***Daniel 6:16-28 16 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.” 17 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. 18 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. 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. 20 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?” 21 Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! 22 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.” 23 Now 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. 24 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. 25 Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. 26 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.
27 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. 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.***

 Tonight, we’re back with King Darius and Daniel, as well as the conspirators. King Darius has been deceived by those around him, because he let his pride get in the way. We remember that he was upset with himself when he realized the wool that had been pulled over his eyes by these deceitful people. He spent the whole day, until the going down of the sun, trying to figure out a way to deliver Daniel from the mess he had caused. When we left last week, the conspirators had returned and reminded him that he was constrained by the laws of the Medes and the Persians.

 Daniel 6:16-17 *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.” 17 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.*

Darius has reached the going down of the sun and has run out of time. He gives the command and Daniel is brought and is cast into the den of lions. Notice that Daniel does not speak, but is led to his execution. Unlike Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego who told Nebuchadnezzar that they would not bow and that God would deliver them, but even if God decided otherwise, they still would not bend the knee, the Bible does not indicate that Daniel said anything.

 But the king spoke! This presents such a contrast between the belligerence of Nebuchadnezzar and the sorrowfulness of Darius. *Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.* Do we hear a seed of Faith sprouting from all Darius has seen and the Faithfulness Daniel has demonstrated? Or do we hear desperation? It’s hard to say. What we definitely hear is that Darius knows that Daniel served God without ceasing. Daniel has lived out his Faith in the sight of anyone watching, both in the everyday and the face of death. The world watches our witness and we must live what we believe.

The king sealed the stone that had been placed across the den. This calls to mind the stone rolled over the mouth of Jesus tomb. In this case, Darius sealed it so that no one could come covertly and kill Daniel in another way. It was sealed against the conspirators, In the case of Christ, it was sealed at the urging of the conspirators. Regardless, the seals served the purpose of demonstrating that God’s hand moved – Daniel delivered from the Lions, Christ raised from the dead. No man could claim victory.

Daniel 6:18 *18 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.*Darius goes home. Does it strike you how much like Daniel this was? When Daniel knew the deed was done, he went to his home and prayed. When Darius knew the deed was done, he went home and spent the night fasting. This communicates genuine interest and affection for Daniel. This is not a picture of a happy man. His sleep left him and the minutes crept slowly by.

Daniel 6:19-20 *Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. 20 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?”* All of us have endured nights like this when, at the first hint of morning, we are up. The king wants to know how it all turned out. He was sick at the stomach and very sad, no sleep. He rose very early and went in haste! He cried out in a lamenting voice, a sorrowful voice, a lot of emotion is in that word! Listen to what he called out - *Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?* What a wonderful praise, what a wonderful title. It brings to mind what we long to hear when we leave this world and enter the rest of the Father - *His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.* Philippians 2:5-9 says *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,* Daniel demonstrated Servant Faith that was observable in all of his stations in life, like Joseph, like Moses, like Paul, like Jesus. He continually served God, whether in a high position or in the pit with some lions, and the world noticed. Let us strive to plant those seeds of Faith and shine the light of Hope in that same way.

Daniel 6-21-23*Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! 22 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.” 23 Now 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.*  Daniel’s reply was showed respect for the king and forgiveness for the wrong done to him. He gives God all the glory instantly, *My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me*. Psalm 34:4 *I sought the Lord, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.* God delivered Daniel because *I was found innocent before Him.* Daniel had done no wrong before God and he had done no wrong to the king.

Darius is exceedingly glad! He commands Daniel be brought out. The decree never said Daniel had to stay in until the lions killed him. Remember in Daniel 3:26 we read - *Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.* And in verse 27 we read - *And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.* Daniel, when he’d been taken up, *no injury whatever was found on him.* Why? The lions weren’t hungry? The ground he landed on wasn’t hard? No - *because he believed in his God.* God encamps all around those who believe.

Daniel 6:24 *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.*Daniel has been delivered.Make no mistake, Darius remembers the deception. Proverbs 11:8 says *The righteous is delivered from trouble, And it comes to the wicked instead.* The conspirators are seized and cast into the very place that was supposed to be Daniel’s end. Like Haman being hung on the very gallows he built for Mordecai in Esther 7:10. They were cast into the den of lions and the lions attacked and broke all the bones before they hit the ground. God’s vengeance falls.

Daniel 6:25-28 *Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. 26 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. 27 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. 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.* Darius acknowledges the Most-High God of Daniel, calling God the Living God, Steadfast, Eternal. He acknowledges God as a Saving God, delivering and rescuing, and a God of signs and wonders. Darius makes a decree to all the nations praising God, unlike Nebuchadnezzar’s decree that threatened anyone who didn’t praise God in Daniel 3:29.

In the last verse of Daniel 6, we see that Daniel prospers in the reign of Darius and Cyrus, and God’s favor stays with him.

Daniel stayed focused, faithful, and fearless, even in the dark, even hearing the breathing of the lions nearby, not knowing how God would deliver him, but knowing for sure that God would. May we stay so Faithful and witness so boldly even in this Lion’s Den of a world we find ourselves in. God is still in the delivering and rescuing business. He still sends angels to shut lion’s mouths. He still delivers us from injury and brings judgement upon the wicked. May we be found to be good and faithful servants when our Father lifts us from the pit into our heavenly home.