



THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Last week we read about the wickedness of King Nebuchadnezzar, who set up an idol for the people of Babylon to worship. They were to fall on their faces in worship to this idol when the music played. As faithful followers of God, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to follow the king's order. So, Nebuchadnezzar threatened their lives. Nevertheless, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood firm, believing that God could deliver them from the fire, and if He chose not to do so, they still wouldn't bow in worship to this false god. While we may not face these exact circumstances, we'll come to a similar crossroads when we're forced to take an unpopular stand for our faith. When that time arrives, will we have the resolve to stand firm and face the consequences?

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 3:19-30

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What encouraged you, challenged you, or stood out the most to you from the sermon?
2. What punishment awaited those who refused to bow to the image of gold? In Daniel 3:19-23, how is the furnace described? How does the king's anger affect his response to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's refusal to bow in worship to the image of gold? How is this similar to how the world reacts when followers of Christ stand firm in their faith?

Anyone who didn't bow down to the image King Nebuchadnezzar made would immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

The fire was heated to seven times hotter than usual. The fire was so hot, and the king's command so urgent, the soldiers who tied up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and who were to throw them into the furnace were killed by the flames of the fire.

King Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for refusing to bow to the image of gold he set up. His attitude toward the men had changed. In his anger, he commanded the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual.

3. How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego enter the fire? How did their situation change when Jesus showed up? What did it look like when He stepped into the fire with them? What did Nebuchadnezzar see when he looked into the furnace? What does this teach us about God's presence in our lives?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were firmly bound, wearing robes, trousers, turbans, and other clothes. The king saw four in the fire, walking around unbound and unharmed. The fourth looked “like a son of the gods.” Even in the fire, there was freedom, protection, and the presence of God.

Here’s a follow-up question you can ask your group: What does Deuteronomy 31:6 say about the Lord’s presence in the lives of His people? Why is it important to cling to this truth in spite of the emotions we feel about the trial we may be facing?

Deuteronomy 31:6 says, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

4. Look back at Daniel 3:17-18. What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego declare to the king? What do these verses reveal about their dependence on God? How did this dependence invite God to step into their situation? What does it look like to rely on God when we’re in a trial?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said to the king: “...we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego believed God could rescue them, and even if He didn’t, they would remain faithful to Him. We allow God to step into our situations in radical, special, or perhaps unique ways when we depend entirely on Him because we have given Him complete control. We decide that whatever He chooses to do in our lives, we will still honor Him in each situation.

5. Read Habakkuk 3:17-18 and Psalm 23. What do these verses teach us about rejoicing in the Lord and trusting God’s faithfulness in every circumstance? How can we keep these truths front and center in our lives while we’re walking through difficult circumstances?
6. How are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego described in Daniel 3:27 as they came out of the fire? Without God, the fiery furnace was a hopeless situation. Yet, the Bible says, “For nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37). When did you face an impossible situation, but God showed up? How can reflecting on these moments help us remain steadfast in the future?

“They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them” (Daniel 3:27).

Nothing on their bodies was singed, scorched, or smelled of fire. They were rescued in the fire, yet there was no evidence that they had been in the fire.

7. In Daniel 3:28, what declaration did Nebuchadnezzar make when he saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? What did he acknowledge about their faith? How can difficult circumstances in our lives serve as a testimony to unbelievers? How have you been encouraged by the testimony of other believers as they’ve gone through their trials?

King Nebuchadnezzar called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego “servants of the Most High God” (verse 26), and he declared praise to God. He acknowledged God sent His angel and rescued His servants. He says, “They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.”

8. As we saw a couple of weeks ago, Nebuchadnezzar remains unchanged by God’s work in the lives of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. What does James 1:6 say about those who doubt God? How do we see this in the Nebuchadnezzar’s life? What distinction do you see between the settled faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and the inconsistent response of the king? What’s the difference between “being moved” by God and not being “surrendered” to God?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego surrendered to God, changing every part of who they were. They had a settled faith marked by surrender, faith, and hope. Their belief and trust in God didn’t change based on their circumstances. They were willing to honor Him even when their life was threatened. They knew God could deliver them, and they relied on His faithfulness. They knew God was worthy of their faithfulness and obedience no matter what He chose to do. They would stand on their faith in Him no matter the outcome.

King Nebuchadnezzar saw miracles of God and made bold proclamations in response to the power of God He witnessed. However, in these moments, he refused to surrender to God truly. He is unwilling to submit to the Lord and moves back and forth between witnessing the power of God and going his own way, honoring himself.