

# JESUS LOVES YOU

## Luke 5:12-14

### Intro

If you have any familiarity with the Bible, you probably know that lepers were treated as outcasts by the communities in which they lived, and somewhat understandably so, as the disease was incurable and extremely contagious. But even when everybody else gave up on them, Jesus healed them, because He loves them just as much as He loves everyone else, and He will never abandon them. He was always there for them. The scripture reads this way.

**Luke 5:12-14** While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." **13** Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him. **14** Then Jesus ordered him, "Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."

## Daniel 6: 1-23, 25-28

### Intro

When Pastor Ryan, Jandre, Colin, and I decided on "Jesus loves you" or "God is always there for you as the theme for the service and I volunteered to do the sermon, the story that immediately jumped into my head was that of Daniel and the Lions' Den. It was a story that I heard a lot as a kid, especially in the form of Veggie Tales DVDs. When Pastor Ryan asked me to think of a passage from the New Testament, it took me some time to think about it, but when asked for one from the Old Testament, I thought this passage would be perfect, as it's all about God being there for Daniel. Daniel 6: verse 16 includes, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" And even when he was trapped in a den full of lions with a boulder covering the opening, much like the way Jesus' tomb would be sealed about 600 years later, God did indeed deliver Daniel. The scripture reads this way.

**Daniel 6: 1-23, 25-28** It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, **2** with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. **3** Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. **4** At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. **5** Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

**6** So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: "May King Darius live forever! **7** The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den. **8** Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." **9** So King Darius put the decree in writing.

**10** Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. **11** Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. **12** So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: “Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions’ den?”

The king answered, “The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.”

**15** Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, “Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.”

**16** So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!”

**17** A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel’s situation might not be changed. **18** Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

**19** At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den. **20** When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?”

**21** Daniel answered, “May the king live forever! **22** 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 any wrong before you, Your Majesty.”

### ‘Jesus Loves You’

This is the first sermon that I have written, and I don’t yet have Pastor Ryan’s ability to come up with a story from my own life that I can relate to the theme of the sermon, but I am reminded of a book that I read in school about the Sudanese civil war which was written by one of the Lost Boys of Sudan, young members of the Dinka and Nuer tribes who were displaced or killed in the civil war. The book is called *God Grew Tired of Us* and contrary to the title, it tells the story of how the author, John Bul Dau, survived the war and made it to America. His faith in God was a major factor in his ability to keep his motivation to keep going. He spent most of his teen years avoiding death. Separated from his parents at age thirteen, he has been shot at, bombed, gone weeks without food, days without water, and swam through crocodile infested water, and suffered from dysentery among many other things. But God got him through it. I would like to read the introduction to this book now.

He says, “I know I have been blessed and that I have been kept alive for a purpose. They call me a lost boy, but let me assure you, God has found me.” Then at the end in the acknowledgements, he says, “...God, who has blessed me so many times, has outdone Himself.” So just remember- this man had problems worse than most of us can even imagine, but God was there for him, God loves him, because God loves everyone. Jesus loves everyone. There’s a Bible verse- John 18: 9, that reads, “Of those whom you gave me I have not lost one.” Next time you are struggling- whatever it may be- just remember in your heart that Jesus loves you and he will never, ever, let you fall out of his hands.

When I was twelve years old, many of you may remember that I had a very badly broken arm. When it first happened, I didn’t think I needed surgery. But when we got to the doctor’s office for a follow-up, he didn’t sound so sure but was ready to cast it without surgery. This made me nervous, but I was too

afraid to speak up. Fortunately though, God was looking out for me. My mom and Mrs. Kuhrt were there, and Mrs. Kuhrt immediately spoke up, blatantly expressing her concern regarding the doctor's willingness to cast it. So we scheduled an appointment with a pediatric surgeon, where I learned that I needed surgery.

If my mom and Mrs. Kuhrt hadn't been there, then I don't think I would have spoken up, and my left arm might have healed incorrectly and been permanently disfigured. And that is what Jesus loves me means to me. I didn't know it then, but I believe that Jesus loves me means that he is looking out for you, and that he is working through others to get you through whatever hardships you encounter in life.