

**GOING WITH GOD**  
**Sermon Three**  
**“FAITH UNDER FIRE”**  
**Daniel 3**

At the beginning of this amazing journey with Daniel we saw in 1:8 that Daniel had resolved within his heart to go with God. A critical element of going with God is the element of faith because God’s Word tells us that when we go with God we walk not by sight but by faith. Going with God is about going in faith. Daniel and his friend’s faith in God would be the motivation for facing the challenges that would come with going with God. However God’s word says that our faith without works is dead, it is of no use. Daniel and his three friend’s faith had to be put to the test in order for it to produce the fruit God desired.

In our passage today we will witness just how the faith of Daniel’s three friends was tested under fire and how their faith

was able to change the hard heart of a mighty king. As a consequence of this they are mentioned in the “faith hall of fame in Hebrews 11:34. Do you walk by faith? Has your faith been tested and tried? Have you experienced the blessing of faith in action?

Let’s look at some of the valuable lessons we can learn about faith from these three young men.

**1. TRUE FAITH CONFRONTS THE CHALLENGE vs’s 1-12**

We do not know the amount of time that had passed between the interpretation of the dream and the King’s instruction to build the metallic image but there is some speculation that a period of twenty years had passed. It is amazing to me how foolish the heart of man can be. Having experienced the greatness of Daniel’s God the King gives in very quickly to his own pride and sets himself up in opposition to the one true God.

Ever since the sin of Adam and Eve man has desired to be like God and indeed replace him without much success. This is indeed the root of all sin. The New Age says to us that God is within each of us. Having conquered many different nations the king was concerned that they were not all loyal to him and so he tries to unify them through a common act of worship. He sets himself up as God. The word worship is used eleven times in this chapter and is therefore a key theme. The challenge to the faith of these three men was simply this. Choose this day who you will worship, God or man. In Exod 20:3,5 God says in the Ten Commandments, “You shall have no other gods before me...You shall not bow down to them or worship them..”. Here I am reminded of the words of Joshua as he spoke to the people of God in Jos 24:15, “choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..” Their faith in God came into conflict and confronted the pride and arrogance of a sinful man. Our faith in God alone if it is real will always have the effect of confronting

the faith of the world. These three men stood tall whilst the rest of the land bowed in worship to the king and thereby challenged the command of the king. True faith always confronts the faith of this world.

## **2. TRUE FAITH CONFESSES THE LORD vs's 13-18**

The King confronts the three men about their failure to obey his command and they respond by confessing their faith in the Lord alone. They make two very significant statements in this regard. In verse 16 they respond to the king by noting, “..we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter...” What an amazing statement. In saying this they were affirming that they did not recognise the king's authority in this matter whilst recognising a higher authority. True faith confesses the Lord as the sole authority that we seek to obey and please. We so easily fall into the trap of pleasing man when it is God alone we should seek to please. It is amazing how they got their focus

and priorities so right. They were able to make this amazing statement because of their next comments. In verse 17 they note of the Lord, “the God we serve is able to save us...but even if he does not...we will not serve you gods or worship the image of God you have set up”. This is the essence of faith. Firstly it does not presume on God. Note they don’t say God WILL save them but only that He is ABLE to save them. Faith is believing in God’s ability to do the impossible. Secondly faith is not affected by the outcome. Even though God may not choose to save them even then they would not worship the image. Our faith in the Lord should never be undermined because we did not get the outcome we desired of the Lord. Faith recognises and confesses the Lord’s ability and then accepts the Lord will in the matter. Here I am reminded of the words of Job about the Lord in 13:15, “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in Him”. Job knew that God was able to save him and he prayed for this without seemingly any result and yet his faith did not waiver.

Our faith is dependent on who God is and not on our circumstances. Habbakkuk puts this so well in 3:17-18, “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour”.

### **3. TRUE FAITH CONFOUNDS THE ENEMY vs’s 19-25**

I’m sure that the king really expected the three men to give in to his command and when their faith resists his demands verse 19 says his attitude toward them changed. His pride and ego had been dented and he responded with anger because he realised that he could not control these men. True faith confounds the unbeliever because it operates outside the bounds of normal rational thinking and in doing so the impossible is achieved. The furnace was intended to destroy these three men but look

what faith achieves in the midst of the furnace. The first thing I notice is that their faith sets them free in the middle of the furnace. Notice in verse 20 that the three men are tied up before being thrown into the furnace and verse 23 says that they were firmly tied when they fell into the blazing furnace. In verse 25 however as the king looks into the furnace he notices that the men are not only unharmed by the fire but they are also unbound. The only thing the fire did was to set them free from the bonds that held them earlier. This is what happens when we exercise faith. It sets us free from the restrictions that the world puts on us so that with a mustard seed of faith we are able to move mountains. What an amazing reality. With faith in God there are no restrictions the world and man can put on us. Secondly the furnace revealed the presence and power of the living God. True faith acknowledges the presence of God and releases the power of God so that these men are unharmed. Here I am reminded of God's promise through the prophet Isaiah in

Isaiah 43:2, "...I will be with you...when you walk through the fire you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze". True faith and God's response to true faith always confounds the enemy. The effect is that the king once again affirms the power of God as well as the faith and trust that these three men had put in Him. By one act of faith these three Jewish men became witnesses of the true and living God to the entire Babylonian Empire!

#### **4. TRUE FAITH CONFIRMS THE PROMISES vs's 26-30**

God had promised his people that even though they were in exile he would not leave them. It is on the promise that these three men exercised their faith. When we exercise faith not in ourselves or others but in the multitude of promises contained in the Word of God, we discover that our faith confirms his promises. What an encouragement this story must have been to all the other Jews in exile in Babylon. It said that God had

indeed not left them but that he was still a God who responded to their acts of faith in Him. When we are blessed with great testimonies of faith by ordinary people like an Angus Buchan and others, our hope in the Lord is renewed and we are more courageous in taking our own steps of faith.

## **CONCLUSION**

If we choose to go with God we need to go n faith and not by sight. We go by faith we need to accept that our faith at times will be tested by fire. Far from destroying us, the fire of testing will set us free from the bonds of the world that holds us captive and we will experience both the presence and the power of God in ways that we have never experienced before in our lives. The journey of faith is never and easy one but it is a journey of blessing. Are you experiencing that blessing in your life?