

Trust and Obey

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[0 : 0 0] My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's Word to you today. A special welcome if you're new or visiting with us.

We're glad that you're here, and we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community. And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good, they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad they can't have it.

And that's why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say in His Word, because we believe that God has something to say to everyone. We're continuing our series in the book of Daniel, and you'll remember the book of Daniel tells the story of a man named Daniel who lived in the late 7th and 6th century B.C., and he was a faithful Israelite who was living in exile in Babylon.

And we have two major things the book of Daniel teaches us. First, it's meant to encourage us. No matter how bad things get, God is still in control. He rules and He reigns over the nations.

Not only does it encourage us, though it also instructs us. We're meant to learn from this book how we live faithful lives in a foreign land. And so we've been going back and forth between those two things, encouragement and instruction.

[1 : 1 1] Remember the last two weeks we've gone and looked at some minor themes in the book of Daniel. We looked at our lives as workers in the world, and we've looked at prayer. And now we're going to get back to the main point of chapter 6.

So we've covered verses 1 through 10 together. This morning we're going to cover verses 11 through 38. And we're going to come back to a theme we've seen before, which is this challenge of the relationship with the Christian and the state and the government.

We've seen before that the state wants to be God. It wants to function as God. It wants us to treat it as God. Here we're going to see what happens when the state doesn't command us to worship it, but forbids us to do our own worship.

Before we've seen, remember in chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar commanded that they worship the golden image. Here it's not so much that they have to worship a golden image, but that they stop praying to God.

And so we have the common temptations that we come up against as Christians in the world when we have these conflicts. If we are told to we can't do something that God commands us to do, we're tempted to believe, right?

[2 : 1 0] Maybe we have everything to lose and nothing to gain by obeying God and defying the state. Maybe we believe that God's here in the church building with us, but he's not anywhere else.

He's not powerful. I'm out in the world. And maybe we're simply tempted to give in to the world, the flesh, and the devil, the three temptations that Christians face. And so it's with that challenge we're going to turn now to Daniel chapter 6.

Now I'm going to start reading at verse 11. However, I'm going to preach the whole chapter for us here because we're getting back to the main point of chapter 6. So I'm going to refer back to verses 1 through 10. So if you have your Bible with you or you have it on your phone, that would be helpful because you can see the entire chapter.

And I'm going to do something I haven't done in a little bit, which is I'm going to give the kids another reading challenge. So I'm going to have you count words again. And our two words this morning are this. I want you to track the words law with me and the word injunction.

So the word law, the word injunction, we're going to have a little bit of a challenge because we've already seen those words in verses 1 through 10. So you're not starting at zero. When it comes to the word law, we've already seen it twice in verses 1 through 10.

[3 : 16] When it comes to the word injunction, we've seen it three times in 1 through 10. So you're starting at two for law. You're starting at three for injunction. With that, we're going to turn to God's word.

I invite you to turn with me in your worship guide or in your Bible or in your phone. No matter where you turn, remember that this is God's word. And God tells us that his word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

In other words, God has not left us to stumble alone in the dark, but instead he has given us his word that we would know the way to go. And so that's why we read now starting at verse 11.

Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and said before the king concerning the injunction, O king, did you not sign an injunction that anyone who makes petition to any God or man within 30 days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?

The king answered and said, The thing stands fast according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked. Verse 13. Then they answered and said before the king, Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.

[4 : 32] Verse 14. Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.

Verse 16. Then the king commanded and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you.

And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lord's, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting.

No diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. Verse 19. Then at the break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish.

The king declared to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions? Then Daniel said to the king, O king, live forever.

[5 : 47] My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him. And also before you, O king, I have done no harm.

Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. 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.

And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions, they their children and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

Verse 25. Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in all my royal dominion, people are to tremble in fear before the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues.

[6 : 53] He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth. He who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Our Father in heaven, we thank you and praise you again that you haven't left us alone and you do speak to us.

