Sermon for October 25, 2026 - Reformation

Daniel 6:10-11 EHV

Theme: **Calm Confidence in Christ…**

1) Is worked in us through God's Word.
2) Moves us to Prayer.
3) Reveals God's power to the world.

[10]Now, when Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went to his house. It had windows on its upper story that opened toward Jerusalem. Three times each day he would get on his knees and pray and offer praise before his God. He continued to do that, just as he had been doing before this. [11]Then these men came as a group and found Daniel praying and seeking favor from his God.

How could Luther calmly keep on confessing Christ when, after the Diet of Worms, the world's most powerful man declared him an outlaw, whom anyone could kill without penalty? How could Daniel do the same when his king signed an irrevocable law that for thirty days, anyone who prayed to any god or man except the king would be thrown into a den of hungry lions?

Wouldn't such dangers terrify you? Wouldn't they make you want to hide your faith? They would me.

But before we assume we could never be so bold in our faith as they, let us learn that it is not an individual's innate fortitude of will that enables him to be so brave. No, it is God's work – a gift He offers to all of us through His Gospel.

With Daniel's example as our guide, let us learn that **Calm Confidence in Christ 1)** is worked in us through God's Word, 2) moves us to prayer, and 3) reveals God's power to the world.

Part One: Calm Confidence in Christ is worked in us through God's Word.

Daniel was a youth when Babylon's armies besieged Jerusalem. Even though he trusted in the LORD, it was God's will that he be exiled to serve the king of Babylon.

I imagine him gazing back at the temple as he left Jerusalem – an image that never left him. It was there that God met with His people, where the sacrifices were made for the forgiveness of sins.

Even though Daniel lived his life in exile, he lived in hope – looking forward to the LORD fulfilling His promise to restore His people and forgive their sins.

The devil saw what the LORD was accomplishing through Daniel and raged against him. Inciting the jealousy of Daniel's unbelieving co-administrators, he used them to trick the king into making a law that would destroy Daniel.

Make no mistake: Daniel's calm confidence in the LORD did not come naturally, or easily. He was just like you and me: sinful, and in desperate need of God's grace. How do I know? Because Daniel tells us how, during the first year of Darius' reign, he was on his knees confessing his own sins and those of his people.[i] He trusted that the LORD would forgive and restore them despite the gravity of their sin. What gave him this confidence? God's Word as he read Jeremiah's prophecy that the exile would last seventy years. This promise drove him to prayer.[ii]

Yes, Daniel was different from people of this world. What made him distinct is the same that makes you and me distinct: the faith God worked in him through His Gospel promises.

That is why, *when Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went to his house. It had windows on its upper story that opened toward Jerusalem.*

Even though the temple was destroyed, Daniel remembered God's promise concerning it – how it would be rebuilt once again. He remembered from Scripture the prayer Solomon offered for the people when the temple was first built:

> *When they sin against you (for there is no one who does not sin), and you become angry with them, and you give them up to an enemy, and they are taken captive to a land…and they repent and plead to you for mercy in the land where they were exiled… and they pray toward their land which you gave to their fathers, and toward the city which you have chosen, and toward the house which I have built for your Name, then from heaven… hear their prayer and their plea for mercy and provide justice for them, and forgive your people, who have sinned against you*.[iii]

Yes, God's promises recorded in Scripture gave Daniel hope. The more he studied them, the more the Holy Spirit used them to work a calm confidence in Daniel's heart – not to worry, but to leave everything in the LORD's hands.

The faith the LORD worked in Daniel's heart is the same faith the LORD wants to work in your heart through His Word. He doesn't want you to worry or fret when times of trouble come your way, but to trust in His promise to work in all things for your good.

Sadly, we don't do that, do we? When acquaintances mock the God we love, do we politely ask them to stop slandering Him, or do we keep quiet and sheepishly grin, pretending we don't hear them? When our boss asks us to do something that goes against God's Word, do we respectfully say, "No," or do we go against conscience to keep our boss happy? When the government tables laws that conflict with our faith, do we work ourselves into a frenzy with worry, or calmly take our problems to the LORD in prayer, trusting that He will work in everything – even in the evil that threatens us – for our good?

If I am honest, I have to admit that I have hidden my faith for far less than the threat of physical death. Don't you have to confess the same? And we're not just guilty of a lack of nerve. We feared people more than God and loved their approval more than His. Jesus warns that if anyone is ashamed of Him and His words now, He will be ashamed of them when He comes again in His Father's glory.[iv]

So where does that leave us? At the foot of the cross, confessing our sins to Jesus, who offered perfect obedience to God in our place. He never wavered nor hid the truth.[v] No, He offered the perfect witness of the truth to all for the salvation of all – fearing, loving, and trusting in God above all things. Where we failed, Jesus succeeded. And He did it all for us – taking our sins upon Himself to the cross to pay for them in full. It is finished: you are reconciled to God. The One we have been ashamed of is not ashamed to call you His brother or sister.[vi] Live in the peace of that reconciliation – letting your confidence in Christ calm you in every crisis as you study God's Word and make use of His sacraments. Through these means, the Holy Spirit will increase your faith, just as He increased the faith of Daniel, Luther, and every other believer who came before you. Yes, it's through these means alone that God works a calm confidence in our hearts that cannot help but move us to praise the LORD, as we ask him to deliver us from every evil attack, and bring us safely to His heavenly Kingdom.

