However, in the middle of this vision, between the encouragement of the heavenly being and the revealing of the vision itself, we have this strange story that's sort of a quick peak behind the curtain to see what's really going on in the spiritual realm. And what's revealed is that the message that Daniel receives is ...

**v. 10-11:1: A MESSAGE DELAYED**

*“And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. <sup>11</sup> And he said to me, “O Daniel, man **greatly loved**, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. <sup>12</sup> Then he said to me, “**Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.** <sup>13</sup> The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, <sup>14</sup> and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.”*

*<sup>15</sup> When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. <sup>16</sup> And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, “O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. <sup>17</sup> How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.”*

*<sup>18</sup> Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. <sup>19</sup> And he said, “**O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.**” And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” <sup>20</sup> Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. <sup>21</sup> But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince. <sup>11:1</sup> “And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.”*

The “prince of the Persian kingdom” is an angelic figure who is associated with the Persian Empire and who resists God's purposes. Therefore, he is evil and an agent of Satan. Satan's hostility against God's people is sometimes manifested in and through the rulers and powers of the present age, and the church's present experiences are the earthly working out of a parallel conflict in heaven. And apparently this “prince of the Persian kingdom” is a powerful adversary — powerful enough to delay God's messenger for three weeks. Yet in the end all he could do was **delay** God's messenger. The text tells us that the archangel Michael came to his side. Michael, whose Hebrew name means “Who is like God?” is only mentioned four times in the Bible. Here in Daniel 10 and again in Daniel 12, and then he's not mentioned until Jude 9 and Revelation 12. And when the archangel Michael came to help him, the angel who spoke to Daniel was able to complete his journey and bring this message of encouragement to Daniel.

Ultimately, Satan's most strenuous activity cannot stop God's purposes and harm His people. Indeed, God's Word says, **Isaiah 55:10-11**, “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

The magnitude and power of the spiritual forces ranging against God's people are

sobering, and the angel's words give us a whole new perspective on the difficulties facing God's people who were trying to rebuild Jerusalem. They were not only facing human opposition, but spiritual opposition in the heavenly realms.

What's more, the spiritual struggle isn't going to be over anytime soon. The angel tells Daniel that after delivering this message, he's headed back to the battle, verse 20, *"But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come."* Not only will he fight against the prince of Persia, but soon he will contend with the prince of Greece, the next great world power. But don't think that because these empires are ancient history, the angels are resting on their laurels. The satanic forces opposing the church will continue to use the powers and institutions of the world in their struggle against the people of God. I wouldn't be surprised if today there are angelic beings doing spiritual battle with the prince of America. However, time and time again, the church has been beaten down, but **it is not**, and **will not**, ever be destroyed because God sustains it through the strengthening ministry of His own angels.

We need to see that **the root cause** of our difficulties is not the husband or wife that's being so unreasonable, or the work situation that seems to be impossible, or the rebellious child that's making life miserable. The root cause isn't even our own bad habits and the sins that frustrate us so much. Rather, it's the underlying spiritual battle in which we're engaged against powerful forces in the heavenly realms. As the Apostle Paul put it, **Ephesians 6:12**, *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."*

Does that supernatural struggle sound frightening and intimidating? It's supposed to! God wants us to clearly see that life isn't a picnic but a battle. The devil is a powerful opponent, far too powerful for us to take on in our own strength. We need to patiently endure while we wait for God's promises to be fulfilled. However, arrayed on our side is God's strength — the might and the power of the blazingly glorious God, who created heaven and earth out of nothing.

We need to see the reality of what Daniel saw here in chapter 10. We need to be convinced of the reality of the devil and his power. We need to be aware of the heavenly dimensions of this struggle. But we also need to remember that we're not in this struggle alone.

And therefore, we need to recognize that we have ...

#### **APPLICATION: A Great Need**

So is this simply a heavenly battle in which we're helpless bystanders? It may look like that at first. After all, the heavenly contenders, on both sides, are far more powerful than we are. What role could we possibly play in all of this?

The answer lies in Daniel's revolutionary act that triggered the vision in the first place ...

**Daniel prayed.** When we pray, we — weak, trembling human beings — become engaged in cosmic conflict in a way that has vast, though unseen, repercussions. That's why, when Paul urged the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God, he ended by urging them to pray, **Ephesians 6:18-19**, *"...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,<sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel..."*

In the face of overwhelming situations, unbearable trials, and frustrating difficulties, what can we do? We can pray.

In contrast to Paul's urging to pray **always** with **all** kinds of prayers and requests, instead we tend to pray **rarely** with **small** kinds of requests. Our prayers are limited by **small** imaginations and **little** faith. We don't pray for **big** things, because we don't really believe in our heart of hearts that God can do them. And this is especially true during those discouraging times when life is hard and spiritual progress seems slow.

We pray for **small** sinners to come to Christ, but not for the **big** sinners. We pray for victory over **small** sins, but ignore the **big** ones that seem too hard. We pray for change in our own lives, but not for change in the lives of those who surround us. Why not? **Don't we serve a great and mighty God? Isn't He the One** who causes kingdoms to rise and fall? **Isn't He the One** who controls the detailed events of world history, as we will see in chapter 11 next week?