And we ask that you would do that this morning by your word and the power of your Holy Spirit, that you would give us a measure of the spirit that we would be able to hear and believe and understand everything that you have written about yourself and your word.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. If you know anything about American history, you know that the Constitution is very important.

And we value it a lot. And if you're familiar with the Constitution, you might know there's something in Article 6, Paragraph 2, called the Supremacy Clause. And the Supremacy Clause lays out for us that there are some laws that are more important than other laws.

[8 : 00] And specifically, it talks about the fact that the Constitution is higher and more authoritative than any state law. Of course, this is what happens, right? When cases go to our Supreme Court, people are saying, well, the state did this, but the Constitution forbids it.

And so when there's a lineup, a matchup, between the Constitution and the state law, Constitution always wins. At least that's the hope. That's the idea.

And of course, there's conflicts at times, right? There's times where federal laws and state laws conflict. So, for example, here in Colorado, we have one of those. Marijuana is legal in the state of Colorado, but it's illegal according to federal law.

And so it creates some complications, right? Technically, it's still illegal because we're under the Constitution. That's a whole other discussion. The point is this. There are contests right between laws.

There's a Supremacy Clause, which means that some laws are greater than others. Constitution versus state. Constitution always wins. We see the same thing here going on in Daniel chapter six.

[8 : 58] We might say that there is a divine supremacy clause. In other words, God's laws always trump man's laws. And that's been set up for us with what we read in previous weeks.

I'm gonna jump back with us to verse five. Remember when these men who are jealous of Daniel hatch this plot to get him. In verse five, they say this. We shall not find any ground for complaint against Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.

By the way, there in verse five, that's our first instance of the word law. And this is the same concept we've talked about earlier in Daniel. Remember, I've told you about Acts chapter five, verse 29, where the apostles say, we must obey God rather than men.

And so that gets us to our test. Injunction appears in this chapter how many times? It's seven. Okay, so there's four times in what we read today, seven times throughout the whole chapter.

Law, I told you it appeared two times in verses one through 10. We saw it another two times. So we have seven injunction for law. The point is this. This chapter is setting up for us the question, whose law wins?

[10:13] Verse five, we see law for the first time. It's the law of his God. And then over and over and over, we hear about the laws and the injunctions of Darius. Whose law wins?

Or we could put it another way. What do we do when God's laws and man's laws conflict? And that's what we're gonna see here in Daniel chapter six.

And so we're gonna look at simply at two things. First of all, Daniel's obedience. And second, God's faithfulness. We're gonna look at Daniel's obedience and God's faithfulness.

First, Daniel's obedience I mentioned already. Verse five, these men who want to catch Daniel, remember they're jealous of him because he's so successful. They know there's one way they can trap him and that's with the law of his God.

And that tells us something already. Daniel is so known for his fate that it's obvious to these men that this is going to be an easy way to get him. There's no doubt in their mind as far as we can tell that this is going to be a successful plan.

[11:12] And even more than that, not only do they know this is the way they can get Daniel because he has this reputation for loving God and obeying his law, they know it's only going to take 30 days.

Even 30 days is enough to force Daniel to break. That's what we see in verses six through nine. And then after this whole trap is set, everything they believe is confirmed, right?

Because verse 10, Daniel hears about this new law being passed. He just continues what he's done before. Verse 10, it says, he did as he has done previously.

Daniel just continues his practice. He prays three times a day. As we looked at last week, he keeps praying three times a day. Now, last week we talked about the fact that this was the practice that enabled Daniel to stand strong.

He'd been praying for years. It had become a part of who he was. And this week, we'll emphasize a different part of it. He just continues it, right? It's not just that he's practiced it in the past, but he continues it in the present.

[12:06] And we've talked before about the variety of things that Daniel uses in response to government threats. He has a repertoire. So we saw in chapter one, for example, Daniel negotiates. He does a backroom deal so that he doesn't have to eat the king's food.

Here, Daniel has a slightly different strategy. He doesn't strike a backroom deal. He just remains consistent. And there's something amazing about this. Daniel, he doesn't start doing more than he'd done before.

