

I. Introduction

My wife and I were discussing coffee, and I said, "I think Bob is a coffee drinker. I think he likes it." There are a lot of Baptists who drink coffee out of peer pressure; I don't. I have Pepsi Zero; that's liquid Holy Ghost right over there. But I said, "Honey, go pick out the coolest Lao version." Coffee is a big deal in Laos. My wife found one type of coffee that literally comes from cat poop. Anybody know? Google it; it's a thing. There's this creature that is part cat and part monkey. It eats coffee beans and loves the texture of them, swallows them whole, and then poops them out. They gather that up and let it dry for four years. It's the most expensive coffee you can buy in America. We didn't get that for you. Out of respect, my wife said, "This is it." I said, "No, no, it's not." So, we got you the second-best coffee in Laos, not the cat poop one. I have no idea what it is.

I appreciate the information about the treasures in the snow. I'll be honest with you, when I come here, it's kind of a bittersweet thing because I'd just rather sit right where you're at and hear him preach. I don't get that every week. But today, you know, we're Bible believers. We read through our Bible cover to cover more than once, at a minimum, you want to read ten pages a day. Today, I got about ten pages through Job and realized, "You know what? I was jet-lagged." So I was up at 1:30 in the morning, and I just punched in this whole book of Job, and I came across Job chapter 38. I just feel like what I'm supposed to preach to you is what I'm supposed to preach. I want to preach to you about the concept of being an overachiever, and I want to use the life of Daniel to talk about that.

The truth is that we're all going to have to go through difficulties in our lives. We're going to have difficulties, trials, and tribulations. When I was in Southeast Asia this last time, I used—Bob, I just totally ripped off, just pulled it right out of the book—all the information I could find on the judgment seat of Christ that you had done. When I got there, we wrote the outline, pulled up the timeline to show them where the judgment seat of Christ is after the rapture. The judgment seat is in heaven. I realized I was in for a treat because they couldn't find the Hmong word for rapture; they didn't know what that was. So we kind of had to back up. But we went through, we spent six and a half hours teaching through the judgment seat of Christ. We taught about, we went to Luke 19, talked about the cities that you can get over in the millennial reign. They needed an explanation on the millennial reign. We talked about how 1 Corinthians chapter three described your Christian life like a garden and husbandry, and also like a building, and that building could be made of gold, silver, precious stones. Guys, this is old hat to you, right? But this was the first time that they had ever heard that. It hit me like a ton of bricks. That particular country is very backward. It hit me as I was looking through your notes and stuff I had handwritten out there. There's a lot more to it. We were talking about the five crowns and all the different things. It hit me, this might be the best Bible teaching in that country in a thousand years. People that would love to have just one thimbleful of what you guys get on a Thursday night are sitting on the edge of their seats for six and a half hours. It was great; they were asking

all the right questions. "Well, if that's the case, how do they get saved in the millennium if they can see Jesus?" Good question. "Well, how do they get saved in the Old Testament?" Good question. I mean, it's just the hunger, and I mean, we're talking about getting your teeth into something.

When I got to the part about the five crowns, one of those is the crown of life for people that go through difficulties and trials and tribulations. You could see the tears well up in their eyes. They said, "Pastor, we may not get that shepherd's crown, and we may not get some of these others, but we can get that one." My wife met a girl, and in that country, they have a problem with Chinese people coming down to that country and just taking a little girl, just taking her back to China, just taking her across the border undocumented. One of these gals, she was probably, I don't know, she was probably 35. She had three kids. Her husband, or not really her husband, the guy that abducted her and took her to China, got sick of her and sent her across the border. He can't go back, and she was baptized this last Sunday. People go through some things.

Sometimes we think about our great heroes of the faith. I think of Adoniram Judson right there in that same area of the world, a place called Burma. They call it Myanmar now. We think, "Yeah, at one point he led every single, massive revival in the country of Burma." Yeah, but do you know what that guy had to go through to get that done? At one point, he got thrown into jail, and they had this tiger over there that they were starving to death. So when they cut the tiger loose on Adoniram Judson, it would kill him, you know, just be a big show, whatever. You're in jail in Burma; they can't—I mean, you don't get fed or anything. So his pregnant wife, who was sick herself, came and tried to talk them out of giving him to this tiger, feeding him with whatever she could. Her own health was failing. Finally, he got out of jail after several months, went back, and he's in his living room. There was this just big, ugly Burmese woman breastfeeding his baby. He went over to his wife, who was sick in the bed. As he got there, she was dying and died two days later. Then that baby was dead. Adoniram Judson went out into the jungle and dug his own grave and sat there and looked at it for 30 days and just lost his mind. Now, I want revival for Burma. I don't know if I'm standing in line to make that sacrifice. But the greatest people that God uses are overachievers. They're overachievers. I want to just look real close today—not real close, but just generally speaking—at an overachiever in the Old Testament, a guy by the name of Daniel.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into his treasure house.

