

May 24, 2020

**COLOSSIANS 4:2-6<sup>NIV</sup>**

**<sup>2</sup>Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.**

<sup>3</sup>And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. <sup>4</sup>Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

<sup>5</sup>Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

**Instructive in this passage are 3 characteristics of the praying Christian.** Today's encouragement will only highlight the first of these characteristics. A praying Christian is:

1. Devoted to Prayer.
2. Alert in Prayer.
3. Prayerful in Thanksgiving.

**DEVOTED TO PRAYER.** Governments, corporations, laboratories, & human service departments all around the world are working double-time to answer the calling of this present hour. We need an antidote. People need work. The vulnerable need justice. The world needs change. People from across private and public sectors are banding together in order to bring better days. The significance for these agencies to share the burden in carrying out their work is undoubtedly meaningful for creating solutions.

But out beyond the much-needed workings of the world's organizations, lies an essential task and function most groups will not perform. It is the task Apostle Paul instructs in this passage—**BE DEVOTED TO PRAYER**. You don't need to have CEO experience; you don't need to be backed by banks; you don't need to have political influence. Devotion to prayer refers to our attitude of faithfully confronting life, **with God**. What Paul wants us to see is how this sort of faithfulness **demonstrates a reliance upon God.**<sup>1</sup> Since our beginning, Christians appear to have engaged in prayer on regular occasions, either individually or when gathered together, as well as in times of specific need.<sup>2</sup> Devotion to prayer doesn't mean we suspend all other activities and utilize every waking minute in prayer. Rather, devotion refers to our orientation of life.

When we face all sorts of troubles – do we pray?

When times are high and when times are low – do we pray?

When we wake up and lie down – do we pray?

When we are confused and lack confidence for what to do next – do we pray?

**You remember Daniel.** He's the guy that was thrown into the lion's den.

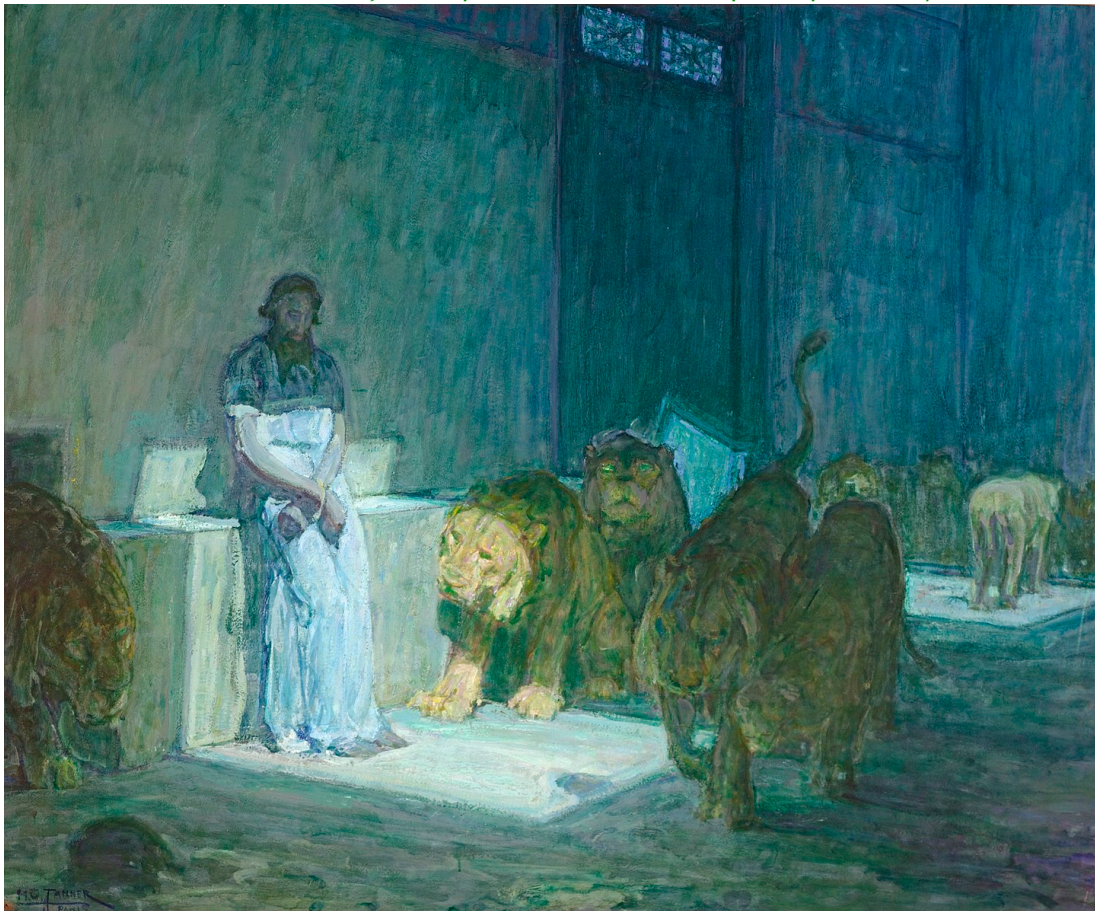
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<sup>1</sup> Thompson, Marianne Maye. *Colossians & Philemon: A Two Horizons Commentary*. Section, Colossians 4:2-6.

<sup>2</sup> For examples, see: Acts 1:14; 3:1; 6:4; 10:30-31; 12:5; 14:23; 16:13,16. Also, see: Thompson, Marianne Maye. *Colossians & Philemon: A Two Horizons Commentary*. Section, Colossians 4:2-6.

Daniel's consistent spiritual rhythm with God, *in prayer*, shaped his life. (Daniel 6)  
Daniel's prayer life is central to the events that played out in his life. Daniel was in tune with God while living in a foreign land where an open and viable relationship with God was socially and politically unacceptable. ...Yet, Daniel prayed anyhow.

**HENRY OSSAWA TANNER** is an American gem. He was the first African-American artist who gained international renown for his paintings. Tanner did mostly paintings of biblical subjects, and are still on display at places like the Smithsonian and the White House. One of his most popular paintings is called, *Daniel in the Lion's Den* (c. 1896). *Tanner infused the drama of Daniel's unjust imprisonment with a quiet spirituality.*<sup>3</sup>



- It might be good to pause for a moment and consider what spiritual rhythms have been shaping your attitudes lately?
- Are you standing at any sort of crossroad? Like Daniel did, let's be devoted to prayer.

Without Ceasing,  
Pastor Brandon

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<sup>3</sup> Learn more about Tanner's painting from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (<https://collections.lacma.org/node/228961>).