He doesn't start doing less than he'd done before. In some ways, Daniel just continues completely unfazed. He doesn't increase or decrease his practice. He doesn't change his location.

Daniel doesn't hide on the one hand. He also doesn't go out and have a public protest on the other hand. We don't find Daniel making a huge show, you know, out in the center of Babylon, praying so he can make sure everyone can see him.

And on the other hand, he doesn't hide. Daniel just keeps doing what he's doing. And there's a lesson for us here as well as we think about what it looks like to live faithful lives in a foreign land.

[13 : 08] Daniel doesn't back down. He also doesn't go out of his way to be obnoxious. And I've talked about this before. There's a certain strain of American Christianity that will teach you that when there's something you don't like in the world, it's important for you to be as obnoxious as possible about it.

It's important for you to go and protest and make sure everyone sees how angry you are. And yet Daniel models for us something here incredibly different. He just keeps doing what he's always done.

And so again, there's a consistency. He's consistent. He's reliable. He has a reputation. These men know they can trap him in this way. And Daniel's not obnoxious.

Okay? He's bold. He's firm. He's clear. And so that's part of what we see in verse 11. Both of those things are at work. These men come to trap him.

And what do they have to do? On the one hand, they have to come and find him. Right? Daniel's not being obnoxious. On the other hand, they know that they can find him. Daniel's consistent, reliable, faithful.

[14 : 11] There's a sense in which Daniel's sort of separated from everything that's going on around him. He just ignores it and keeps going. And so that's exactly, of course, what these men tell the king.

Right? Verse 13. One of the exiles from Judah, Daniel, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed. Daniel knows which law matters.

Daniel knows who's in charge. Daniel has a perspective. Right? He knows who the great king is. He knows what the great kingdom is. And then finally, to drive this home, we see a word repeated in both verse 16 and verse 20 that describes Daniel and his practice.

Daniel does these things continually. Verse 16. And when Darius speaks to Daniel, he says, May your God, whom you serve, continually deliver you.

Verse 20. The king again says, O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve, continually been able to deliver you from the lions?

[15 : 13] So that's the lesson we have from Daniel here. When we have this conflict of laws, when the state forbids us from doing what God commands, we want to be Daniel-like people. We want to continue doing what we did before continually.

If you know anything about military cemeteries, you know that perhaps the most well-known of all of them is Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. And it's known, of course, for being prestigious.

It's also known because it's the place where there's the tomb of the unknown soldier. And the tomb of the unknown soldier is there for soldiers who have died in combat whose bodies have not been identified.

And there's actually some soldiers like that who are buried there. What's even more famous about this monument is the guards who guard it. And they're called sentinels.

They're from the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment. And they have to go through this incredibly rigorous, demanding, highly selective process. Almost no one becomes a sentinel of the tomb of the unknown soldier.

[16 : 14] Because once they do, they have to do it continually. And this is what it looks like. No matter what happens, the tomb is always guarded. Is it snowing?

No. The sentinels are marching around the tomb, guarding it. Is there a hurricane? The sentinels are marching around the tomb, guarding it. Is it 105 degrees outside?

The sentinels are marching around the tomb, guarding it. There is nothing that pulls them off course. Because they have something more important, right? They have a higher task. None of those other things phase them.

They don't ramp up when there's something bad. They don't ramp down. They continue their task. And so the point for us, brothers and sisters, is this. We want to be verse 20, verse 16 kind of people.

People who serve our God continually. No matter what happens, everything else is a distraction. The state, right? This passage, by the way, it's about forbidden worship.

[17 : 13] They're told they can't pray. They need to pray. Now, this is going to be something that's experienced much more by our brothers and sisters around the world than it is for us here in the United States. And also, there are ways that we can relate to it, right?

If the government comes and tells us that preaching the gospel is a form of hate speech, what are we going to do? We're going to continue serving our God continually.