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Father God, Lord, I know that there is a message here, and God, you know that I am capable of not preaching it well. Lord, I can try to be funny and say something stupid. Lord, I could fumble around in my notes. I could just get distracted. Lord, I just pray right now that I wouldn't be the reason these people don't get that treasure from the snow. Father, I know there's a treasure here, so Lord, I just want to step out of the way. I want your son, Jesus Christ, to have freedom in this pulpit this morning. I want to see you high and lifted up. I want your train to fill the temple, and I want you famous in the hearts of these people. Lord, help us to do that. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

II. Daniel's Impact and Trials

When you think of Daniel, oftentimes you can think of things that are really impressive about him. Do you ever think of just how awesome the guy Daniel was as a person? Daniel was sort of a drafted missionary, so to speak. He was sent to a foreign country. He had to learn a language. He had to work inside of that culture. This guy, Daniel, really did some amazing things. He became head of the entire education department of all of the richest and most powerful country in the world at that time. In fact, if you go back a few hundred years, you've got these wise men coming from the east at the birth of Jesus Christ. These are disciples that had learned the Scriptures down through the centuries from Daniel. Listen, Daniel had an incredible impact. He also worked in the political realm. He led, in an Old Testament sense, Nebuchadnezzar to Christ, or to God. Nebuchadnezzar got so on fire for God that in Daniel 4 he wrote a gospel tract that made everybody in the entire realm, all every province of the known world, had to read that. Then, if that wasn't enough, in Daniel 6, another great king did that again. What an impact that he had.

But did you know that he also went through great and difficult trials? For him to get over to Babylon was for his hometown to be taken over by the Babylonian army. He had to be taken off. Sometimes we need to kind of get our minds around some of the things that happened in those days. If an army comes in here, remember whenever we think of the Christmas story, where Herod sent and they killed all those kids two years younger, right? Have you ever thought what a horrendous event that was? I'll be honest with you, I'm not big, brave, bold, and tough, but if somebody comes here and wants every kid under two years old, they've got to step over my dead body to get it, right? I bet I'm not the only one here. The truth is that when Herod went into that

town and killed every two-year-old kid and under, I bet you there were lots of grandpas and grandmas that died that day, too. I bet you there were lots of moms and dads.

Whenever Nebuchadnezzar sent his army in and took over the nation of Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem, and they took Daniel as a young boy, you know, maybe 16, 15, 17, I don't know how old he was, and they took him, I bet you there were some grandpas and some grandmas and some moms and some dads and some aunts and some uncles that lost their life that day. They said, "You'll have to do that over my dead body," and they died. Can you imagine what it looked like the day that they took Daniel out of his hometown? Daniel was part of the king's seed. He was, I mean, he was the rich kid at his high school. He was popular. He was in the lineage of the king. He would have been considered maybe like a prince or whatever. Can you imagine the day, the cushy life he had leading up to that? And then now see Babylonian soldiers come in, and you, can you see the look on his face whenever the Babylonian soldier grabbed his mother by the hair and dragged her down the street and he never saw her again? Can you imagine the look on Daniel's face whenever his daddy had a spear struck through him? You say, "Well, you don't know that happened." I don't, but I can imagine how bad it would have been. The first time that somebody walked up to Daniel and grabbed him by his arm that didn't love him, didn't care for him, him and his buddies, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Azariah, the real name, they were hauled off to Babylon.

And then if that wasn't bad enough, they've got to go and they've got to learn the language of those people. If that wasn't bad enough, they got to learn the customs, and they're going to have to stand in front of the very king that did all that to him. It's worse than that. There was a prophecy back in the days of Hezekiah that Isaiah said, "There's going to come a day when some of your descendants are going to be hauled off to Babylon, and they're going to be made eunuchs in the house of Nebuchadnezzar, in the house of Babylon." Do you know who we find as Daniel's direct boss? He's the prince of the eunuchs. You never hear of Daniel's kids. You never hear of Daniel's wife. You never hear of his family. Without getting graphic, Daniel's body probably was mutilated in such a way that he could never have kids.

