

THE THREE BOYS

Daniel 3:16-18

March 19, 2016

Today

- **Daniel 3:16-18** - Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. ¹⁷ "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ "But *even* if *He* does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

I love this story. It is perhaps my favorite story in all scripture. First a quick review from last week:

- The king had a dream of a statue made of 4 different metals: gold, silver, bronze, iron – which represented 4 earthly kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.
- We understand that God was giving Nebuchadnezzar a glimpse into history to show him his role in history and to show him that God is ultimately in control of all history.

Now, Chapter 3 is Nebuchadnezzar's attempt, with the help of his advisors, to defy history and defy God by building a statue made entirely of gold. All the high-ranking officials from ALL corners of the kingdom were instructed to come to Babylon for the sole purpose of worshipping the image. In reality, by bowing to the image, they were bowing to Nebuchadnezzar, showing him honor, worship and loyalty.

Some things to notice in Daniel 3:

It is full of repetition and repetition in the Bible is a big hint as to the importance of what is being said.

MUSIC / MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS = 4 times

- Passive persuasion
- Coercion to get the gathered crowd to obey

FIERY FURNACE = 9 times in the first 24 verses

- If coercion doesn't work force will

WORSHIP = 9 times in the first 18 verses

- Worship is the theme and the central idea of Daniel 3. Worship to God or worship to something or someone other than God

The stage is set. The musicians are in place, the furnaces are hot. The crowd is assembled.

The music starts and everyone hits the ground – picture it the wave in reverse. But wait!! There in the middle of the crowd are 3 who refuse to bow.

Have you ever thought about this?? Those boys had already proven their loyalty to God when they chose to eat only vegetables and water. Did they REALLY have to prove it again? Couldn't They have just bent down to tie their sandals? **Nope** – because they had already made the choice to follow God, every act after that was conditioned by that choice and whatever the consequence there was no going back.

The king's advisors took the opportunity to point out that 3 of his most trusted advisors are not bowing. The words used in verse 8 of chapter 3 literally mean that that they chewed them up and spit them out.

The king must have thought highly of these 3 boys because He gave them a second chance. When given the choice again to bow or die, how did they respond?

- **Ellen White {PK 508}**: "From the history of their fathers they had learned that disobedience to God results in dishonor, disaster and death; and that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the foundation of all true prosperity. Calmly facing the furnace they said, 'your majesty, we have no need to answer you on this matter. If there is a god who is able to save us from the blazing furnace, it is our GOD whom we serve; He will deliver us from your majesty's power.... Their faith strengthened as they declared that God would be glorified by delivering them and WITH TRIUMPHANT ASSURANCE BORN OF IMPLICIT TRUST IN GOD, they added, BUT IF NOT, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up."

Their response was simple = we will not worship anyone other than our God REGARDLESS of the consequences.

Wouldn't it be nice if that were the end of the story? The perfect place to end the movie?

- They were bound and thrown into a fire so hot that the men who threw them in were killed instantly = kind of seems like a bad way to end a story.

Luckily for them it is not the end of the story. We have the advantage of skipping to the end of the story to see how it all turns out = they did not have the same luxury - they did not know what the outcome would be and yet they stood!!!

Take Away

Trials of life = Sometimes trials happen because we have made a choice, as the three boys did, to stand for God. Faithfulness to God does not do away with trials, sometimes it increases trials:

- Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego faced the furnace because they would not bow down.
- Daniel was thrown into the lion's den because he would not stop praying
- Joseph went to prison because he would not dishonor God or his employer.
- Huss, Jerome, Luther, etc. all faced trial because they just would not be quiet.
- Sometimes God saves you in the fire not from the fire.

Supreme trust in God = They did not know what the outcome would be, but they knew the One who would determine the outcome and they were unmovable in their faith that He would do the right thing. They trusted the WORD of God even when the ACTION on the part of God was not expected.

- Faith is a verb. Oswald Chambers said it this way, "Faith is not intelligent understanding. Faith is deliberate commitment to a Person where I see no way out".
- That kind of faith is a must in our walk with God and it is not something born in crisis. It must be developed over years of being in RELATIONSHIP with God.

BUT = God choosing to save them or not save them was not the issue for them.

- The issue was remaining loyal to God, which meant, WE WILL NOT BOW. REGARDLESS. PERIOD.
- They were unwavering in their in their loyalty and it didn't matter what God chose to do after that.
- Choosing to stand for God does not rest on the hope of reward, or getting out of a jam. It rests on never wanting to do anything that will damage the relationship NO MATTER THE COST.

What would your response have been? Has your relationship with God been developed over the years in such a way that when the time comes for you to face your own fiery furnace you will be able to stand with the same complete trust in God, regardless of the outcome? If someone were to read the story of your life would they find you standing or tying your sandals?

When you stand for God you will stand out. It may be painful. It may not always have a happy ending = God may choose not to rescue you. BUT none of those things matter. What matters is whether or not you STAND.

Develop your relationship with God TODAY. MAKE IT A PRIORITY. If you don't know how find a mentor – JUST DO IT!!! DON'T WAIT!!! So that when that moment comes you will say, without hesitation, "if He rescues me or if He doesn't, I will serve only God".