

The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany ~ Sunday, February 5, 2017

“Daniel: Uncompromising Faith ~

Keeping Your Cool When The Heat is On”

Daniel 3

“King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.” (Daniel 3:1-2)

**4 REASONS NEBUCHADNEZZAR BUILD THE STATUE**

• \_\_\_\_\_  
He was thumbing his nose at Daniel’s \_\_\_\_\_, even though he had honoured him at the end of Chapter 2 as “...God of gods, Lord of kings, and the revealer of mysteries...”

• \_\_\_\_\_  
The statue represented the best of industrial and scientific \_\_\_\_\_ of the day.

The philosophy behind this was an early form of \_\_\_\_\_, which seeks to \_\_\_\_\_ God and enthrone humanity.

• \_\_\_\_\_  
He used this statue and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the fiery furnace to force people to \_\_\_\_\_ him. However, true worship can’t be \_\_\_\_\_. It can only be \_\_\_\_\_ offered because it comes from the \_\_\_\_\_.

• \_\_\_\_\_  
The fact that the statue was made entirely of gold and not mixed metals, like in the dream, shows that Nebuchadnezzar wanted to ensure that his kingdom was \_\_\_\_\_—that it wouldn’t suffer the fate described in his dream.

He was making it very clear that no \_\_\_\_\_ of religion or culture would be tolerated—that he would crush all possible sources of division and disintegration. In other words, everyone must \_\_\_\_\_.

They couldn’t \_\_\_\_\_ it out; they couldn’t \_\_\_\_\_ it away or pretend it wasn’t happening; and they couldn’t \_\_\_\_\_ and hide. This was a problem that wasn’t going to go away.

**2 IMPORTANT LESSONS**

**Lesson #1. Living a godly life will bring \_\_\_\_\_.**  
“The Lord’s curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous.” (Proverbs 3:33)

“Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways.” (Psalm 128:1)

Scripture is clear that God promises to \_\_\_\_\_ those who are \_\_\_\_\_ to Him. The problem is, we think that blessing means easy \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_ life.

Being blessed by God is more about experiencing His \_\_\_\_\_ and power in the midst of life—whatever our \_\_\_\_\_ might be.

“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...” (2 Timothy 3:12)

**EXPERIENCING GOD IN OUR SUFFERING**

• **We can experience God’s blessings in the midst of suffering as He \_\_\_\_\_ us.**

“For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.” (2 Corinthians 1: 5)

• **We can experience God’s blessings in the midst of suffering as He gives us His \_\_\_\_\_.**

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have troubles. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

• **We can experience God’s blessings in the midst of suffering as He works to \_\_\_\_\_.**

“We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

**What opposition have you experienced because you are a follower of God?**

**Lesson #2. Living a godly life will bring hard \_\_\_\_\_.**  
We can find ourselves in situations where we have to choose between \_\_\_\_\_ or the \_\_\_\_\_.

God wants us to be \_\_\_\_\_.

“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

God has enabled us to be faithful through His \_\_\_\_\_—even to the point of death—by removing the consequences of our \_\_\_\_\_—eternal death—and promising us \_\_\_\_\_ life with Him.

To really do this requires us to live our lives as Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:17, “as strangers here in reverent fear.”

**What difficult choices have you been faced with?**

They refused \_\_\_\_\_ God and His commands. They were determined to stand out against this evil thing and to be \_\_\_\_\_ to God at any cost. They refused to save themselves at the expense of their \_\_\_\_\_, and were prepared to \_\_\_\_\_ their king rather than \_\_\_\_\_ their God.

## 2 SECRETS TO STANDING FIRM IN OUR FAITH

**Secret #1: They were \_\_\_\_\_.**

“O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” (Daniel 3:16-18)

- **They were confident in God’s \_\_\_\_\_.**

They knew God and trusted Him.

Their faith was \_\_\_\_\_. Their God was all \_\_\_\_\_. Fiery flames and kings meant nothing to Him. He could and would \_\_\_\_\_ them.

**Do you have this kind of faith? Do you trust that no matter what happens, God is faithful? What has God done in your life?**

- **They were confident in God’s \_\_\_\_\_.**

“But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up. (Daniel 3:18)

They acknowledged that God had the power to \_\_\_\_\_ them. However, they also acknowledged that rescue might not be God’s \_\_\_\_\_ for them.

They recognized that their lives were firmly in God’s \_\_\_\_\_, so the outcome didn’t matter in the grand scheme of things. \_\_\_\_\_ to God was more important to them than their safety and security—than \_\_\_\_\_ itself.

Our faith must rest in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, \_\_\_\_\_ of what He does or does not do. True faith is a readiness to trust God to fulfil His purposes whatever they might be irrespective of the \_\_\_\_\_.

“...though he slay me, yet I will trust him” (Job 13:15)

**Does your faith depend on things going your way?  
Are you confident in God’s purposes no matter what happens?**

**Secret #2: They were not \_\_\_\_\_**

“Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, ‘Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘True, O king.’ He answered and said, ‘But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.’” (Daniel 2:24)

If God had not delivered his servants \_\_\_\_\_ the fire, he had delivered them \_\_\_\_\_ the fire.

God had strengthened their commitment through a manifestation of His presence with them in \_\_\_\_\_ form.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?..For I am certain that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35; 38)

**Do you know God’s presence in your life?**

**Who do you turn to when the heat is on?**



The message of Daniel 3 is clear: The need for every believer to grow in the \_\_\_\_\_ Of God so that when we come face to face with a challenge—when the heat is turned up—we’ll be able to stand firm in our faith.

This story teaches us that true faith is not trusting in our \_\_\_\_\_; it’s not trusting in what we want to \_\_\_\_\_. True faith is trusting in \_\_\_\_\_ alone. It’s \_\_\_\_\_ on the truth that God is God and we can trust Him—even when His answer to our prayers is \_\_\_\_\_!

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.” (Isaiah 43:2-3)