Now, I don't know what's making you bitter this morning, but the truth is there are lots of things that could make you bitter. You can go through a failed marriage. You can be the kid whose parents had the failed marriage. You can go through moral failings. You can go through health problems. You can go through financial problems. Listen, I'm just here to tell you, I don't care whether you're that Chinese girl that had her kids taken away and kicked out of the country and was baptized last Sunday, or like Adoniram Judson, you sat there and stared at the grave you dug, just asking the Lord for the privilege just to die right there. I don't know if like Daniel, you're a missionary to a bunch of people that you never wanted to be. Listen, there are people that I know. I've got one person in particular. He had two children born with a cleft palate, a massive amount of surgeries. I mean, it's going to be there. Those kids are going to have surgeries for the next 15 years, but he's got a heart. He's now a missionary to people who have kids with medical problems. He didn't want to be. Nobody asked for that, but because of what he's been through, he now has a heart for those people in a unique way.

I bet you there are people here that when the subject of somebody in the congregation or in your community has cancer, because you've had cancer and you've been through it, or your mom had cancer, or your daddy had cancer, or your grandpa died of cancer, whatever it was, when somebody comes up to the subject of cancer, you get tears welling up in your eyes. Listen, none of us asked for that stuff, but I'm here to tell you this morning, the treasure that's in the snow, just like those kids I was teaching in Southeast Asia—those, I say kids, they were 20s and 30s—and the tears welled up in their eyes that thought that they could get a crown in heaven because they went through a trial and tribulation in their life, and they came through it on the other side with a good testimony and with the joy of the Holy Spirit, that there's a crown in heaven for that. I want you to know this morning there's a crown for you, but if God's going to use you, you're going to go through some stuff. I bet you some of you sit around and you say, "Well, life would be easier if I was, well, Bible Bob over here, just a walking, talking Bible, any question, boom, you know what I mean?" Yeah, I'd be great. You don't realize what that guy's had to go through to have that? Listen, none of us get a free pass. Nobody gets off the hook. This guy, Daniel, is a missionary that has done a lot of great things.

III. Three Pillars of an Overachiever

I just want, real quick, I'm not going to preach a long time—famous thing preachers say—but I'm going to tell you if you're going to be an overachiever in your life, you're going to need to know what your purpose is. You're going to need to take some initiative, and you're going to need some consistency.

1. Know your purpose.
2. Take initiative.
3. Be consistent.

Let's just start by the understanding of knowing what your purpose is. Do you know what your purpose is? If you're going to get you a book on the purpose-driven life or the purpose-driven life, whatever, guess what? These people are going to tell you something that you will buy that you sort of want to hear anyway. That's what's so wonderful about the Bible. That's so wonderful about a Bible teacher is they're going to tell you what the Bible says. You realize you take like this snowmageddon we had. You realize that the Weather Channel and all of those people get extra money when you're tuned in. When things come up, they're going to just be this like, "Oh yeah, you need all this." It's a retail, it's like a second Christmas for Walmart. You said, "Yeah, but there's no toilet paper." Yeah, because they get this weird. They sold it all. The news mafia wants to get you worked up into a frenzy to where you'll just pass out over five inches of snow. That's what they do. What they're doing is they're preying on something that is kind of inside you a little bit anyway, and you're a little bit nervous about it anyway, and boom, it's all over the news.

I just want you to know that whenever you're talking about you being an overcomer or you getting some good Bible teaching or Bible preaching, listen, there are other people that are so-called Christians that are in the business of getting up behind a pulpit and teaching to you smooth things, easy things to make you think you're going to have something at the judgment seat of

Christ when the truth is the Bible says in the book of Revelation that you are poor and blind and miserable and naked. You don't want that. What you want is something from the Bible. Our guide Daniel has to know he needs purpose for his life, and it's not some, you know, I mean people think of "What's your purpose?" "Well, my purpose is my kids. My purpose is my career. My purpose is I'm just trying to live my best life." Well, guess what? That's not your purpose.

