

Are you Building your Life on the ROCK or on sinking sand?

Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins - June 3, 2018

I read an article this past week (May 24, 2018) written by Eric Austin, a computer technical advisor entitled “The artificial intelligence singularity; are you ready?” It showed a photo of the man with a big smile on his face and a long detailed description of the emerging of a computer that will one day rule the world. The article started out with these words: “In the beginning, claim the physicists, the universe existed as a single point-infinately small, infinitely dense. All of time, all of space, literally everything that currently exists was contained in this unbelievably small cosmic egg. Then, before you can say ‘Big Bang’ quantum fluctuations caused it to rapidly expand and the rest, as they say, is history.” I am thankful that I have read “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1 for the coming storm for the universe is predicted to take place, according to Eric, within the next 50 years. Everyone who refuses to submit their will to this super intelligent being and doesn’t believe in him will be severely punished according to the article.

In Luke 18 Jesus spoke a parable that illustrates that men ought to always pray and not to give up. The story described a judge over a city that had no fear of God or any regard for people. A woman in that city kept coming to him pleading with him to grant her justice against her adversary. The judge refused to honor her request for a spell but finally said to himself, “Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, lest she wear me out with her coming.” Jesus said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Will you be found faithful when the storms of life come to you?

I want to speak about Daniel this morning for God raised up a remarkable man in Satan’s territory who stayed true to the living God in spite of severe opposition from the principalities and spiritual wickedness in high places of his day.

Babylon was ruled by a wicked king, Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel’s lifetime. Because of the sins of the Jews, God had allowed this king to overcome Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and articles from the temple of God were carried away and placed in the temple of the Babylonian god where his treasures were stored. He also ordered his soldiers to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility- young men without any physical defects, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. Among them were 4 men captured from Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Hishael and Azaariah. (Daniel 1-7)

These are the only ones named in the book of Daniel. It appears that all the rest of the men that were captured integrated into the Babylonian society. In verse 8 we read, “But

Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. Verse 9 tells us that God caused the chief official to show favor and sympathy towards Daniel. However he also feared the king. If he defied the king and gave Daniel other food than what was ordered and it caused Daniel to look sickly before the king, the official would be beheaded. The four men stood together and Daniel asked that they be assigned vegetables to eat and water to drink for 10 days. At the end of the test, the official could make a final decision after comparing the countenances of all who were eating from the king's table. It was agreeable to the official and after 10 days the four men looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who were eating the diet of the king. So the matter was settled and the four men were given vegetables and water as they requested. God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning to these men. Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. When all the men were brought before the king at a specified time, he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, so they entered into the king's service. They were given Babylonian names In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them to be 10 times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

The Babylonians tested these men due to their jealousy and envy concerning God's favor that was on these men. The four men stayed true to Jehovah God and were not willing to neither bow to the king's gods nor integrate into the idolatrous culture of Babylon. They feared God, rather than man and God honored and protected them and showed his power over Satan who ruled this kingdom through the king.

The king had a dream and when he awoke he couldn't remember the dream. He demanded his wise men to tell him the dream and interpret it for him. When they pleaded with him that no one could do this, he ordered that all of them be killed including Daniel and his friends. Daniel asked for more time and God revealed the dream and the interpretation to Daniel and the king was amazed and gave glory to God.

However, the king built a huge statue and demanded that everyone bow to it. When the 3 Hebrew children refused, they were thrown into a fiery furnace that was heated so hot that the men who threw them in died from the heat. God kept the men alive and when the king looked out he saw four men and one was like the son of God. He came to realize that God is almighty and will not give his glory to another.

Daniel prayed three times a day from his room facing Jerusalem and making his requests to the God in heaven. He lived above reproach and when his enemies tried to find fault with him, the only thing they could come up with was that he prayed to his God. Through trickery and flattery, they caused the king to sign a decree that no one could request anything of any other being but him for 30 days or else they would be thrown to lions. Daniel continued praying just as he had before the decree. The king was sad that he had signed the decree when the complaint came to him, but he could do nothing to change

what he agreed to. He said to Daniel, “Your God whom you serve continually will rescue you.” The king couldn’t sleep nor eat that night. The next morning he went to the mouth of the cave and called out to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually been able to rescue you from the lions?” Daniel answered, “O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done anything wrong against you, O king.”

The men who had brought the charge against Daniel along with their families were thrown into the lions’ den and were torn to pieces. God protected his own all through the years that the Israelites were in captivity in Babylon and Daniel and his friends stayed true to their faith regardless of Satan and his evil schemes.

There were many who didn’t honor God nor keep on the right path. Samson had a high calling from God, but he disobeyed God by insisting on being entangled with Philistine women who dragged him down. He didn’t appreciate his calling and he took his strength for granted. He partially delivered his people from the Philistine regime, but his lust for wicked women hindered him from real victory. He died when he called out to God to give him strength one more time to avenge him for the loss of his eyesight from the Philistines. See Judges 16.

Achan was a soldier in Joshua’s army. The men were told not to take the spoil from the battle of their enemies. Achan stole a beautiful robe from the Babylonians’, 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold that weighed 50 shekels. He coveted them and hid them under his tent. The next battle of AI was lost and 36 men died because of Achan’s sin. Joshua declared that Achan and all that he had was to be stoned and burned because he had disobeyed God’s commandment. See Joshua 7

Jesus addressed the issues that cause people to be disqualified for the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9 says this: “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God.” Look at Revelation 21:5. “Write these words down as they are trustworthy and true. “He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars will have their place in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

2 Thessalonians 2 speaks about the coming false Christ. Paul told the people not to believe those who said that the day of the Lord had already taken place. “ Don’t let people deceive you in any way for the day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. The Holy Spirit is holding him back until his time is fulfilled. Once the Holy Spirit is taken away the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For the reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.”

John 3:16 declares that God loved this world so much that He sent his only Son to die that none should perish but that all should have eternal life. Verse 17 says that God didn’t send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. Proverbs 23:23 says to buy the truth and sell it not; get wisdom, discipline and understanding. The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. (John 14:6). (John 10:1) reads like this: “I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.” If you continue reading these verses, you will find that when a false shepherd tries to get near the sheep they will run away from him for they will not follow a stranger. They know the true shepherd’s voice and they do not heed the stranger’s voice. Jesus continues by saying, “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. I know my sheep and they know me. I am the good shepherd!” We must be careful not to be deceived for sin will not enter God’s kingdom.