**Faithful Men in the Fire**

**Daniel 3:19-30**

**Introduction**

Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah refused to bow before the idol built by Nebuchadnezzar because their faith in God was more important than the approval of their society. The God they served was bigger than any statue. Serving God was more important than serving Babylon. They chose to serve the Lord regardless of the outcome. This type of faith flows out of a heart that loves God. It was more than a religion to them. It was not a set of rules that kept them from bowing. It was not a fear of disappointing their parents. It was a relationship with their God. In a day when others were compromising, these young men remained true to God. As modern-day fires of adversity intensify in our own country, we need men and women who will remain true to God regardless of their circumstances. In this lesson, we will see the results of choosing to remain true to God.

1. **Remaining true to God brought increased difficulty. (v. 19-23)**
   1. The king was hot! (v. 19a) Being “full of fury” indicates he was filled with rage.
   2. As a result of his rage, the king turned up the heat! (v. 19b) “Seven times” is most likely a proverbial expression for making it as hot as possible! He wanted it heated to the maximum intensity. He tried to gain control by turning up the heat. Because they did not cater to his wishes, he subjected them to the effects of his wrath.
   3. When Nebuchadnezzar turned up the heat, it affected his own men. (v. 20-22)
   4. It seemed this would be the end for the three young men. (v. 23)
   5. Those who oppose godliness turn up the heat on those who seek to live godly lives.
2. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (2 Timothy 3:12)
3. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (1 Peter 4:12-13)
   1. In 2012, Hobby Lobby faced potential fines for not complying with the Affordable Care Act under the Obama Administration. The reason they opposed Obamacare was that it required them to provide insurance that supports abortion. Under the mandate by the Department of Health and Human Services, they are required to provide the “morning-after pill” and the “week-after pill.” David Green, CEO and founder, said, “These abortion-causing drugs go against our faith, and our family is now being forced to choose between following the laws of the land that we love or maintaining the religious beliefs that have made our business successful and have supported our family and thousands of our employees and their families. We simply cannot abandon our religious beliefs to comply with this mandate.”
   2. In 1993, Jack Phillips opened Masterpiece Bakeshop in Lakewood, Colorado. As a Christian, he determined from the outset that there were certain cakes he would decline to make if they violated his faith. For example, he declined to make cakes in celebration of Halloween. In 2012, David Mullins and Charlie Craig requested Phillips to bake a cake to celebrate their upcoming wedding. When he refused based on his belief in Genesis 1:27 and related verses, the men filed a complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission which ruled in their favor, accusing Phillips of discrimination. Ultimately, the case made its way to the Supreme Court. In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled in Phillip’s favor, but the case and its aftermath demonstrate the increasing pressure that is mounting against those who hold to the Christian faith.
   3. If you choose to live a godly life, you will experience the heat at some point.
4. If you choose to tell the truth, others may pressure you to go along with their deceit.
5. If you choose purity, others may ridicule you.
6. If you don’t attend certain events, you may be considered strange.
7. Remaining true to God will increase the difficulty of your life.
8. **Remaining true to God brought glory to God. (v. 24-30)**
   1. The king saw that the young men were not alone in the fire. (v. 24-25) He was “astonied” (greatly alarmed; startled). The three men were loose and walking around like they were enjoying it!
   2. The Lord is with believers who are in the fiery trial. They had a fourth person with them. The fourth was like the Son of God.
9. Nebuchadnezzar was a polytheist and would not have understood the Trinity. However, he knew that the One who was with them was divine. He was ascribing deity to the being.
10. We understand that it was most likely a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. Those who take a stand for Christ find Him standing with them!
    1. They came out of the fire untouched by the flames. (v. 26-27) The leaders of the kingdom gathered around to see their state and were amazed! The fire had no power over them! It was as though they had never been in the furnace. They didn’t even smell like smoke.
    2. The king gave glory to their God for their deliverance. (v. 28-29)
    3. The king promoted them in his kingdom. (v. 30)
11. **Central Idea: Remaining true to God brought increased difficulty and glory to God.**
12. **Application**
    1. God did not receive glory from those who did bow. He received glory from those who took a stand. Is God receiving glory from your life?
    2. Notice that the Lord preserved them in the fire, not from the fire. He may do the same in your life. We like to be delivered from the trial, but it may be God’s will to sustain us through the trial.
    3. Remaining true to God will bring additional difficulty to your life, but also an opportunity to bring glory to God.
13. This was true in the lives of the first readers of Daniel. It was not easy to move back into the land of Israel and to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem. A brief reading of Ezra and Nehemiah demonstrates that it increased the difficulty of their lives. They faced resistance and persecution. Yet, it also brought glory to God.
14. This was true in the lives of the first Christians. Identifying with Christ brought increased difficulty to their lives. The fires of persecution burned against them. Yet, the Lord was with them and received glory from the lives of those who committed their all to Christ.
    1. Identify the heat that is coming to your life at this time.
15. How is adversity increasing against churches?
16. How is the enemy working to bring pressure against marriage and family?
17. How are things changing in the workplace? What “fiery furnaces” are heating up?
18. In what ways are students facing fiery trials in today’s schools and universities?
    1. Take responsibility for how you are responding to the heat.
19. Accept the fact that the fire reveals the level of your loyalty to Christ. It reveals what is in your heart. There is nothing like adversity that demonstrates what you really believe and value.
20. How are you thinking about the pressure that has come? Do you doubt God’s goodness and control? Are you wallowing in self-pity? What or who is ruling your heart as you face the fire?
    1. What does remaining true to God look like in your situation?
    2. Notice that they stood together. There may have only been three of them, but it certainly helped that they stood together. We are in the minority as believers. This gives all the more reason we need to firmly stand together.
    3. Look for evidence of God’s presence in your life situation.
21. Do you see ways in which God is with you?
22. Can others see Christ in you as a result of the heat in your life?
23. Does the way you are responding invite people to trust Christ?
24. What good could come from your situation?
25. What would it look like for God to get glory in your situation?

**Conclusion**

Times are changing in our land. Believers are facing greater pressure to conform in many ways. We must remain true to God! Others are observing how you respond. Will your response bring glory to God when the flames are burning higher? May the Lord find us faithful in the fire!