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Let me start by asking three questions:

1. How many followed Glastonbury, the week before last? No one?! A few!
2. How would you describe Glastonbury in your own words?
3. Do you think anything good can come out of Glastonbury?

Let me read a "report" by Nell Goddard, a member of staff at the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity which was published a few days ago.¹

"Lord I've been broken, although I'm not worthy, you fixed me, now I'm blinded by your grace you came and saved me."

"It may sound like a worship song, but these lines were sung to – **and (sung) by** – over 100,000 people at Glastonbury festival last Friday (28 June, 2019).

"Stormzy, a 25-year-old grime (hip-hop) artist, played his two-part song 'Blinded By Your Grace' during an explosive 90-minute headline set at the UK's biggest music festival.

"He began his performance of *Blinded By Your Grace pt. 2* by saying, *we're going to take this to church, and we're going to give God all the glory right now*. This was a change in tone from the rest of the rapper's performance, which consisted of stark political and anti-racist commentary with strong language throughout.

"It was an unusual moment. An audience of over 100,000 were ... singing a clear theology of grace: *You saved this kid and I'm not your first / it's not by blood and it's not by birth / but oh my God, what a God I serve*.

"Like so much of contemporary pop culture, Stormzy's performance at Glastonbury has divided Christians: those who immediately and unquestioningly celebrate such a clear declaration of gospel truth, ...; and those who write him off completely due to the bad language and questionable morals presented in the rest of his music.

¹ Grace at Glastonbury | Connecting with Culture (04.07.2019) by LICC at [CLICK HERE](#)

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"...we should perhaps be wary of writing him off completely. But we also shouldn't accept and condone his music unthinkingly. As with so much in our culture, there is much to be affirmed and much to be critiqued here.

"Whatever our conclusion, however, it is clear that this artist – the second youngest ever to headline Glastonbury, and the first ever black British solo artist to do so – has introduced the Christian concepts of grace, salvation, prayer, and brokenness to an audience who may otherwise never come across them.

"We do not have to affirm everything about Stormzy's set and his music, but we can and should celebrate that – and pray that God would give the increase."

As I read this, one word came to mind: **WITNESS**, *a person who has had a first-hand experience and is willing to give a sworn testimony before anyone, including competent law authorities.*

The first thing we understand about a witness is that their experience is deeply personal; the experience may have taken their emotions from ecstatic joy to deeply humbling, through to crushingly painful, but the experience is real, because it's personal. This is important because we must never undermine, or belittle a person's first hand experience.

So it must be as we study the character of Daniel.

We have talked about labels and titles which can often mislead; Daniel is often referred to as "*The Decoder of Dreams*", a title which leads us down the path of trying to understand his dreams, to determine their meaning and timing. The human mind is curious, wanting to understand and explain the past and know the future, but our purpose in going through this book is not to decipher Daniel's dreams; our intention is to learn from the person he was, and how he handled the challenges of his day.

Personality can be created by *image*; we can go through an image makeover, to convey the personality we want others to think of us.

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Character is built over a life-time. Every incident, every event, every relationship builds character, which is our *identity*.

How did Daniel's character make him an effective witness of God in this world? Chapter 2 gives us a glimpse.

1. Learn about the situation through first-hand knowledge; don't rush to reply (v.15).
2. Have a trusted prayer network (v.17-18).
3. Start by acknowledging the sovereignty of God ***in the context of the situation*** (v.20-22).
4. Trust what God tells you (v.22).
5. Declare the God whom you worship, that all may know the source of your wisdom, knowledge and strength (v.27-28)

To be an effective witness of God at work, requires us to be in a continually growing and maturing relationship with Him, one in which our trust grows to be unquestioning. For God to be "Our Father", our trust in Him must be childlike.

One of the travesties of our time is that people I knew when I was a young adult, who read their Bible and had an active prayer life, lost their faith in God and their Trust in His Word, because they gave in to social pressure which has pushed religion to be private. We cannot talk about it in public, nor can we discuss the application of scientific principles for testing Truth. To say anything about religion in our society comes under attack by trolls, whose main interest is to control, if not destroy dialogue. Religion and faith have become privatised: believe whatever you want in private, but never let it come under public scrutiny, don't let it be tested against Truth. The result? Our moral and ethical codes become prone to misunderstanding and misapplication, exactly what the Pharisees, Sadducees and teachers of the law did - no one could challenge them against Truth, and when Jesus did, they got rid of Him!

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Daniel takes a stand. Perhaps because of his upbringing, perhaps because Judaic law and Hebrew thought and culture was so deeply embedded in Him, Daniel's relationship with God was solid and his trust in God was unshakeable.

God works through us when we are bold in our faith: bold enough to approach God, bold enough to trust God's Word, and bold enough to declare it.

Daniel was an effective witness of God in his life, because he was bold in his faith, bold enough to approach God with the dilemma posed by a mad megalomaniac, bold enough to trust God's vision of the king's dream, and bold enough to declare it before the king.

The result? (v.46ff) *Then the King said to Daniel, 'Truly your God is the greatest of gods, the Lord over kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal His secret. ... The king appointed Daniel to a high position ...made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, as well as chief over all his wise men.* The King's declaration of faith is the work of God, because Daniel did not waiver in his relationship with God.

The **first** challenge the character of Daniel places before us, is the challenge of **faith**: *Do you know Me (God) well enough to trust me? Do you know Me well enough, to trust my Word? Do you know me well enough to stand up for Me?*

The **second** challenge, the Character of Daniel places before us, is the challenge of **witness**: *Will I trust God's promises? Will I believe God's Word, that I can stick my neck out to declare Him?*

We might do well to consider these two questions this coming week, to examine how we can be bold in our faith: bold enough to approach God, bold enough to trust God's Word, and bold enough to declare it.

AMEN.