We're going to keep preaching the gospel the same way we did before. If the state comes and tells us we cannot speak out against sexual anarchy that's all around us, what are we going to do?

We are going to serve our God continually. We are going to keep preaching and teaching God's beautiful design for our bodies and our sexuality.

We're not going to be obnoxious about it. We're not going to do it less or more. We're just going to continue. We're going to be faithful. We are going to speak clearly about what God tells us in his word.

[18 : 12] No matter what happens, we have a higher loyalty. Is the church targeted? By the way, I've talked about this before.

I don't think this happened for us in El Paso County. It probably did happen in other parts of the U.S. last year. If we're going to serve our God continually, we as the church, no matter what's happening around us, like sentinels around the tomb, we keep doing our thing.

We keep obeying God. Now, if this sounds like a culture warrior, it is not one of my goals in life to be a culture warrior. However, that is kind of what's going on in this passage, right?

Verse 5, they decide to target Daniel specifically because of his faith. So Daniel doesn't invite this, right, but it comes to him. And so there's a winsomeness here, right?

Daniel, as I've said before, doesn't go out of his way to be a jerk. There's also a firmness, a steadfastness, because Daniel and we belong to a different kingdom. That's what we've been looking at over and over again, right?

[19 : 26] God rules and reigns over the nations. He's the one who's actually in control and in charge. So we've looked at Daniel's obedience. Daniel trusts, right, that the divine supremacy clause is going to win.

He trusts that God is going to protect him. And of course, Daniel is not disappointed, which brings us not just Daniel's obedience, but also God's faithfulness.

We see God's faithfulness at the very beginning of this chapter. We were reminded in verse 3 that Daniel had an excellent spirit in him. That's what we talked about two weeks ago, the fact that Daniel was this excellent faithful worker.

And we know from earlier parts of Daniel this was the spirit of God in him. So God's already at work in the beginning of this chapter, empowering and enabling Daniel to be excellent in his work. But we see God's faithfulness as well in an unexpected way here.

We actually see it by contrast. Not just in Daniel. We actually see it in the fact that Darius is a nervous wreck. So you may have picked up on this.

[20 : 28] Darius is an emotional basket case here. Verse 14, The king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him.

So Darius finds out what's going to happen. He's distressed. He's running around trying to fix the problem. And there's an irony here that we're going to see, right? Here's the man who's supposed to be powerful. And everyone's supposed to pray to him, right?

And he's the one who's anxious and out of control. That continues not just in verse 14, but in verse 15. His men come to him and remind him, Hey, we see you running around. We know you're trying to get Daniel out.

Guess what? You can't. You already bound yourself. And then the consequences for him come true in verse 16. We see that this powerful king, excuse me, verse 18.

The king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. No diversions were brought to him and sleep fled from him. This man, who's the most powerful human in this situation, can't sleep.

[21 : 36] Now, we're not told what Daniel is doing that night, but we can imagine. This powerful man who has given this punishment, who's asked people to, commanded people to pray only to him, is in a palace unable to sleep.

Daniel, on the other hand, who belongs to God, who has trusted in him and has confidence in his faithfulness, is most likely getting a great night's sleep in the lion's den. Now, we're not told.

I think that's, in fact, part of the point here, is there's no even mention of what's going on with Daniel, but we can imagine maybe he's snuggling up with a lion for a pillow. And so, brothers and sisters, the point is this.

It is better to be in a lion's den and belong to God than to be in a palace far away from him. It is better to be in a lion's den and belong to God than be in a palace far away from him.

Daniel knows this. This is why he's able to be faithful and obedient. Darius does not know God in that way. And so that's why, despite his power and his wealth and his comfort, he cannot sleep.

[22 : 45] Despite all odds and against all appearances, God's servants are the ones who are safe. Despite all odds and against all appearances, God's servants are the ones who are actually safe.

And we see the climax of this chapter. The king, of course, can't sleep. Verse 19, as soon as the sun's up, he's up. He goes in haste to the den of lions.