Daniel was—I mean Daniel had several purposes that God laid out just for him, but there was also some overarching purpose. Daniel was a Jew. Do you know what Jews were supposed to do? They're supposed to be a light to Gentiles, weren't they? I mean if you wanted to go to heaven in the Old Testament, you needed to worship the God of the Jews. That Jew was a kingdom of priests. That Jew was a light to Gentiles. That Jew was a peculiar people. When God wanted a revival, he would send a Jew to Nineveh. He would—I mean there was a Jewish element in Old Testament salvation. They were the evangelistic mechanism, and the problem is that the Jewish people as a group, as an entity, had lost their love for Gentile people. They hated them. They didn't want to be around them. Didn't want to talk to them. Didn't want to know anything about them. Now the collapse of the Jewish nation is taking place, and the Jewish people are scattered all over everywhere, and guess what they are going to be now? They're going to be a light.

Daniel knew that, "Hey, listen, if I'm alive, my body may be mutilated, I may not know what happened to my parents. Me and my friends will never have families. We've got to learn this stupid language. We've got to learn this crazy culture, and well, what are we even doing here?" But he knew that one of the things that he has to do according to the Old Testament is to be a light to Gentiles. I ask you the question, do you understand as a born-again child of God what your purpose is? One of the overarching things is you need to be evangelistic. We're trying to lead people to Christ. We're trying to disciple them, and the truth is that Daniel understood that his job was not to live his best life. His job was not to rack up as many financial bookmarks to say, "Yeah, well, I've got this and I've got that." His job, he knew he was a child of the king, but his job was to do something for the Lord, and he looks around and he says, "You know what? I can see that I'm a child of the king. I can see that I'm in this situation. If I'm alive and still breathing, then God must have a plan for me." Guess what? If you're alive and still breathing, God has a plan for you. Your life was not, is not an accident. You understand that, right? Your life, well, you were conceived—I wrote down a couple thoughts here. You were conceived in the mind of God before you were conceived in your mother's womb.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

God unveiled a plan that the woman's seed, Jesus Christ, there would be this plan for salvation to come through him. That is way back in Genesis 3:15. God knew that you would be born. He knew that you would need a Savior, and he had a plan before you were even alive for you to go to heaven. A plan for what you might do. God had a purpose for your life, a plan and a purpose. The day your birthday marked the beginning of a possibility. Have you ever considered that? I'm thinking about Daniel here, and I'm thinking about his adversity, and then I'm thinking about you, and I'm thinking about your adversity. I don't know most of you by name, but I don't need to

know in a group this size. Pastor, I know there are people out here that have health problems. There's somebody right here that's probably got a financial problem, and they probably put money in that offering plate, and they're just almost in tears because they can't pay their bills anyway. There's probably a person here that you've got kid problems. There's probably a person here that one of your kids is marrying somebody or dating somebody that you don't approve of, and it's not helping you. There are people here; you've got problems. You've got problems, but did you know that God is for you? He really is.

I've got some thoughts here. Calvary's cross proves that God's for you. I mean, there are people all the time that are just mad at God. They're looking around and saying, "Well, God, it's your fault that there's communism. God, it's your fault that there are babies that are born with health problems. God, it's your fault that kids die. God, it's your fault that cancer." Hey, God, it's your fault. God took the blame on Calvary's cross. He hung there. Every sin of the world was paid for by him. He took the blame. Tell me God's not for you. He's also at the right hand of God. He's interceding for you. How awesome is that, that God cares enough that he's interceding for you on his behalf. Here's another one. This is what I like. God is training his people to forgive you. I mean, have you ever done something stupid? Raise your hand. Oh, okay. Well, that's a... Okay. Have you ever said something stupid? Raise your hand, right? Isn't it great that every week you get up and from the New Testament and from the Scriptures somebody basically tells, "Hey, you ought to forgive people, and they ought to forgive you."

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

God is taking even your mess-ups, and he's working it together for good. If that wasn't enough, the Bible says in John chapter 14 that he is building a mansion for you. Listen, I know that we all sit around sometimes and think, "Man, this whole thing is rigged against us." But have you ever thought that just for one second there's a whole lot of things that are rigged for you? God is—man, God is mighty and he's powerful. What he wants is he wants for you to have a testimony. He wants for you to be an overcomer. He wants for you to be an overachiever. Here's a guy by the name of Daniel whose body is mutilated, his family's dead, he's in a different country, he's speaking a different language, he's learning Babylonian algebra—I mean, what a difficult life. And this guy has purpose.