Part Two: Calm Confidence in Christ moves us to Prayer.

Prayer and praise are exactly what Daniel offered the LORD from his open-windowed room, as we read: *Three times each day he would get on his knees and pray and offer praise before his God. He continued to do that, just as he had been doing before this.*

The ban would have lasted only thirty days.[vii] Daniel could have closed his window for a month and pretended not to pray, but he didn't.

God's promises created in Daniel a calm confidence that expressed itself in regular prayer and praise. Daniel's practice echoed that of King David centuries earlier, when he wrote: *As for me, I call to God, and the LORD saves me. Evening, morning, and noon I cry out and I sigh, and he hears my voice. In peace he redeems my life from the assault against me, even when many are*

against me. God will hear, and he will punish them — yes, he is seated on his throne from eternity![viii]

Scripture and prayer went hand in hand for Daniel. Through God's promises, the Holy Spirit worked confidence in Daniel's heart, and that confidence flowed over into praise and prayer. He recalled sacred Scripture as he prayed, so that, even in prayer, the Spirit would strengthen Daniel's faith with His Word.

This is not to say that Daniel didn't feel the stress and anguish of what threatened him. But Daniel laid out all his feelings before the LORD – trusting that, regardless of whether he would be killed, God would not fail to deliver him to His side in heaven. And God listened to Daniel – graciously answering his prayers in ways he could never have imagined.

So let me ask you, brothers and sisters in Christ – how is your prayer life? Do you heed the apostle Paul's encouragement: "*Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing."*[ix] Or do you let worry and the concerns of this world keep you from praying?

I know how easy it is to put prayer off – to do something other than give our full attention to prayer. "What are we accomplishing by simply praying?" we are tempted to think. We think about problems and try to deduce what to do if this or that happens – how we should react and what could come next. What's worse, we sometimes voice this concern and anxiety through prayer—initially placing our petitions before God mentally but ultimately getting caught in a vicious cycle of obsessing over the issue and our reactions to all imaginable results.
Such prayers leave us without peace because, even while we speak our concerns to God, our hearts continue looking to the problem rather than resting in His promises.

Don't misunderstand me. I am not saying feeling anguish is a sin. Even Jesus Himself felt deeply distressed in the Garden of Gethsemane. What is wrong is letting those feelings prevent us from trusting in Christ – imagining that we must carry our burdens on our own.

Thankfully, our merciful Saviour offered perfect prayers of trust to His Father on our behalf. Even when in anguish over the wrath He was facing because of our sin, Jesus kept trusting His Father and submitting to His will. He did this for us, to forgive our sins and reconcile us to God.

Daniel experienced peace in prayer, not because the act of praying has power in and of itself, but because Daniel prayed God's own promises, through which the Holy Spirit calmed his heart and increased his faith. What the LORD did for Daniel through His Word, He graciously promises to do for you, as the Apostle Paul states in his letter to the Philippians: [6]*Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to*

God. [7]And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.[x]

Part Three: Calm Confidence in Christ reveals God's power to the world.

God had a purpose for the crises He permitted in Daniel's life: to glorify His name. Not just by miraculously delivering his life from the lions, but also through the calm confidence he expressed when his crisis came to a head.

Just think: when threatened with death, most men would hide or fight. But not Daniel. When the men who conspired against him came as a group to get him, *they found Daniel praying and seeking favor from his God*.

Who, other than the LORD, could move a man to neither flee nor fight when faced with danger, but calmly carry on in prayer? And see how God revealed His power. At dawn, King Darius hurried to see if Daniel's God had saved him. And He did. Daniel was brought up from the pit unharmed because he trusted in his God.[xi] This moved Darius to decree that all people throughout His empire must tremble before the God of Daniel, the living God, who rescues and saves.[xii]

Throughout my ministry, I have been asked at various times how certain Christians can carry on like they do, such as, "How can she be so cheerful and caring of others when she is dying of cancer?"

I especially remember an event from my junior high school days in Wetaskiwin. Far from being the popular kid in school, I was harassed a lot for my faith. One day, my art teacher, an atheist, called me into his classroom for a private talk. He said to me, "Michael, I see how the kids pick on you all the time, and yet you always seem to have a smile on your face. How do you do it?" The Holy Spirit was with me that day as I answered without hesitation, "Because I know Jesus loves me. He died on the cross to save me from all my sin."

I wish I could say that I always expressed my faith so boldly, but as you heard me confess earlier in this sermon, I don't. But on that day, the Holy Spirit put the Gospel on my lips so that an atheist who asked why a bullied boy smiled heard about God's love for him.
Yes, God uses calm confidence to draw attention to His Word so that He can change hearts through the Gospel message we share.

May this truth lead you all the more back into God's Word to meditate on the faithful love He promises you in Christ. Through that Word, He will strengthen your faith, guiding you into regular prayer and praise while revealing His power to change hearts through the Gospel you confess to the glory of His name. Amen.

[i] Cf. Daniel 9:20
[ii] Cf. Daniel 9:2ff
[iii] 2 Chronicles 6:36-39 (select verses)
[iv] Cf. Mark 8:38
[v] Cf. 1 Timothy 6:13
[vi] Cf. Hebrews 2:11
[vii] Cf. Daniel 6:7
[viii] Psalm 55:16-19 EHV
[ix] 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 EHV
[x] Philippians 4:6-7 EHV
[xi] Cf. Daniel 6:23
[xii] Cf Daniel 6:25-27