



CELL GUIDE 2016

Theme	Knowing & Experiencing God
Topic	Work Life – Know the Purpose of God
Speaker	Prof Freddy Boey
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Message Summary

The Book of Daniel

How do we be in the world but not of the world? How do we continue with both fortitude and excellence in both our ministry and our work? Prof Freddy Boey unpacked the principles in the book and life of Daniel to show how Daniel had the character that sustained and empowered his anointed ministry within his secular work in the kingdom of Babylon. Daniel was not a full-time prophet – he was a prisoner in the service of an enemy – and his life is a fine example of how we are to be in the world but not of the world.

True to Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer 25:11) of the punishments that the Jews would receive for their disobedience to God (Jer 25:3-7), the king of Babylon conquered Jerusalem and captured the most competent young Israelites to serve in his kingdom. Among these Israelites were Daniel and his three companions – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were men of integrity and uncompromising spirits. It would have been much easier for Daniel if he had conformed to all of Babylon's ways according to what the king wanted, but Daniel's excellent spirit would not allow him to compromise.

Daniel and his friends put God first in their lives and they made bold and difficult decisions in accordance with God's Laws which went against the culture and laws of Babylon. (e.g. Dan 1:8 – rejecting the king's food; Dan 3:16-18 – refusing to bow to the king's idol; Dan 6:10 – praying when it was illegal to do so). Being forced to work for the enemy did not deter them from living their lives as faithful servants of the Lord. It was also through such faithfulness that the Lord divinely intervened and helped Daniel and his three companions gain favour in the eyes of the king of Babylon.

Understanding the Purpose of God in our Workplace

Daniel was young and inexperienced at the time of his capture but he possessed godly characteristics. He was committed to following the Lord and he understood that God had a purpose for placing him in the Babylonian kingdom. Second, he continued putting God first even during times when it seemed counterproductive for him to do so (e.g. Dan 6:7-10). Daniel simply obeyed the laws of God and left the results in the Lord's hands.

Many Christians approach their workplace with the wrong attitude and chase after worldly things such as performance bonuses and promotions, when instead, they should focus their energy on



CELL GUIDE 2016

putting God first in their lives and doing God's work. Not everyone will be called into full-time ministry, but that does not mean that other vocations are not important. God has placed us in our places of work to bring Him glory; to be the light that shines in the darkness.

Rather than chasing the things of the world, we should follow Daniel's example of giving Christ preeminence in our lives by consistently putting God first no matter the situation we are facing. We must learn to accept work, but at the same time, making sure that what we do does not compromise the work that God wants us to do. The result is that God will honour us when we remain true to Him. When we do get promoted, remember that promotion comes not from our own efforts, but from God, because of His purpose for us. By putting God first, He will not only honour us but also allow us to honour Him.

Conclusion

God has placed each of us with a purpose in our place of work. As salt of the earth and light of the world, we need to engage the world. Jesus has said that we are to be in the world but not of the world, understand the role we have in the workplace, recognize its importance and fulfil the purpose that we were created for.

Questions

1. Prof Boey has identified that the first six chapters of Daniel illustrate the character of Daniel. Identify instances where Daniel and his friends put God first. Reflect on instances in your life where you were able to/given the opportunity to do the same.



CELL GUIDE 2016

2. Having been exiled and forced to serve the enemy, Daniel should have been resentful. Recall why Daniel was not bitter and instead, performed his duties to the best of his abilities. How can you embody the same attitude as Daniel in your workplace? What desires and attitudes in your workplace do you have that need to be changed?

3. Identify areas in your life where God has taken a position of prominence instead of pre-eminence. What are some steps you can take to rectify this?
