

Series: Stand Fast In the Lord

BURNING FIERY FURNACE

DANIEL 3

Text: Daniel 3:20

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²⁰ *And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into **the burning fiery furnace.***

Introduction:

This morning we began considering these three young men who too demonstrated Standing Fast in the Lord.

As we stated this passage speaks of:

Commitment

Character

Conviction

Consecration

Courage

It portrays to us fervent faith in a fiery furnace of three godly young men that obey God rather than man.

This is a powerful chapter that is relevant for us today.

We considered the Construction of the King, the Command of the King, and the Conspiracy of the People and the Confrontation of the King.

Note this evening:

Sermon Content:

1. THE CONDEMNATION OF THE KING (VS. 19-23)

Daniel 3:19-23

¹⁹ Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. ²⁰ And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. ²¹ Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. ²² Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that

took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

These young men did what was right, but were going to be punished for doing so.

It wasn't fair.

There may be times, however, that God allows us to unfairly suffer for doing right that He might bring future blessing to us.

As we will see, the fire of the furnace burned away the cords that bound them.

God uses trials to burn away the dross of sin in our lives and to help us mature and make us more like Him.

His promise to us is that all things work for our good if we love the Lord.

Remember what we read Romans 8 and James 1:

Romans 8:28-29

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

James 1:2-4

² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴ But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

The response of these three defiant men sent the king into a rage.

They were obeying a higher law than the king's.

He condemned them to a horrible death.

They were to be bound and burned alive in a fiery furnace.

This was a common punishment in Babylon.

Note Jeremiah 29:22:

Jeremiah 29:22

²² And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire;

In my mind I can hear the king screaming out the orders, "Heat the furnace seven times hotter than normal."

His face is as red as the flames.

By doing this, however, he destroyed the best men of his army.

It was the flames that killed his soldiers.

Understand:

When we lose our temper and get into rage, we too, do not think clearly.

We become very impatient just like this king who shot off an urgent death sentence.

Our anger has an effect upon those who are under our authority.

Quote:

“Anger that is created by our pride can cause us to make decisions that rob us of our best.”

In the case of the king, it was his best soldiers.

Illustration:

Our temper can cost us our job, our marriage, our health, our testimony and closeness with people we love.

When the king lost his temper, the Bible says his visage, his face or countenance was changed.

Daniel 3:19

*¹⁹ Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and **the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego:** therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.*

Understand:

Our countenance says a lot about what is going on in our lives.

Some have joy in their faces and others have despair.

There are several things that affect our countenance spoken of in the Bible:

- Personal Relationships With Friends

Proverbs 27:17

¹⁷ Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man **sharpeneth the countenance** of his friend.

- Positive Pleasure and Cheer

Proverbs 15:13

¹³ A merry heart maketh a **cheerful countenance**: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

- Panic and Terror

Daniel 5:5-6

⁵ In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. ⁶ Then **the king's countenance was changed**, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

Ezekiel 27:35

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee, and their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be **troubled in their countenance**.

Daniel 7:28

²⁸ *Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and **my countenance changed in me**: but I kept the matter in my heart.*

- Praise and a Positive Trust In the Lord

Psalm 42:11

¹¹ *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, **who is the health of my countenance, and my God.***

- Perverseness or Wickedness

Isaiah 3:8-9

⁸ *For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory. ⁹ **The shew of their countenance doth witness against them**; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.*

- Prudence or Wisdom

Ecclesiastes 8:1

¹ Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.

- Pride

Psalm 10:4

⁴ The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

Note not only the Condemnation of the King but also:

2. THE COMPANIONSHIP OF THE LORD (VS. 24-27)

Daniel 3:24-27

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

The furnaces were designed in such a way where a person could look inside of them.

Nebuchadnezzar was looking into the furnace to watch these guys burn.

He was totally taken off-guard by what he saw.

The Bible says that he was “astonied.

It means to be startled or alarmed.

We too would be startled or alarmed if we saw people walking in fire.

These men had committed their lives to the care and custody of the Lord and in this situation, God spared their lives.

The king sees four in the furnace and the fourth looked like the Son of God.

What a comfort to know that the Lord enters the fire with His people.

He went through fiery trials with many believers down through the ages.

He has promised “I will never leave thee or forsake thee.”

Note Psalms 23:4:

Psalm 23:4

*⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: **for thou art with me**; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Whether it was Paul in prison, Noah in the ark, Daniel in the den of lions, or John exiled on Patmos, as God was with them; God is with us in our furnace.

Illustration:

When a person is on fire, they tend to run in a panic.

These guys, however, are in no hurry at all. They are walking in the midst of the flames.

Their walk with the Lord in the fire was a time of peace and joy.

Remember:

God is with us in the good and the bad times.

Isaiah 43:2

² When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

The light of the furnace turned on the mental light bulb in Nebuchadnezzar's head.

He nears the entrance of the furnace, a dangerous place, and tells these men who are servants of the most high God to come on out.

They were not harmed at all.

The smell of smoke was not on their garments. Their ropes were burned, but nothing else.

God's power was demonstrated to all who witnessed what took place.

These three Hebrew men were not saved FROM the fiery furnace, they were saved IN it and preserved through it.

Though these men were preserved from the fiery furnace throughout history many have died for the cause of Christ.

Some believers were sown into the skins of wild beasts and fed to wild dogs.

Other Christians were dressed in shirts of wax, tied to axle trees, and set aflame in Nero's garden to illuminate his parties and feasts.

Polycarp, the pastor at Smyrna, desired one hour of prayer before his execution.

He prayed fervently. In fact, his guards repented for taking him into custody.

They demanded him to deny Christ.

This was his reply, *"Eighty-six years I have served Him. Never once has He wronged me. How shall I blaspheme my king who saved me?"*

At the stake, the flames encircled Polycarp like an arch without touching him.

The executioner then pierced him with a sword.

This leads us to briefly consider:

3. THE CONFESSION OF THE KING (VS. 28-30)

Daniel 3:28-30

²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

By taking a courageous stand for the Lord, the king sees the power of God.

By taking a standing fast in and for the Lord, these three men accomplished several things.

- They *magnified* their position. They stood out among all those around them.
- They *amplified* their message and *verified* they believed it because they were willing to die for what they proclaimed and believed.
- They *solidified* their obedience. They were determined to do what was right no matter what the cost.
- They *crucified* their fleshly desire of compromise even in the face of death.
- They *mystified* the king, creating curiosity by their refusal to bow to the image.
- They *glorified* the Lord by their trust in Him no matter what would happen.
- The people were *edified* as they witnessed the power of God's protection and Jehovah God was *identified* as the true God.

- The three were *ratified* or promoted by the king

King Nebuchadnezzar praised God and these three men.

Moments earlier, he was angry with them and attempted to burn them alive.

The Lord has a way of changing the hearts of people.

Close:

Nothing will show more accurately what we are than the way we meet our trials and difficulties.

The king saw that these men had something very real.

This is one reason why the Lord allows trials into our lives so that we might demonstrate to others our faith in Him.

People will watch your life in a trial probably more than any other time.

Trials and temptations may not weaken us, but they do reveal where we are weak so we can become strong.

The three young men were faithful because they were yielded.

They presented themselves voluntarily without any restraint.

They were an example of what the Bible calls a "living sacrifice" and an "example of the believers."

Romans 12:1

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

1 Timothy 4:12

¹² Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were godly examples.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were examples who stood fast in and with the Lord.

Understand:

You will not know the strength of your faith until it is tested.

A faith not tested is a faith that can't be trusted.