

Daniel #6

February 11, 2024

Series Title: Daniel's Visions Of the Ages

Today's Message: A Death-Defying Faith: The Value of a Strong Deliverer; Daniel 3:16-30

We talked about the value of strong convictions last week. It was the strong conviction of *the three* that enabled them to defy the command of the king. It was their strong conviction that God was able to save them from death that energized their commitment to courageously yield their bodies to the fury and rage of Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace. Indeed, it was their strong conviction that life and death belonged not to Nebuchadnezzar, but to the God heaven!

The primary application centered on an admonition urging each of us to establish biblical convictions, which will strengthen our commitment to Christ, resulting in courageous actions that cause you and me to stand in the evil day.

The main principle was this: The Stronger your convictions the stronger your commitment. The stronger your commitment the greater your acts of courage to take your stand *in* the evil day.

For the Christian strong convictions grow out of growing faith. The Bible encourages us to feed and grow our faith. 2 Peter 1:5-10 encourages this by saying, "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall."

In summary, the fruit of strong convictions are not produced in a vacuum. They grow out of the stem of faith that is well-rooted in Christ and nourished by His word! And resilient fruit-bearing faith is strengthened as the strong winds of trials/ *testings* strain not only the fruit, but the stem and the root as well. Your faith will be healthy, nourished and fortified as you put into practice the teachings of Scripture. In this you will be able to take your stand in the evil day, much like you see in the lives of *the three* as they stand before the fire and the king! (see James 1:22; Ephesians 6:13)

Most of us will never engage a **death-defying faith** like *the three*, but we will have to learn **the value of our Strong Deliverer** as we obey the Lord's command to take up our cross daily and follow Him. If you would stand strong in the face of evil temptations, you must be willing to submit yourself to the *trials/ testings* of your convictions that are present every day (Jer. 12:5). Sometimes you will stand; sometimes you will fall. But, be encouraged! Get up! And know that "He who began a good work in you will see it through to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6)

Today we have another simple outline. 1) The convictions of *the three* bring condemnation (3:16-23). 2) The faith of *the three* brings deliverance (3:24-28). And 3) The astonishment of the king brings praise and promotion (3:29-30).

I) **(3:16-23) The Convictions of *the three* bring condemnation.**

A) (3:15, 16) A hill to die on.

- 1) *The Three* had determined that refusal to compromise God's law was a hill worth dying on.
 - B) (3:17) A Hope to live by.
 - 1) Strong convictions prepared by faith: **God is able to save us from the fire.**
 - 2) Faith prepared by knowledge cemented their hope in God as their **strong Deliverer!**
 - (a) They could pinpoint specific times in the history of Israel when God **Delivered** them!
 - (i) Think of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel at the Red Sea, David and many others.
 - 3) "We want you to know, O King" God's "hand" is more powerful than Nebuchadnezzar's *hand*.
 - (a) "hand" of Nebuchadnezzar is to be understood as *the power of his authority*.
 - C) (3:18) Prepared to die.
 - 1) In a sense *the three* had already died before they were thrown into the furnace.
 - (a) They had made up their minds beforehand not to compromise the Word of God!
 - (i) They knew that Israel was in exile b/c of their compromise to bow down to idols.
 - (b) Jesus warned the disciples to be prepared beforehand.
 - (i) Matthew 11; Mark 13; Luke 10; John 16:1-4 "All this I have told you so that you will not go astray...all this I have told you so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you."
 - D) (3:19-23) Yielded to the sentence of death.
 - 1) Yielded to God meant no compromise with the king's command.
 - (a) No threat of the king's fury, no fear of the king's wrath could alter their convictions!
 - (i) (3:23) "...firmly tied, [they] fell into the blazing furnace."
 - (ii) One of the key tools of the enemy is **intimidation** in order to **produce** fear!
 - E) Long before the threat of death, *the Three* had built strong biblical convictions in order to stand!
 - 1) Knowledge of God and His Word is essential in **forming** the **necessary internal convictions**, which strengthen our **commitment to courageous obedience of faith** when tested.
 - (a) Psalm 37:5-6: "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."
 - (i) Your commitment: "Do not merely listen to the word... Do what it says." (James 1:22)
- II) **(3:24-28) The Faith of *the three* brings deliverance.**
- A) The miraculous story of their deliverance
 - 1) (3:25a) The miracle of *the Three* walking unbound and unharmed in the fire.
 - 2) (3:25b) The miracle of the fourth person in the fire with *the Three*.
 - (a) One "like a son of the gods." Nebuchadnezzar was acknowledging a divine being in the fire.
 - (i) No doubt, the divine being was the very presence of the preincarnate Christ!
 - (a) Jesus is Immanuel, "the with us God."
 1. He is with you always! Even in the dreadful fires of life! You are never alone!
 2. And, for us, just as in the story, God triumphs over evil every time!
 - 3) (3:26-27) The miracle response to Nebuchadnezzar's command to "Come out! Come here!"
 - (a) Their bodies were not harmed, nor their hair singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of smoke on them!
 - (i) **Isaiah 43:2-3a**: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; **the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.**"

