

# Faith in the Fire

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Today we are in Daniel chapter 3. Next week we'll begin going verse by verse, chapter by chapter! But today we're in Daniel chapter 3. Now normally I will only preach on a handful of verses. Well today I'm preaching on the whole chapter, which means that your endurance is going to be tested as we stand for the reading of God's Word and your stamina is going to be tested here. So let's stand as we honor the reading of God's Word. Daniel chapter 3.

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold whose height was 60 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 province to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then the satraps and the prefects and the governors and the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the province gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And the herald proclaimed aloud, you are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning, fiery furnace. Therefore, as soon as all the people heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Therefore, at that time, certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, O King, live forever. You, O King, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music shall fall down and worship the golden image. And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning, fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O King, pay no attention to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar, in furious rage, commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? Now, if you are ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning, fiery furnace.

And who is the God who will deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, 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. Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to cast them into the burning, fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning, fiery furnace. Because the king's order was urgent and the service furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach,

[ 4 : 45 ] Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning, fiery furnace. 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 the son of the gods. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near the door of the burning, fiery furnace. He declared, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out and come here.

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, and the prefects, and the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over their bodies of these men. The hair of their heads were not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own god. Therefore, I make a decree, any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated?

You know, I'd be interested to know, of all the reference verses that I've used as I've preached to you these past five years, which ones have been referenced the most. You know, I wouldn't be surprised if Romans chapter 1 verses 18 through 32 was at the top or near the top of that list, probably because of how often we need to look to that passage of Scripture to help us make sense of all the things that don't make sense to us that are happening right now in our culture and in our world.

I want to read that passage to you. I won't make you stand. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile and their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies amongst themselves because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

[ 8 : 19 ] Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature. And the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another. Men committing shameless acts with men receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They were full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.

They are gossip, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them.

When a people persistently reject God, deny God, and turn away from God, the consequence is His wrath as a result of their spurning His grace. In this case, God's wrath works in this way.

He gives them over to do what they want to do by removing His gracious restraints. I think a good example of that is those who have recently called for the defunding of the police.

Those who did that soon found out that police officers no longer had a visible presence in their community, and people start misbehaving whenever there is no one to hold them accountable around, whenever there's no longer to have a presence to keep them in check and to protect them

and to protect others from harm. We are living in a Romans 1 culture, and we're at the point where not only has sin been normalized, it's being applauded and praised by the majority.

[10:32] And those who haven't lent their praise to these things are beginning to be identified and singled out and pressured to join them. And that pressure is coming in the form often of cancellation.

If you're not with us, they say, then you're against us. And if you're against us, then you're an enemy. And if you're an enemy, then you must either surrender your convictions and adopt ours or be silenced.

I'm sure you've felt that pressure, and I'm sure that you've been tempted to compromise your convictions as a result. Peer pressure is a powerful tool. And holding convictions that oppose the majority and put you in the minority is not comfortable.

So how should we, as Christians living in a culture that has normalized sin and applauds it, respond? We can turn to many passages of Scriptures to answer that question, but today we're looking at Daniel chapter 3.

And the example of these three men whose faith in God was tested, quite literally, by fire.

[11:51] These men were men of courage, conviction, and commitment. And you know what? We need more men. We need more people like that today because they are growing in an ever-decreasing number. They are in short supply.

So the main idea for this morning's sermon is this. God's people must stand on their convictions and refuse to compromise. God's people must stand on their convictions and refuse to compromise. The book of Daniel was written in 605 B.C. after Babylon conquered Jerusalem. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and other Jews were captured, and they were taken to live in Babylon. And that was a common practice back then. You captured a nation. You purged it of its best and its brightest citizens. You brought them to your capital, and you put them to work for you.

And so these men were exiled from their home. They were forced to live in a foreign land, serving a ruler, a government, a people who did not share their religion, did not know their Scriptures, which their convictions were based upon.

[13:08] I'm sure we're all familiar with the phrase, courage under fire. Well, in this passage, we see three men who demonstrated courage in the fire.