Verse 20, he has this question, by the way, we, many of us are familiar with this story, but if you imagine you're reading it for the first time, we don't know what's going on with Daniel. Part of the reason we're not told about his lion pillow is because we're meant to have this tension.

We're not sure what's happening with him, right? So verse 20, he asks this question, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions? And we see the resolution here, verse 22.

My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him. And also before you, O king, I have done no harm.

[23 : 48] And so God's faithfulness, we see it not just in the fact that Darius is the one, ironically, comically, who's anxious. We also see it in God's clear deliverance. He sends an angel to Daniel, and he finds Daniel blameless.

In other words, Daniel is saying this, there are two laws, and there's one great judge. That great judge has heard this case, and he has found me blameless.

You might think about it this way. The Supreme Court finally weighed in, and guess who won? Daniel won. The lesser court, the state, lost. The real law wins.

The true judge weighs in. The real law wins, because the true judge weighs in. And we see that Darius recognizes this, verse 27. He delivers and rescues.

He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth. He who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions. And there's a sense in which Darius also, verse 26, recognizes God's power, as these pagan kings have over and over in the book of Daniel.

[24 : 59] He's the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. And so the point here is simple, and it's the point that we have in verse 23.

God delivers those who trust in him. God delivers those who trust in him. We see that literally at the very end of verse 23.

No kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. Brothers and sisters, we are able to stand firm, because we know, like Daniel, who is really in charge.

We are able to follow and serve God continually, because we know who the true king is, and we know what the great kingdom is as well.

And so we, not just being faithful like Daniel, but we remember and we believe, who is really in charge, who actually has the power. We remember who's really in charge, and we know who actually has the power.

[26 : 02] Remember I've mentioned before, the summary that Daniel provides us of his book. Daniel chapter 11, verse 32. The people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. And that's what we see here.

Daniel knows his God, he stands firm, and he takes action. The same we want to be true of us. We want to know our God as well, so that we can stand firm and take action.

Daniel is not just obedient, but God is faithful. And remember, part of the reason Daniel's able to remember this to stay focused. We talked about it last week. Verse 10, he sets his eyes towards Jerusalem.

He sets his eyes towards the city of God, the place where God's king truly dwells. Now I alluded to this earlier in our worship service, and we saw it a little bit in our Hebrews passage, and it's kind of a question that's been in the background for all of Daniel, and it's this, what if God doesn't deliver?

Yes, God delivered Daniel out of the lion's den here. Yes, Daniel chapter three, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered from the fire.

[27 : 12] But what if they weren't? What if we are like Daniel, we're obedient, and we don't see God's faithfulness in this way, we just lose?

Right? What if Daniel had been eaten by the lions? Well, the Bible's not unaware of this, right? We read this passage from Hebrews this morning. David read it for us, and it references both realities.

It references us being delivered right now, and it references us being delivered in the future. In fact, it alludes directly to Daniel. If you go back on page four of your worship guide, the end of verse 33, it talks about those who stopped the mouths of lions.

So it recognizes there are people like Daniel whom God delivers. It also recognizes there are people who don't experience that level of victory here and now. We saw it in verse 35.

Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. In other words, there are places like Daniel where we see glimpses and samples of what is to come.

[28 : 15] We don't always experience that in the here and now, but we look forward to it knowing we will have it one day. So Hebrews is incredibly realistic for us, right? God delivers in part now.

He delivers fully and finally in the future. And so what we have here, some people have pointed out, is a picture, a foreshadowing of what the end of the world will look like.

Daniel delivered from judgment, right? Daniel stops the mouths of the lions. His accusers given over to judgment. The lions devour them before they can reach the bottom of the den.

And so while we don't see always that kind of deliverance here and now, we have a picture in Daniel of what God's deliverance looks like fully and finally. We know that one day he will come and bring his kingdom in full.

This first 26 kingdom, the kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and this dominion that shall be to the end. And so no matter what happens now, we continue like Daniel, obedient and faithful.

