

VBS

JULY
12-16



KNOW the GOSPEL!

BELIEVE the GOSPEL!

SPREAD the GOSPEL!

1ST - 5TH GRADE

**Day 3: Preaching with your
Actions**

Preaching with Your Actions

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the kids that they can preach the Gospel with their actions by living the Christian life.

Key Verses

Daniel 6—Main Teaching Passage

Matthew 5:16

1 Peter 2:11-12

Memory Verse - Matthew 5:16

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Hook

Review yesterday's memory verse, Mark 5:19.

Act out several different kinds of people (a firefighter, a cowboy, a doctor, etc.) in front of the kids and have them guess what you are pretending to be. After doing this a few times, ask the kids how they were able to figure out what you were acting out.

Explain that to play this game, they had to look at your actions to figure out what kind of person you were. This is actually what non-believers do as well. They watch our lives carefully to see what we are like as Christians. As we will see today, the way we live will tell them a lot about what we believe.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

The story of Daniel and the Lions' Den is a familiar one, but as we look at it today, let's pay careful attention to the way Daniel acts. The first thing we see about Daniel is that he was well-regarded by the king because of his wisdom and hard work, and as a result, he was made one of the most powerful men in the land. However, this made some of the other rulers jealous, and so they hatched a plan in order to get rid of Daniel. They knew that Daniel prayed to the Lord three times a day, with his window open facing Jerusalem, and so they tricked the king into making a law stating that everyone must pray only to the king, and that anyone who broke this law would be thrown into a den of lions.

When Daniel heard about this new law, he did not stop praying, nor did he hide. He boldly continued to pray, just as he always did. The other rulers caught him doing this and brought him to the king. The king was sad about this because he liked Daniel, but he couldn't change the law, and Daniel was thrown into the lions' den. The king hoped that Daniel's God would protect him.

That night, the king couldn't sleep, and early in the morning he ran to the lions' den to see what had happened. He asked Daniel if his God had protected him, and Daniel told the king that the Lord had sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions. The king ordered Daniel to be removed from the lions' den, and Daniel had no injuries. The king then wrote a letter to all his kingdom telling them that everyone should fear and honor the God of Daniel because He is the true and living God, the one who rescued Daniel from the lions. Daniel was restored to his place as one of the most powerful men in the kingdom.

LOOK

As we saw yesterday, Jesus wants us to share the Gospel message with our friends and family, as well as anyone else we meet. However, sometimes people don't want to listen to us when we try to tell them the good news of what Jesus has done. But even if they won't listen to us when we share the Gospel with our words, we still have another way to proclaim the Good News: with our actions.

In Daniel 6, the only words recorded that Daniel said to the king are in verses 21-22. He let his actions do the talking, and as the king observed the way Daniel lived his life, it led him to learn more about the Lord. First, the king recognized how Daniel worked hard and demonstrated wisdom as a governor, and as a result the king set him over the entire kingdom. Then he noticed Daniel's bravery and commitment to the Lord when he refused to obey the king's law and continued to pray to God. Finally, he saw Daniel's faith and God's power when the Lord protected Daniel from the lions. As a result of seeing the way Daniel lived and what God did for

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

him, the king discovered that Daniel's God was a powerful and loving God, and that His followers were faithful and courageous. As a result, the king made a great proclamation for his people to worship the Lord.

The Bible tells us that, like Daniel, we should live lives that are pleasing to God in order to lead people to Him. Another way of saying this is sharing the Gospel with our actions. Matthew 5:16 says that when we let our light shine (a metaphor for doing what is good and right), people will see the way we live and praise God, just like the king did in today's story. The same way, 1 Peter 2:11-12 says that even if people dislike us for our faith, if we live obedient to the lord and do what's right, they may change their mind and turn to the Lord.

So what would it look like to preach the Gospel with actions in your life? In school, you can be a good and honest student, respect your teachers, and be kind to your classmates. At home, you can obey your parents and get along with your brothers and sisters. When you are with your friends, that might mean thinking of others before yourself and saying no when they are doing something you know is wrong. When other people see that you are living a life that is pleasing to God, they'll take notice, and they might ask you why you are different from others. When that happens, you have a perfect opportunity to share the Gospel with that person and possibly lead them to believing in Jesus!

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Matthew 5:16.

Review the lesson by asking the kids how Daniel acted in the story. Ask them why they think the king turned to the Lord in the end.

Pray: Ask the Lord to help the students live in a way that pleases God so that unbelievers might come to know the Lord. Pray for opportunities to share the Gospel with others.

Parent Question: How can we preach the Gospel with our actions?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Daniel 6 by David Guzik

IN THE LION'S DEN

This has long been a beloved Bible story – and no wonder. There are so many dramatic features in this story – the jealousy of political subordinates, the vanity of a king, the integrity of a man, the power and preservation of God, even wild animals and violence.

