

THE FIERY FURNACE

(How God Honors Those Who Honor Him)
Daniel 3:1-30



WHAT A TEST!

- ◆ The Faith Of The Hebrews
- ◆ The Fury Of The King
- ◆ The Faithfulness Of God

“Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire” (Daniel 3:25)

Bill Kirk

“THE POWER OF COURAGE”

Text: Daniel 3:1-30
Subject: How A Courageous Spirit Obtains The Attention Of Jesus

Question: How many of you have ever been tempted to commit any sin?

Question: How many of you have ever been pressured to compromise your convictions?

Question: How many of you have ever had to chose between pleasing God (or pleasing man?)

(Daniel Can Relate To You Today)

Introduction

(The theme of Daniel chapters 1-6 is summed up in 2 verses)

- ◆ Daniel 5:12, “Forasmuch as an *excellent spirit* was found in Daniel”, (and)
- ◆ Daniel 6:3, “Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes because an *excellent spirit* was in him”

Question: What is an excellent spirit?

Answer: It is the spirit of Daniel revealed in Daniel chapters 1-6.

- ◆ The first 6 chapters of Daniel are historical (and reveal his personal integrity).
- ◆ The last 6 chapters of Daniel are prophetic (and reveal end time events).

Question: What are the characteristics of an excellent spirit (that bring blessing and great reward?)

- ◆ In chapter 1 – A willingness to choose right when the environment is all wrong. (**An Integrity Spirit**)
- ◆ In chapter 2 – A willingness to thank God when blessings come your way. (**A Grateful Spirit**).
- ◆ In chapter 3 – A willingness to choose companions who fear the Lord above every other opinion. (**A Courageous Spirit**).
- ◆ In chapter 4 – A willingness to speak the truth in love even when it hurts. (**A Secure Spirit**).
- ◆ In chapter 5 – A willingness to not use God for personal gain. (**A Servanthood Spirit**).
- ◆ In chapter 6 – A willingness to pray and seek God in the midst of a crisis or a calm. (**A Devotional Spirit**).

In Daniel Chapter 1, “An Integrity Spirit”

- ◆ How Daniel was pressured by the kings food, alcohol and a name change.
- ◆ How Daniel purposed in his heart to chose right in an environment that was all wrong.
- ◆ How Daniel was rewarded by God with health and favor for his loyalty to God.

In Daniel Chapter 2, “A Grateful Spirit”

- ◆ How Daniel “Thanked God” for His wisdom, might and knowledge of all things.
- ◆ How Daniel prayed with faith and obedience in a crisis.
- ◆ How Daniel deflected all praise to God when the answer to prayer came his way.

In Daniel Chapter 3, “A Courageous Spirit”

Question: How were the 3 Hebrews pressured and accused?

Question: Why did the Hebrews refuse to bow down?

Question: How did the 3 men respond when intimidated?

Question: What happened inside the fiery furnace?

Question: Why is it better to suffer for doing right than escape suffering and do wrong?

Question: How does God honor a courageous spirit?

Question: And pastor, what is the application to my life today?

(Capture The Setting Of Our Text – Verses 1-7)

In (V. 1) “Nebuchadnezzar makes an image of gold and sets it up in the plains of Dura just outside of Babylon”.

- ◆ A golden image 90 ft high, and 18 ft wide.
- ◆ A golden image for all to see.

Question: Why erect the image of gold?

Answer: Because in chapter 2, Daniel had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

1. In the dream, Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold in the image of his dream.
2. Instead of humbling himself in response to the dream, Nebuchadnezzar exalts himself.
3. He builds an entire image of gold to represent the kingdom he had built.

Question: What happens when we shift attention from God to ourselves?

- #1. Nebuchadnezzar became rebellious instead of grateful to God.
- #2. Nebuchadnezzar became proudful instead humble before God.
- #3. Nebuchadnezzar became intoxicated with himself (and drew attention to his own importance).

Question: What happens when we forget that all good things come from God?

Answer: We become insecure and demand that other people give us attention.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ To the degree we forget why we were created, (to bring glory to God)...
- ◆ ...To that same degree we become self centered and want attention and cannot be truly happy.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ To be spiritually healthy means: I want people to see Jesus in me, (not me)
- ◆ And to the degree that my motive is correct to that same degree I am secure,
- ◆ And to the degree I am secure, to that same degree I’ll be healthy and happy,
- ◆ And to the degree I am healthy, to that same degree I need no attention, no stroking, no applause, no worship, and no recognition.

(But Nebuchadnezzar Is Not Spiritual)

Now notice 3 things today

I. The Faith Of The Hebrews (Vs. 8-18)

Question: What did the king do after he built the 90 ft image to himself?

Answer: He draws a line in the sand.

- #1. (In Vs. 2-4), he calls together all the big shots and musicians.
- #2. (In V. 5), he commands everyone to fall down and worship the image.
- #3. (In V. 6), he cautions that whoever doesn’t bow down will be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.
- #4. (In V. 7), he discovers that all but 3 people fall down and worship the golden image.