When you get saved, you've got purpose. Dr. Ruckman preaches that message that I can tell you now, I have preached. He's got a message called the Four Judgments. I have preached that on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. Basically God's judgment is you need to be saved. But the other thing is you're now a child of God. So if you want this cozy little loving relationship, now you've got to repent of the different sins as they come up. You don't get saved by repenting of all your sins because every Jehovah's Witness in town repents of all their sins. You get saved after you're saved, you start to the place where God brings up something to your head like, "Hey, that's not right," and you repent of it. Change of heart, change of direction toward God. Then you also need to start serving God. Not only do you want to be close to God, but you want to be serving God. Listen, God has a purpose for your life. As a Christian, we have

that in spades. You need to get yourself now to the place where you find out what that purpose is and accomplish it.

One of the things that he has to do is he has to be a light to Gentiles, and he's surrounded by Babylonian Gentiles. Do you know what he does? He chooses not to eat the king's meat or drink the king's wine. Do you know what he knows? He knows if you're going to win Babylonians, you can't act like a Babylonian, right? I mean, I'm not for these hypercritical, amazing, high standards that nobody can attain. But at the end of the day, somewhere along the line, you've got to look distinctively like a Christian. You can't win the lost world if you're acting like the lost world. The truth is that Daniel understood that. As a result, he understood that there had to be a change in his culture. That is, sometimes you get in there and you kind of look around and say, "Well, you know, I think the number one thing that he had about ten years ago was, 'I'm biblically sound, but I'm culturally relevant.'" What they mean by that is, "I still social drink, even though I'm a Christian," right? What they mean by that—I mean, they got a whole bunch of things they mean by, "Hey, listen," they say, "Yeah, but I mean, I go to Southeast Asia, Bob, and they're always saying, 'But that's their culture,' right?"

Well, let me tell you what my culture was before I started living for God. My culture was Metallica, okay? My culture was Def Leppard. My culture—I mean, I backslid on the plane ride home. You know, I got this 15-hour plane ride from Singapore to Seattle, and I'm sitting there, and I'm feeling claustrophobic, and I'm just punching through, just watching there. You can't—you only watch Top Gun Maverick so many times. And I come across there. And here it is, Bon Jovi's Greatest Hits. For 45 minutes, I put the little plug in my wife's ear, she said, "Get that out of here. I'm a Christian." And I'm just, you know, "Shot through the heart." For about 30 minutes, I recovered myself. But hey, listen, I'm telling you, there's got to be some cultural change in your life, right? The truth is, is that I can look at a person from, you know, a Buddhist culture and I can say, "Hey, listen, you need to knock that off. Stop bowing down to those images. Stop the whole Chinese New Year thing. Stop the incense and the meat offerings." You say, "Well, how dare you tell them that they have to change their culture?" Bless God, I changed mine. Except for 30 minutes on that plane ride home. But I'm back. I'm back.

But he also was living proof. When you're willing to live your life on purpose, not be blown around by the winds of doctrine and by the winds of, you know, the Philippines right now, Independent Baptist—I just learned this—Independent Baptist has got a problem. About half of them in the Philippines are struggling over the doctrines of grace. That means Calvinism, right? And I'm thinking, "Oh my goodness, you know, where's the Bible teaching?" You know, I mean, it just hurt my heart to think about that. But the truth is, is that whenever you have studied to show yourself approved unto God and you're filled with the Spirit of God, living in the Word of God, with the power of God in your life, it is proof to the lost world of who God is. I mean, that's what he said to Melzar. He said, "Prove thy servant." That's what you are. Your life is a proof. Your life, when you—listen, you're going to get, have relatives or possibly yourself, you're going to have health problems. We're all going to have that. But whenever you have that, guess what? There's got to be some proof that the Lord is real in your life. Then of course, at the end of it, you

get to the end of verse number 20, you find out that Nebuchadnezzar could see that their lives were ten times better than anybody they knew. Now, you got to have some purpose.

The second thing you got to have is you got to have, you got to take some initiative. Now we're not going to read the chapter, but in chapter two, Daniel gets himself to the place where there's this problem. King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. The dream is that he would—Nebuchadnezzar can't even remember what the dream is. But he wants the magicians and the soothsayers to tell him what the dream was that he forgot or is not telling, and then tell him what the meaning is. The idea is if you can't tell me what the dream was, I think you're probably lying to me about what the meaning is. Nebuchadnezzar wasn't born yesterday. Because the astrologers and magicians say, "Nobody can do that," then Nebuchadnezzar decides, "Okay, well, we'll just kill you all. I'm sick of you." He was a big hothead. You can read that through the book of Daniel.