A. How Daniel was condemned to the lion's den.

1. ([Dan 6:1-3](#)) Daniel in the government of Darius.

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

a. **It pleased Darius:** Secular history of this period has no record of a ruler named **Darius**. There are three possible explanations for the Darius of [Daniel 6](#).

i. It may be that **Darius** was simply another name for Cyrus, who ruled the Medo-Persian Empire during this period.

ii. It may be that **Darius** was actually Cambyses, son of Cyrus, who served under his father as a ruler of Babylon and later inherited the throne of the entire empire.

iii. It may be that **Darius** was an ancient official known as *Gubaru* in ancient documents, whom Cyrus appointed as ruler over Babylon immediately after its capture. It is the opinion of this commentator that this *Gubaru* was the same person as **Darius**. In fact, "Darius" may be an honorific title meaning, "holder of the scepter."

iv. Ancient documents show that the man Gubaru had the power to make appointments, to assemble an army, to levy taxes, and to possess palaces. Gubaru was in a very real sense the king over Babylon.

b. **Daniel distinguished himself:** Daniel was one of three leaders directly under Darius, and he shined above the other two leaders because he had **an excellent spirit**. Daniel had a good attitude in his work and life, and this made him the object of attack.

2. ([Dan 6:4-9](#)) A plot against Daniel is conceived and initiated.

So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God." So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make

a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.” Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

a. **They could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful:** Daniel was such a **faithful** man that those who looked for a flaw in his actions or his character came up empty.

i. Sometimes today a candidate or nominee for political office is set under this kind of scrutiny, but imagine looking as hard as you can at a public servant in office some 50 years and finding *nothing wrong*. No fraudulent expense accounts. No intern scandals. No questionable business deals. No gifts from lobbyists. No accusations from his staff.

ii. Simply, there were no skeletons in Daniel’s closet. His enemies examined his life and found nothing to attack – so they had to *make up* something.

b. **Nor was there any error or fault found in him:** This wasn’t to imply that Daniel was actually sinless, but that he was a man of great integrity. We could also say that Daniel was especially blameless in the conduct of his professional life.

i. When he considered Daniel’s integrity, Spurgeon bemoaned our modern compromises: “As for Lord Fair-Speech, Lord Time-Server, Mr. Smooth-Man, Mr. Anything, Mr. Facing-both-Ways, Mr. Two-Tongues, and all the members of their club, Mr. By-Ends included, the entire company of them will be swept away when the Judge comes with the besom of destruction.” (Spurgeon)

ii. “Daniel here is not the herald of his own virtue, but the Spirit speaks through his mouth.” (Calvin)

c. **We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God:** These men knew Daniel well. They knew he could not be trapped into evil, but they also knew that he would be faithful to **his God** in all circumstances. Every Christian should consider if others could say the same about them.

i. The world may not know the details of doctrine or the intimacies of worship with God, but they can tell a bad temper, selfishness, conceitedness, or dishonesty when they see it. “The world is a very poor critic of my Christianity, but it is a very sufficient one of my conduct.” (Maclaren)

d. **Whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king:** If the enemies of Daniel knew him, they also knew Darius. They knew they could appeal to Darius’ pride and his desire for a unified kingdom.

i. “The suggested mode of compelling every subject in the former Babylonian domain to acknowledge the authority of Persia seemed a statesmanlike measure that would contribute to the unification of the Middle and Near East. The time limit of one month seemed reasonable.” (Archer)

ii. “What pretence could they urge for so silly an ordinance? Probably to *flatter* the ambition of the king, they pretend to make him *a god* for *thirty* days; so that the whole empire should make prayer and supplication to him and pay him Divine honours! This was the bait; but their real object was to destroy Daniel.” (Clarke)

iii. **All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together:** Daniel’s enemies also knew that people could be persuaded to do things they wouldn’t normally do if they thought *everyone else* approved of that thing.

iv. Of course, they lied when they said **all the governors... have consulted together**. We know it was a lie be-

cause Daniel was one of the **governors** and he was not **consulted**.

e. **So that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians:** It was an established principle in the Medo-Persian Empire that when a king formally signed and instituted a decree, it was so binding that not even the king himself could change it.

i. The decrees of a Persian king were unchangeable because he was thought to speak for the gods, who could never be wrong and thus never needed to change their minds.

f. **Therefore King Darius signed the written decree:** “Suppose the law of the land were proclaimed, ‘No man shall pray during the remainder of this month, on pain of being cast into a den of lions,’ – how many of you would pray? I think there would be rather a scanty number at the prayer-meeting. Not but what the attendance at prayer-meetings is scanty enough now! But if there were the penalty of being cast into a den of lions, I am afraid the prayer-meeting would be postponed for a month, owing to pressing business, and manifold engagements of one kind and another.” (Spurgeon)