(And Now We’ve Got A Problem)

- ◆ In (vs. 8-11), the Chaldeans tattle-tale on 3 men who are faithful to God,
- ◆ And in (v. 12), one of the greatest testimonies in all of Scripture. (Lets read it)

“There are certain Jews who you’ve placed in leadership, and guess what king?” (Pg. 2 of 4)

- #1. "They have not regarded you,"
- #2. "They serve not thy gods,"
- #3. "They won't worship the golden image which you have set up."

- ◆ In (v. 13), the 3 are brought before the king.
- ◆ In (v. 14), the king inquires, "Is it true, that you do not serve my gods nor worship the golden image to myself?"
- ◆ In (v. 15), the devil tempts you again doesn't he?

- #1. "I'll give you another chance (to bow down) or you'll be thrown in the fire";
- #2. "And who will be able to deliver you out of my hands?"

Question: Pastor, what do I say and what do I do when I'm tempted under pressure?

Question: What do I do when the enemy lies to me about compromise, disobedience, fear and insecurity?

Question: What do I do when the enemy lies to me about tithes and offerings?

Question: What do I do when the enemy lies to me about sex under pressure?

Question: What do I do when the enemy lies to me with weed, tobacco, alcohol, drugs and rejection under pressure?

Question: What do I do when I'm in the minority and everyone else around me is in the party spirit?

(In v. 16) "We are not careful to answer you O Nebuchadnezzar" (or)

- ◆ We are not concerned about the consequences.

That's Dedication

(In v. 17) "God will take care of us"

- ◆ **That's Faith**

(In v. 18) "But even if we burn like cinders, we will not serve thy gods nor worship your image".

- ◆ **That's Loyalty**

Question: Why does God allow us to be tempted at certain times?

Answer: Because a multitude of heathen from many land were watching these 3!

Question: Where is the battle really waging?

Answer: In the heavenlies between God and Satan.

Question: What determines who gets the glory?

Answer: The choice we make to please God or please sin.

Question: What is the lesson in my life today pastor?

Answer: That it is better to die in a furnace with the favor of God, than to live without His favor and compromise your eternity. (I repeat!)

- ◆ O God, give us some Daniel men and women.
- ◆ Believers committed so that rejection, fear and pain cannot sway our decisions.

II. **The Fury Of The King** (Vs. 19-23)

Question: What can happen to those who are faithful and do the perfect will of God?

Answer: (V. 19), the enemy of your soul becomes furious and heats the furnace 7 times hotter!

- ◆ In (v. 20), "Bind them and cast them into the fire".
- ◆ In (v. 21), "The 3 are cast into the furnace".
- ◆ In (v. 22), "The flame was exceedingly hot".
- ◆ In (v. 23), "The 3 men fall down into the furnace".

Question: How many of you know that it costs something to be faithful to God? (Pg. 3 of 4)

Question: How many of you know there is a price to be a true disciple of Jesus?

Question: How many of you know that bad things happen to good people on earth?

Question: How many of you are hurting on the inside because of what someone has done to you?

Question: How many of you find yourself in some kind of fiery furnace experience?

Question: How many of you have angered the enemy of your soul by your commitment to the Lord?

Question: How many of you are walking through the fire and need a word from the Lord?

III. **The Faithfulness Of Jesus (Vs. 24-30)**

Question: What happens to faithful followers of Jesus who go through fires and floods?

Answer: (3 things)

- ◆ In (v. 24), the enemy is astonished.
- ◆ In (v. 25), the Lord gives His attention.
- ◆ In (V. 26), you come out of the fire.

Question: What enables you not to crack up when you should crack up?

Answer: (V. 28) "Blessed by the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent His angel, and delivered His servants (why?), because they trusted in Him".

Question: What is the proof of our faith?

Answer: (V. 28), "They yielded their bodies and would not serve any god except their own".

Question: What happens to you when you chose to respond with courage and take a stand for the Lord?

Answer: Fidelity is rewarded by God! (V. 25) "I see 4 men loose in the fire", said the king.

Question: Who was the 4th man?

Answer: It was Jesus!

Question: What happens when Jesus is with us?

Answer: He takes the sting and the curse out of our fiery experiences.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The Lord will **give us grace** to suffer for His sake.
- ◆ The Lord will **hold us up** when no one else is around.
- ◆ The Lord will **break through the darkness** and turn evil into good.
- ◆ The Lord will **not abandon** one of His children in the fiery oven.

Question: What happened to the faithful in the fire?

Answer: The only thing lost in the furnace was the cord that bound them!

(In Other Words)

- ◆ What others mean for evil, God turns to good if we will obey and be faithful.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ God uses your fiery furnace to work for you, and not against you.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ God will use your fire to purge, refine and sift off the hindrances!

Question: What is the key?

Answer: Courageous obedience in every area of life!