Daniel realizes, "Oh my goodness, they're going to kill all of us." Daniel takes some initiative, and he goes to the authority and said, "Give me just a little bit of time, and I'll tell what the dream is, and I'll tell what the interpretation is." You know what? If you're ever going to be an overachiever, you're going to have to take some initiative. You're going to have to understand that possibly you've got limited time. You may—listen, we're living in a day and age where I'm not for sure that everyone here will grow old. You realize it's very possible that Jesus Christ could come back this very year. You realize you're living in the kill box. You're living in the last days. How do you know you're living in the last days? Well, you know, look at what the Bible says about cashless banking, right? I mean, remember the old days whenever you went to the convenience store and you're sitting in line and somebody is 1989 or 1992 and somebody whipped out their credit card and you're thinking, "Oh my goodness, this is going to take forever." Put it on there, quirk, quirk, you know, and sign here, date here, you know, three years of tax returns. I don't know what they had, but it was terrible. It's going to take you forever. Now you go to the convenience store and somebody pulls out cash and you're like, "Oh my goodness, this is going to take forever." They're going to have to give cash. She's going to have to give change. She doesn't know how much change you get. She can't count it back. This guy's a jerk because he wants it counted back to him. You know, I mean, it's like, "Oh my goodness." You live in a society that's moving like a freight train towards a cashless society.

You realize that you're living in a day and age where all the signs of the times are, you sort of get inoculated to it because you've lived in a day and age where you think that stuff is normal. The Bible talks about wars and rumors of wars. I mean, are we going to invade Columbia or not? Well, that's a rumor. Who knows? What are we going to do in Iran? That's a rumor of a war waiting. What are we going to do? I mean, my goodness, there is a military industrial complex. There are groups of politicians, whether Democrats or Republicans, their number one goal is to keep you in a war all the time. Then they go work for the military industrial complex so that they can just blow more bombs up, make more people hate us, have more wars. You realize, now I'm not being political as much as you realize what ended the first great awakening. What ended it was the Revolutionary War. Do you want to end the second great awakening? Was the Civil War. Do you realize the days of Mordecai and Billy Sunday and when America got so excited for God that we outlawed liquor, and you don't want to end it all that? World War II. I mean, you went

into the Great Depression and all this stuff. I'm just here to tell you that there is a satanic thing out there trying to keep you in a war all the time. It's one of the signs of time.

Over there in the book of Revelation, you've got this thing where there's—it says that he deceived the whole world by sorceries. Well, now I'm not a big Greek Hebrew guy. Sure, I don't want to use it a lot in preaching. But do you know what that word for sorcery is? Same word you get your word pharmacy from. It's Big Pharma. I mean, there are people out there. They try to keep you sick so they can keep more money coming in. Listen, I'm here to tell you—let me give you another example. The number one selling movie of all times was a movie called Avengers. There's a series of these movies. That second to last one was a movie about a guy that snapped his fingers and half of the people all over the world disappeared. Now we've got a Bible that tells us there's going to be a blowing of a trumpet and a bunch of people are going to disappear. Do you know what that movie was all about? It was all about—the next movie was all about, "What do we do? Where did they go? Can we get them back? What's going to happen? What's life?" I mean, that's the greatest selling movies of all time. They're all about stuff from the Bible. The truth is that Daniel understood he had a limited time. Do you understand that you have a limited time?

So Daniel turns and he takes this whole thing to prayer. Him and his buddies get together and they just start praying. Let me ask you the question. With prayer, are you taking the initiative to pour your heart out to God and for Him to answer your prayers? I mean, sometimes when I pastored—and I love your pastor. Your pastor one time said, "If you can't call your pastor and make an appointment with him very shortly sometimes, he's not a very good pastor." He said that. I just think it's kind of amazing that one of the top Bible teachers in the world, you can call him up and talk to him, right? I just think that's kind of amazing. But the thing of it is, is when I pastored, I would get people coming to me all the time and say, "Pastor, I've got this thing that happened and what do I do?" And they tell me their long drawn out story and how it was. I'm a pastor. I will listen to it. I will love them. I'll pray with them. But I kind of got a sneaking suspicion that somewhere along the lines, sometimes they're pouring their heart out to me, but they're not pouring their heart out to God.