3. ([Dan 6:10-15](#)) Daniel’s faithfulness to God causes him to be condemned to the lion’s den.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king’s decree: “Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.” So they answered and said before the king, “That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.” And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, “Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.”

a. **When Daniel knew that the writing was signed:** Daniel was confronted with a test of loyalties. He was a loyal subject of his king, yet he knew that the King of Kings deserved a higher loyalty. Daniel refused to give to the government the measure of obedience that belonged to God alone.

i. Others perhaps considered it risky for Daniel to pray as was his custom. Daniel knew that the *safest* thing he could do was radically obey God.

ii. It isn’t hard to see why people are men-pleasers; it *seems* as if people have the power to hire or fire us, to break our hearts, to slander us, to make our lives generally miserable. The power to obey God and stand for Him comes from a settled understanding that God is really in control.

iii. “Unless you are prepared to be in the minority, and now and then to be called ‘narrow,’ ‘fanatic,’ and to be laughed at by men because you will not do what they do, but abstain and resist, then there is little chance of your ever making much of your Christian profession.” (Maclaren)

b. **Prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days:** Daniel didn’t let the decree change his actions one way or another. He didn’t do more praying or less; he simply continued his excellent prayer life.

i. There was danger in both directions. It would have been compromise to do less or pride to do more. “This was not the act of a person courting martyrdom but the continuation of a faithful ministry in prayer which

had characterized his long life.” (Walvoord)

ii. What was Daniel’s **custom** in prayer?

- He prayed **in his upper room** – this was private prayer, made with no intention to impress others.
- He prayed with **his windows open toward Jerusalem**, remembering the place of sacrifice even when there was no sacrifice.
- He prayed according to Scripture, because in [1 Kings 8](#) Solomon asked God to give special notice to the prayers of His people when they prayed towards Jerusalem and the temple: *And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place* ([1 Kings 8:3](#)).

- **He knelt down on his knees**, praying just as Jesus did, ([Luke 22:41](#)), as Stephen ([Acts 7:60](#)), as Peter ([Acts 9:40](#)), as Paul and other leaders in the church ([Acts 20:36](#)), and as Luke ([Acts 21:5](#)). “Kneeling is a begging posture and we must all come to God as beggars.” (Heslop)

- He prayed **three times that day**, knowing that though a little prayer is good, much prayer is far better. We also remember that Daniel was one of three governors over an empire – yet still had time to pray. “That does not tell you how often he prayed, but how often he was in the posture of prayer. Doubtless he prayed 300 times a day if necessary – his heart was always having commerce with the skies; but thrice a day he prayed formally.” (Spurgeon)

- He **prayed and gave thanks**, because great prayer is filled with thanksgiving. “Prayer and praise should always go up to heaven arm in arm, like twin angels walking up Jacob’s ladder, or like kindred aspirations soaring up to the Most High.” (Spurgeon)

c. **Found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God:** They found Daniel just as they knew they would – deep in prayer. For Daniel prayer was both communion with God and pleading for His will to be accomplished (**supplication**).

d. **Does not show due regard for you, O king:** This was not true. Daniel intended no disrespect for the king, only a higher respect for God.

e. **And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself:** There is a lot to like about King Darius, and one of the admirable things about him is that he was **displeased with himself**. Instead of blaming others, he knew that he was at fault. We can be sure that he wasn’t happy with Daniel’s enemies, but he knew that ultimately he was responsible.

i. Like Darius, our foolish decisions often haunt us. Often all we can do is pray and ask God to mercifully and miraculously intervene when we make foolish decisions.

f. **He labored till the going down of the sun:** This means that he worked as long as he could. According to ancient eastern custom, the execution was carried out on the evening of the day that the accusation was made and found valid.

B. Daniel is preserved in the lion’s den.

1. ([Dan 6:16-18](#)) Daniel’s time in the lion’s den.

So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.” Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.

a. **Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you:** Darius had faith, and it was faith born out of Daniel's trust in the Lord. The idea was, "I tried my best to save you Daniel, but I failed. Now it is up to your God."

b. **You serve continually:** This made Daniel's testimony. Many of us occasionally display godly character and wisdom before the world, but counter-act the good by then being bad. Daniel's testimony was made by *continual* service.

c. **The king sealed it:** This may have been to protect Daniel as much as to make sure someone didn't rescue Daniel. Darius knew that Daniel had powerful enemies who might kill him if the lions didn't.

d. **His sleep went from him:** Undoubtedly, Daniel had a better night's rest than Darius. We can be sure that Daniel prayed in the lions' den, because it was simply his habit to pray. He did not need to *start praying* on this remarkable occasion because the *habit of prayer* was well ingrained in his life.

i. "When our lives are centred in God, we can ever afford to leave circumstances to the compulsion of the One in Whom we trust. The occasional is always affected by the habitual." (Morgan)

ii. Perhaps Daniel prayed [Psalm 22:21-22](#): *Save Me from the lion's mouth... I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.*

iii. "In any case he must have had a glorious night. What with the lions, and with angels all night to keep him company, he was spending the night-watches in grander style than Darius." (Spurgeon)

2. ([Dan 6:19-23](#)) Daniel is found alive after the night in the lion's den.

Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "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! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you." Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

a. **Very early in the morning:** Since he could not sleep, it was easy for Darius to rise **very early**. We imagine him waiting for the first glimmer of dawn so he could see how Daniel fared.

b. **Then Daniel said to the king:** When Darius heard Daniel's voice he knew that he had survived through the night. The lions would not or could not touch this servant of God.

c. **God sent His angel to shut the lions' mouth:** We don't know if Daniel *saw* an angel or not, but he certainly knew that **God sent His angel** to rescue him. [Hebrews 1:14](#) says angels are *ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation*. God sent an angel to serve Daniel's need.

i. "How the angel stopped the lions' mouths, whether by the brightness of his presence, or threatening them with his finger ([Numbers 22:27, 33](#)), or by making a rumble amongst them like that of an empty cart upon the stones, or by presenting unto them a light fire (which things lions are said to be terrified with), or by causing in them a satiety, or by working upon their fantasy, we need not inquire." (Trapp)

d. **I have done no wrong before you:** Daniel did break the king's law, but he did not go *against* the king or against the king's *best interests*. Daniel is an example of obedient disobedience.

e. **Because he believed in his God:** Daniel was preserved through *faith*. Though his cause was righteous and he was unjustly accused, those things alone did not protect him before the lions. Daniel needed a living, abiding faith in God, even in the most difficult circumstances.

i. "Though they were savage and hunger-starved, yet Daniel was kept from the paws and jaws of these many fierce and fell lions by the power of God through faith." (Trapp)

ii. There is an instructive order here. The power of God sent an angel to protect Daniel in response to a prayer of faith coming from a consistent, abiding walk.

iii. Because of this faith, Daniel is recognized in [Hebrews 11:33](#) as one who by faith *stopped the mouths of lions*.

3. ([Dan 6:24](#)) The fate of those who plotted against Daniel.

And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions; them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

a. **The king gave the command:** No one had to *ask* Darius to do this. He was ready and willing to bring justice to those who plotted against Daniel, and also to **their children, and their wives**.

i. This was obviously severe, but it was also according to ancient customs among the Persians. An ancient writer named Ammianus Marcellinus wrote of the Persians, "The laws among them are formidable... by which, on account of the guilt of one, all the kindred perish."

ii. Darius was not happy with these men. He probably would have cast these accusers to the lions even if Daniel *had* perished in the lion's den.

b. **The lions overpowered them... before they ever came to the bottom of the den:** This proved that it was genuinely angelic protection that saved Daniel. It proves there was no *natural* reason why the lions did not eat Daniel. Daniel's accusers perished in the same trap they set for Daniel.

i. This illustrates the work of the cross in reverse: the guilty were punished in the place of the innocent.

ii. This also illustrates a principle of spiritual warfare. God will cause our enemy to be impaled on the same snare set for us ([Psalm 7:14-16](#)).

4. ([Dan 6:25-28](#)) Darius decrees that all must honor the God of Daniel.

Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

a. **Then King Darius wrote:** The Book of Daniel follows a familiar pattern. God's people stand firm in their convictions, God honors and protects them, and the testimony of God's work makes the ungodly see and tell of the greatness of God.

· Daniel and his four friends stood firm and Nebuchadnezzar saw the fruit of it ([Daniel 1:20](#)).

· Daniel boldly and wisely interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the king honored Daniel and his God

([Daniel 2:46-47](#)).

· Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego stood firm and Nebuchadnezzar gave glory to God ([Daniel 3:28-30](#)).

· Daniel boldly told Nebuchadnezzar the truth and the king humbled himself and gave glory to God ([Daniel 4:34-37](#)).

· Daniel stood firm and boldly told Belshazzar the truth and the king honored Daniel ([Daniel 5:29](#)).

i. The point is plain: when we stand firm in godly convictions and honor God *even when it costs something*, others will see the testimony and be impressed.

b. **The God of Daniel:** In a small way, this helps us diagnose Darius' spiritual condition. It isn't enough to say, "**the God of Daniel.**" Saving faith says, "the God of Darius."

c. **Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian:** Some take this to mean that Darius *was* Cyrus the Persian. This is one of the three theories about the identity of Darius (mentioned at the beginning of this chapter).

d. **Daniel prospered:** This is the last link in a long chain set through this chapter. We can see Daniel progressing along this path:

- Plotted against
- Praying
- Praising
- Persistently serving
- Persecuted
- Protected
- Preserved
- Preferred
- Prospered