B) (3:28) Application: Nebuchadnezzar recognized their willingness to **yield their lives to God** no matter what! Lessons from the fire:

- 1) Just as *the Three* had yielded their bodies to God long before the fire, so are we to forsake our lives in favor of a **committed** life to Christ, expressed through **courageous acts of faith**.
 - (a) I Corinthians 15:31 Paul declared, "I die every day—I mean that brothers..."
- 2) Christians are to live in the world as though having died to it!
 - (a) Galatians 6:14: "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."
 - (i) The world of unbelief, rejection of Truth and of God and the corrupt, anti-God system is dead to me.
 - (ii) And, Paul says, "I am dead to the world."
- 3) What does it mean to be "dead"?
 - (a) It means that you daily crucify your selfish, unbelieving, self-reliant desires.
 - (i) Jesus says to us, "Take up your cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:22-23)
 - (ii) Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "When Jesus said this He was saying, 'When I call you, I bid you come and die.' So, taking up your cross daily means to die daily to self-rule, and yield the members of your body to God as instruments of righteousness. (Romans 6:13)
 - (b) It means to lose your life; Forsake your plans and yield to God's plans for you daily!
 - (i) AW Tozer relates the principle this way: "If you saw a man going down Main Street in Jerusalem with a cross, you knew something about him: 1) He was not coming back; and 2) as soon as he put that cross on his shoulder, he had no plans for the future."
 - (a) Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow Me."
- 4) Who dies when we choose to take up our cross daily?
 - (a) The flesh, or the sinful nature. That is, the old unbelieving, self-reliant self. Crucifying the "flesh". Putting to death the "sinful nature" that opposes God's rule and reign over us!
 - (i) Galatians 5:24: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and sinful desires."
 - (a) When we crucify the sinful nature every day a new person lives!
- 5) Who lives when we die to self?
 - (a) Galatians 2:20a: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God..."
 - (i) It is Christ living in you and me molding, shaping, conforming us to His image!
 - (ii) It is the new me, not the old unbelieving, self-reliant me, but the new Christ-believing, Christ-reliant, grace dependent me!
- 6) How do we live this way? And what is our motivation? (Galatians 2:20)
 - (a) How? By faith in the Son of God.
 - (b) What is our motivation? Who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- 7) What do we gain from dying to self and living for Christ?
 - (a) **Read Philippians 3:7-11 (In brief, we gain Christ and His life!)**

III) (3:29-30) **The Astonishment of the king brings praise and promotion.**

- A) Their story ended well. But that is not always the case: **Hebrews 11:35** gives us great pause. Consider that by faith some stories ended well, others didn't: "Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection." **Either way, *the Three* would agree, we live by faith in the Son of God!**