You realize you only have so much emotional energy. I give you an example. My daughter went skiing up in the mountains of Idaho a while back and said, "Oh, tell me all about it." She says, "Wait, get Mom on the phone. I don't want to tell it twice." "What am I, chopped liver?" She says, "No, no, no, just get Grandma, Mom all over there. I just—I just don't want to go through this multiple times. I know how this works. I'm going to have to tell you and I'm going to tell you. And when I tell the story, it's going to be slightly different. I'm going to add some detail and Grandma says, 'Well, she didn't tell me that.' Mom says, 'Well, she told.' I just want to tell it one time." The truth is, if it's a big deal in your life, and there are a lot of details, you probably don't have the emotional energy to tell it three or four times. Right? So why do you have so much energy that you can go on Facebook and just blow it up or go on or call your somebody else and the aunt and the uncle? You know what it kind of tells me? Maybe that you haven't even poured your heart out to God yet. You haven't taken that—you're not an overachiever because your prayer life stinks. Because I mean, if you got on your knees before God, and you ugly cried, you

snot, whatever it is you do, and you just told, you poured it all out, and God, "She said this about me. He said this, and he threatened this, and now they're going to sue. I don't know what's going to happen. Will I lose the house or lose the farm? God, what is this cancer? Is it going to—do I take the chemo or do I not take the chemo?" And you just pour your heart out to God. I bet you you don't have the energy to pour your heart out to Facebook after you've done all that.

We live in a day and age. I get—I get nervous when preachers are just on Facebook and just constantly giving their verse of the day. Because I look around and I don't have energy for that. I don't have time for that. I'm not the biggest, best, and most brightest star in the globe. Man, I'm not even, but I don't have time for that. You know, I mean, "Oh, you know, I put my verse for the day." Right there it is. "Oh, well, that'll bless all the 14 people that like that." You know, I mean, how about talking to God? He took initiative in prayer.

Then in chapter six, we'll close, he also not only took that initiative but he also had some consistency.

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.

Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

Now he's way over under the Persian empire. At this time, by the time we get to chapter six, Daniel is somewhere between 80 and 83 years old. Now if I said what was the most incredible thing, if I asked the students to come in here and I said, "What is the most incredible thing about the life of Daniel?" Daniel and the lion's den, right? You realize that didn't happen until he was like 80 some years old. Listen, I don't want to pop your bubble, but maybe one of the greatest things that ever happened in your life you did for God might be when you're 80 or older. The Bible says in chapter six, verse one, "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage." Verse three, "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and the princes, why? Because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." Now this chapter is about Daniel and the lion's den. I just want to point out to you, he's 80 some years old and he still has an excellent spirit.

Now I don't want to be judgmental, but I have pastored 80-year-old people that did not have an excellent spirit, right? I got one lady, I can't remember if I mentioned her last time, she was pastoring and her name was Stella and Stella had diabetes. She had buried three husbands, she had married, remarried and remarried and now she has diabetes and as oftentimes happens, you lose some toes and you lose part of your leg and she was now she'd been that way for three years and Stella was a good Godly woman. I mean, just a good gal. I love the heck out of Stella, I love Stella right now. But when she was in the nursing home, probably about a month before she died,

her sister called me Nancy and says, "Hey, listen preacher, could you come over and talk to Stella? We know that Stella loves you and you love Stella, but Stella is a bear. She's yelling at nurses, she's in pain, she's had these amputations, now there's complications with the amputations. We're talking about hospice, could you just come over and talk to Stella?" I went over and talked to Stella and she was going to be nice to me, but she was grumpy, she was upset.

I started talking to her about all the great things that she had done in her life and what she meant to me personally. I said, "Stella," she's tearing up and we're having a moment and she says, and I said, "Stella, have you been that way this week? Are you that champion of the faith? Do you have that excellent spirit?" She's tearing up, she says, "No, pastor, I don't have an excellent spirit. I'm dying, they're wanting to put me on hospice, I'm never leaving this nursing home, I've lost both of my feet, I've lost three husbands, I'm just," she says, "I'm tired. When is it ever going to be good for Stella?" And I told her, I said, "Stella, it might never be good to you until you pass away and you get that new body." I said, "But how are you going to die, Stella? You've lived so good for so many years and you've been an inspiration. Are you going to let your last days be this? Barking at an LPN who's 18 trying to get her 40 hours in so she can go get her RN degree and pull her own family out of poverty? Are you going to—is that your legacy?" And she says, "What do you think I should do?" I said, "Stella, you're dying. And there's going to be lots of people coming to this nursing home and they're going to want to talk to you and they're not even going to know what to say to a dying person. You take this hospital bed that you're in and you proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ to everyone and you finish strong with that excellent spirit and your pulpit will be bigger than mine on Sunday morning." She wiped the tears off her face and she said, "That's what I'll do." Stella walked into the throne of God with a smile on her face, with joy in her heart, leaving a testimony.

