

Read: Daniel 6:10-12,16-23

Lord, Keep Us Strong in Faith

Daniel 6:6,23

So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"... And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

When you visit the zoo, what animal do you want to see first? Some people like the playful penguins. Others love the silly, swinging monkeys. A lot of people like the biggest animals the best—lions and tigers and bears! It's fun to see these powerful creatures, as long as they are safely behind bars or a big glass wall. But can you imagine being on the other side of the glass? Can you imagine being locked in with the lions all night?

That's exactly what happened to a man in the Bible named Daniel. The king made a law that said people had to pray to him, but Daniel loved God and kept praying to God even though he knew he could be punished for his faith. The king found out, and he punished Daniel by locking him into a den full of lions. But God protected Daniel from the lions! The next day, Daniel said to the king, "My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me." God showed his almighty power and his love for Daniel by keeping him safe when he was in trouble because of his faith.

Unless we're at a zoo, we won't have to face any lions. But as Christians, we will face difficulties because of our faith in God, just like Daniel did. Our friends might make fun of us or stop spending time with us when we refuse to say or do sinful things with them. We might lose our spot on a sports team because we attend worship on a Sunday instead of going to a game. When being a Christian comes with these consequences, we might be tempted to hide or deny our faith in Jesus.

But when troubles come, we don't have to hide our faith or be afraid. God promises to protect our faith, just like he protected Daniel from the lions! When we were baptized, God put faith in our hearts, and when we hear God's Word, the Holy Spirit grows that faith and keeps it strong. So, when we face hard times because we believe in Jesus, we go to God's Word. His Word gives us peace in the midst of our problems. His Word gives us courage to confidently proclaim our faith in all situations. No matter what persecution we may face, God has promised to keep our faith in Jesus strong until he takes us to be with him in heaven.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- How did God save Daniel from the lions?
- What did God do to save us from our sin?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What does the word “persecution” mean? How might someone your age be persecuted for believing in Jesus?
- If someone made fun of you for believing in Jesus, what might you say to them?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How did Daniel have the strength to stay faithful to God? How do we have that strength?
- Agree or disagree: Adults face more persecution for their faith than young people do.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we may not come face to face with lions like Daniel did, but we do face problems and persecution because of our faith. Keep us connected to God’s Word and keep our faith strong, knowing that you have promised to guard and protect your Church on earth until you come again to take us home to be with you in heaven. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Hymn: CW 200:1,3 – A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev’ry need That has us now o’ertaken.
The old evil foe Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.

Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill; They shall not overpower us.
This world’s prince may still Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none. He’s judged; the deed is done!
One little word can fell him.