While it's undoubtedly true that Satan and his minions are behind much of the evil in this world, and we should certainly pray for God to frustrate their efforts, we don't want to give Satan too much credit. The angel never tells Daniel to pray against the prince of Persia. But rather, he wants Daniel to **recognize and remember the awesome power of God.**

And that's because the sovereign power of God guarantees ...

### **CONCLUSION: *A Decisive Victory***

Ultimately, our victory doesn't rest on our faithfulness to pray, or even on the power of the angels who fight for us. Jesus Christ is the One who has won the victory for us. He took His stand ... all alone ... in the battle for our souls. At the cross, Satan did his worst and was still defeated. And since Jesus won that victory on the cross, **no one and nothing** can stand against Him. And now Jesus is exalted to the right hand of the Father and the Scriptures tell us that "***in Him***" we are greatly loved and precious in His sight, assured of ultimate victory.

Jesus has won the great conflict about which we read in the Old Testament, the battle begun in Genesis 3:15, and described in Daniel 10. But the victory is an already/not yet event. That is, the victory has been secured on the cross, but it still awaits its final outcome. Some scholars have likened it to the defeat of Germany at the battle of Normandy. After D-Day, the power of Germany was broken and there was no doubt as to the conclusion of the war. Nonetheless, battles still had to be fought and lives lost before the war would end.

Spiritually, we live between D-Day and V-Day. The victory has been won, but **the fight is still real**. And this fight continues on three fronts. We face the enemy in the **world**, in the sinful use of powers and institutions, in the persecution of the saints. We face the enemy **himself** in the ongoing battle for souls, sharing the gospel with another person is the spiritual equivalent of hand-to-hand combat.

And finally, we face the enemy in our own **flesh**. For most of us, this front is the hardest, because deep down we enjoy our sin and try to find any way in which to justify it. If we get down emotionally we look for scapegoats — God's given me too much to do both at work and at home, my wife ignores me, my children are brats, and my Little League team stinks. But truth be told, I'd rather be depressed than think that I've overcommitted myself, or that I've been cold toward my wife, or that I haven't disciplined or loved my kids enough, or that I haven't taught my Little Leaguers how to either catch or hit.

And this is important. I believe that God is raising up a new generation of warriors. In the church today, there are an increasing number of sons being born. In our church alone, two-thirds of our children are boys. And every pastor I talk to is noticing the same thing. There seems to be an unusually large percentage of boys being born into the church. I'm not totally sure of the significance of that, but I do know that spiritual warfare will increase in our lifetime

and **the next generation** will be called upon to **stand firm in the faith**. So don't take teaching them this faith lightly, both boys and girls, for there are significant roles for each of them in the coming days.

And as we engage in battle on this final front, we must remember that this battle is being waged between God and Satan **in our own hearts**. And the message of the Bible is absolutely clear: Nothing can stand defiant before God **and survive**. And God will win that battle. And thus God guarantees our salvation.

To know that such a great salvation is coming in spite of the present circumstances cannot **help but to encourage the godly**. The angel came to **encourage** Daniel **with his words** and **strengthen** him **with his touch**.

Three times the angel touched Daniel. The first, verse 10, is the touch of a hand which gives Daniel strength to get up. And then he brings words of encouragement, verse 11, "*O Daniel, **man greatly loved**, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.*" And as he continues to speak with Daniel, he begins with a straightforward command, verse 12, "*Then he said to me, "**Fear not**, Daniel, for from the first day that you **set your heart** to understand and **humbled yourself** before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.*"

The awe-inspiring messenger encouraged Daniel by telling him that he was "**greatly loved**" by God and that he had been sent to Daniel in answer to his prayers, to give him insight and understanding and encouragement in response to his mourning and praying and fasting over the situation in Jerusalem.

The second touch comes in verse 16, "*And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man **touched my lips**. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength.<sup>17</sup> How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.*"

Apparently Daniel is too scared to speak. And so here the angel touches Daniel's lips so that he can speak. And he tells the angel that "*no strength remains in me.*" Which causes the angel to touch Daniel again, verse 18, "*Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me.<sup>18</sup> And he said, "**O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.**"*

And again Daniel is **strengthened** by this touch and **encouraged** by these words. Again he is told that he is **greatly loved**, that he is not to **fear**, that he will be given **peace**, and therefore he needs to be **strong** and of great **courage**.

**What a message for us today!** If you get nothing else out of Daniel 10, get this! In God's eyes, **you are greatly loved!** He doesn't want you to live in **fear**, but to live, despite your circumstances; to live in that **peace** that passes all understanding. And if we set our hearts to **understand** God, as He's revealed Himself in His Word, and if we **humble** ourselves before God, **our words, our prayers, will be heard**. And He will give us the strength **to stand firm**.

*How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word.  
What more can He say than to you He has said,  
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*

*“Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed;  
For I am your God, and will still give you aid;  
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.*

*“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”*

Think about those words. You need to pray.  
Take a moment to do that, and then I’ll close.

*Heavenly Father, we fall on our face before the awesome vision of Your presence.  
And we ask that You would show our hearts Your great concern for the people of God. Show us  
how much we are loved by You. Enable us to recognize the evil around us and give us the  
strength to stand firm until that great day when Jesus comes back to make all things right. Lord,  
come quickly, we pray in the Name of Jesus Christ, who lives, and reigns, and is coming again.  
Amen.*

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### **Romans 8:35-39**

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things **we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.** <sup>38</sup>For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*