Let me ask you the question. You've got a lot of things going on in your life, a lot of difficulties, a lot of trials, a lot of tribulation, maybe similar to Daniel. Maybe your family hasn't worked out like Daniel's family never worked out. Maybe you've got—hey, listen, you can have an excellent spirit though, right? You can get yourself filled with the Spirit of God. You can be faithful to read your Bible every day. You can get yourself a little prayer list and be faithful to that every day. You can try to lead people to Christ. There's a Southern Baptist guy, I got invited to preach at the Southern Baptist Church in Ottumwa, Iowa. I've known enough Southern Baptists. I was raised as a Southern Baptist. I love them, right? I understand that if they got a thimble of some of the stuff I'd gotten growing up that they may be different too. But I was talking to this guy and I preached for him back in the summer and they're not really even helpful, not very helpful to missionaries. They don't know how to handle a missionary. They never see missionaries. They just don't—and so I didn't really—I'd known him, I preached for him, preached up a storm. We hugged it out and I left and thinking, "I'll never hear from this guy again." He called me, "Hey preacher, I just wanted to hear how missions are going." We talked, small talk. And he said, "Yeah, the reason I called you was my daughter died." And he's like 75 and so she was like 40, 45. And he said, "My daughter died," and he cried on the phone and he just didn't have anybody else to—I weep with those who weep, right?

Then he called me when I got back. I had this voicemail. I rolled into Kansas City last Friday and I talked to him. He says, "Call me when you get a chance." So I called him. He said, "Yeah. We were getting some family things. I went to the doctor and I'm just so broken that I'll just witness to anybody right now." He said, "Their 40-year-old doctor was there." And he said, "What's different about you?" He said, "I led that 40-year-old doctor in Des Moines, Iowa, to Christ." And I'm talking to him about once every week or—and I think he might come down to Ottumwa and I think I might baptize him and his wife doesn't know for sure. Do you know what that old boy was doing? He doesn't—I mean, his dispensations are probably wrong, but his disposition is right. Is it too much to ask for your dispensations to be right and your disposition? Is it too much to ask for you to have an excellent spirit? Is it too much to ask for you to try to lead somebody to Christ? Is it too much to ask? Listen, this boy Daniel gets thrown in the lion's den. Do you know why he got thrown in the lion's den? Not because he went up and prayed, but because he always went up and prayed. He always did.

IV. Conclusion

If you're going to be an overachiever in your life and you're going to win that crown, one of those five crowns, the crown of life, where you go through trials and tribulation, you're going to need to have some purpose. You're going to need to take some initiative, and you're going to need to be consistent. You're going to have road bumps in your life. You're going to have problems. You're going to have difficulties. Yes, what you need to do is you need to just stay faithful with that excellent spirit and know that it's possible the greatest thing you ever do might not happen until you're 80 or 90 years old. I don't know what you're going through, but I know that you come out across a snow storm and pull into a parking lot and there's treasure in that snow. There is an overcomer inside of you. What you and I both need to do is we need that excellent spirit. Stay consistent with our Christian walk. We need to take the initiative to pray and know that our time is limited. Man, we need some purpose in our life. When we put these things together, you may not get hauled off to Babylon and have to learn a new language and have your body mutilated, but you will be an overcomer in your trials and tribulations. Amen.

Pastor Comehan: Well, that was worth coming through the snow for this morning. Amen. Well, I'll tell you what. Father, thank you and your wife for being the treasure this morning out of the snow for our church. I'll tell you, I know we're all home folk here today, but that is something that every one of us needs to hear. Honestly, for the most part, as your pastor, most of our church are overachievers. They go after it. That's great. That's why you're here this morning. To some people, when I would say something like the aspect of the treasures of the snow, they just, "Oh yeah, okay." You folks understand that and you believe that. That's what makes the difference. That's why God is using you, not just here in this city, but through our church around the country and literally around the world. Thank you, brother, for being that treasure this morning. I tell you, I always enjoy your preaching and thank you for being with us today. We're going to have a word of prayer and then we'll be dismissed. Be careful going home. Make sure you take time to sign up here for Super Bowl.