

Chapter 12

When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he had done previously. — Daniel 6:10

Gremma had never seen Carly so quiet. She just sat at Gremma's kitchen table, both elbows on the Formica, rubbing her temples, hoping to take away some of the pain. The farm had been in the Cosgriff family since 1874, but now the land was being taken away. And on her watch!

"Come on, Carly, let's eat a bit of casserole and figure out what to do." Gremma dished up a scoop of tuna and noodles, knowing that comfort food from a friend has medicinal value.

Carly took a nibble with her fork and set the utensil back on her orange Fiestaware plate.

"What are we going to do? I blew it! I messed up with the bank. I guess I was too proud to ask for help." Carly's tears began again. She reached for a Valu-More napkin in the wooden napkin holder with a little Dutch girl painted in red.

"I have been praying for you and this situation," Gremma began. "Do you believe that God is listening, Carly?"

"I suppose," responded Carly with little enthusiasm. "Why is this happening if God is listening? If God is supposed to love me?"

Instead of answering directly at this moment, Gremma chose to go to one of her favorite Bible stories. "I know that you love the story of Daniel in the lion's den, and so do I. The government suddenly turned against Daniel with a new law that he could not pray to God. He prayed anyway, was arrested and tossed into a pit with lions. This past week, I listened to a podcast sermon from a pastor in Ames on the story. Even though I have heard the story many times, I had not paused before to meditate on Daniel 6:10. May I read it to you?"

"Sure," replied Carly with a sigh.

Gremma read the verse aloud and continued, "I remembered in the story that Daniel kept praying even with the new law. But I had forgotten the part that Daniel 'gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.' What a great act of faith! The government was messing up his life, and he may even die, and he was still thanking God in his prayers!"

“OK, Gremma, I see where you are going,” interrupted Carly. “I don’t think I can do it. How can I give thanks to God as the farm is being taken away?!”

“It is not about thanking God for the evil,” explained Gremma. “It is thanking God that he will work out good in this situation. Daniel still prayed and didn’t give up. What do you say—shall we pray?”

“Might as well,” agreed Carly. “It can’t hurt.”

Gremma encouraged her to begin.

“OK,” Carly closed her eyes and started. “God, this is hard. I don’t know why the farm has to be taken away, and I want to trust you in all things—even to learn to thank you when things are hard. I am trying to believe that you are working for good at all times. So, I guess, I thank you in this prayer that you’re at work, even if I cannot see it. Please help me to believe. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

“Well done, Carly!” exclaimed Gremma. “Now comes the patience in suffering that is part of following Jesus. I will continue to pray for you as you wait for God’s answers.”

Those in Theater One could wait for a long time. In Heaven, there was no “time” at all. And patience no longer meant “long-suffering,” because there was no suffering. In Heaven, waiting on the Lord was a full-time state of joyful anticipation, similar to the feeling of seeing presents wrapped under a Christmas tree. A little boy couldn’t have the present now, but it had his name on it. He knew something good was coming.

Although Christmas celebrations were loved in Heaven, not everyone on Earth joined the parties. Like Scrooge of old, Ed didn’t get into Christmas much. The holidays interrupted work, and he’d rather be working. Ed loved his job best when he could feel the power of enforcing the law. Like people should repay loans in a timely way.

He got back to his office to tidy up his paperwork. “Another day of fighting for justice,” he said to himself.

He glanced at the copy of the foreclosure letter he had hand-delivered to Carly. Then he looked again, more slowly. “This can’t be!” Ed looked again, this time reading more slowly. He pounded his desk in anger.

Ed had gone to the wrong address.

Cursing, Ed yanked open a desk drawer and took out a piece of blank letterhead.

He grimaced as he composed a letter to Ms. Cosgriff, helped a bit by knowing that he would be making an appearance at a different farm. *The life of a justice superhero is busy and demanding*, he thought.