[29 : 18] We continue to serve God continually. And we trust God's deliverance, even as we only see it in part. And we trust it first and foremost, because we have seen God's greatest deliverance already.

We know about the deliverance that God has brought about because of our Savior, Jesus Christ, whom he sent to live as a man on this earth, to live the perfect life we should have lived, and to die the death that we should have died.

He took our sins on his behalf, and in doing that, he delivered us from death. In other words, Jesus went to his own type of den. He was not delivered so that we could be.

Daniel did not face death. Jesus did. And so we know of God's great deliverance in the past. We can have total and complete confidence in his deliverance now and in his deliverance in the future.

We know what is coming, and we trust it because of what God has already done. And that trust and confidence is only for those who have faith in Jesus Christ.

[30 : 30] And so Daniel models for us what it looks like to trust God. Those accusing him show us what happens to those who do not trust God. And that brings us back to the question that we've seen over and over, which is this, if God rules and reigns over the nations, if he is coming to bring his kingdom that has no end, which kingdom do you belong to?

Do you belong to the kingdom that Daniel is in, the kingdom of faith in Jesus Christ, or do you belong to the kingdom of this world? If you are like Daniel, you will be delivered from the pit.

If you are not, you will be devoured. There is a picture here of God's final judgment. And so if you are not like Daniel, if you're not a verse 23 kind of person, a person who had trusted in his God, remember, as I've mentioned before, the time to repent is now.

No one knows the day or the hour when they will leave this earth and face our Lord. And so we must embrace faith and repentance in Jesus Christ, knowing that he's the only one who can cover our sins.

He is the one who represents us before God because we know that outside of him, we do deserve to be eaten up. It is Daniel's trust in God's power and ultimately God's power that delivers him.

[31 : 51] We've talked about the deliverance and the judgment that we see in the future. We've seen Jesus in the past.

We've talked about the fact that Jesus also was put in a pit and he, unlike us, faced death. We're also given a picture of the great reversal that's going to happen at the end of the world.

In the end of the book of Revelation in chapter 20, we're told about another pit and another person who's thrown into it. Verses 2 and 3, we're told about a dragon who represents Satan that is thrown into a pit so that it no longer has power.

In other words, the nations of this world will throw God's people into a pit for a time. One day, God will throw Satan himself into a pit.

There will be a great and full and final resolution. And there's a sense in which Satan is already in that pit. He's already restrained in this world, right?

[32 : 55] The gospel now goes forward out to all the nations. And so that's our hope and our confidence. As we look to be obedient people like Daniel's obedient, and we look to God's faithfulness as Daniel looked to God's faithfulness.

I mentioned a couple weeks ago the movie Ford versus Ferrari. And if you're familiar with racing fast cars and driving at high speeds, I hope most of you are not that familiar with that.

But if you are, you know there's certain strategies that you have if you're going to be successful. If you're driving a car at 100 or 200 miles per hour, where are your eyes going to be? Hopefully your eyes are in the distance, right?

They're not in the foreground. You want your eyes to be as far ahead as possible because wherever you're looking, you are going to be there before too long.

Brothers and sisters, as we live life in this world, facing the challenges of governments and authorities and dominions, we keep our eyes in the distance, not the foreground.

[34 : 01] Because we know we're going to be there before too long. We keep our eyes focused on Christ and his kingdom, making decisions now that end us there, not distracted by what's going on to the left and the right, not distracted by what's in the foreground, but keeping ourselves centered and dialed in on the future that God has for us because we know before too long we will be there.

And so we remember the words of our Lord in Matthew chapter 16, for whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. We look at our destination and we stay the course because we know that our God is faithful and he will deliver us.

And so we want verse 23 to be true of us. No kind of harm was found on him because he had trusted in his God. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you again for your word and we ask that you would use this story, the story that is true and reliable to strengthen our faith and our resolve, that we would know our God, we would know you, and so we would be able to stand firm and take action.

We ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. I invite you to stand for our closing hymn. Amen.