And their faith in the fire serves as an encouragement to us today as we live in these times, and they teach us how to respond to a culture that has been given over by God to a depraved mind. So there are five truths that God's people need to understand from this passage that will help them not compromise their convictions. The first truth is this.

God's people will be challenged to compromise their convictions. They will be challenged to compromise their convictions. Daniel 3 obviously follows on the heels of Daniel chapter 2.

Though we don't know for sure how much time had elapsed between the two chapters, the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament, indicates that the events of chapter 3 took place in the 18th year of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

[14:17] That would mean that by this time, the temple in Jerusalem, the place where God was worshipped, had been destroyed by the Babylonians. And for a third time, Jews were gathered and transported to Babylon.

In Daniel chapter 2, Daniel interpreted a dream that had been troubling Nebuchadnezzar. It was a dream about a massive statue.

In the dream, the statue had a head of gold, which Daniel interpreted and said that that symbolized Nebuchadnezzar and his empire.

That he had received his kingdom, his place, his power, according to God's purpose. But he was only the head of that statue.

Other empires would follow. But Nebuchadnezzar ignored that part. And though he praised Daniel's God in chapter 2, verse 46, when we get to chapter 3, verses 1 through 7, it appears that Nebuchadnezzar was no longer content to rule temporarily.

[15:28] He wanted it all. And so he commissioned a statue to be constructed to stand permanently as an expression of his greatness and of his glory.

It was about 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. To help you get a mental picture of that, a basketball court is about 94 feet long. So this is a pretty big statue.

But it's interesting to note that the word image appears more than 10 times in this chapter. It's also important to note that in these first seven verses, there are six references to Nebuchadnezzar's setting it up.

So here's what's happening. This is what God wants us to see. In Daniel chapter 2, verse 21, God had declared that he changes times and seasons.

He removes kings and he sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. And though Nebuchadnezzar had said to Daniel in chapter 2, verse 47, that truly your God is God of gods and Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery, it's clear from his actions in chapter 3 that Nebuchadnezzar doesn't really know, doesn't really worship God.

[16:49] He's set up an image to be worshiped, which is a violation of the first commandment. And in setting it up, what he's saying is that his confession back then didn't really match his convictions.

Nebuchadnezzar didn't really believe that God, the God of Israel, was all that great. And so by setting up the statue and ordering it to be worshiped, Nebuchadnezzar was playing the role of God himself.

He was challenging God's authority and his worthiness of worship. In setting up the image, Nebuchadnezzar was setting up a showdown with God, though he was so sure of himself and he was so drunk with power that I don't think that he may have even realized that that was what he was doing.

Then he invites all the influential people in his empire to come, all the movers and all the shakers to come and to worship this image that he has set up.

He also gathered people from all the nations, all the nations that he had conquered and all of his musicians. And he used intimidation to ensure that everything went as planned.

[18:01] And he challenged them that if anyone did not fall down and worship his image that he had set up, they would die. Now, while we may not face the same exact kind of challenge in our culture, either worship what we worship or die, there are many cultures today where that is the case.

But you can be certain that our culture has set up some idols that they expect you to bow down to, that they have challenged you to bow down to, and that they expect you not to challenge.

The idol of tolerance, the idol of gender identity, of homosexuality, of critical race theory, etc. I could go on. All the things that will get you silenced on social media if you say anything to speak out against them.

And what they do and what they've done is they enlist, like Nebuchadnezzar, influencers to promote your conformity and obedience to them.

You know, our society used to not care what our best athletes or who our most famous celebrities voted for. We used to not care what ideologies the businesses and companies we purchased from endorsed.

[19:25] But you know, every time our athletes and celebrities gather for some kind of award show, it becomes a platform for them to tell us what to believe.

And because people worship what our athletes and celebrities have, money, fame, and good looks, we go along with it.

We're tempted to go along with it. They agree with what they say. What they say is beautiful. What they say is wise. What they say is good because, well, they have influence.

And not only do these challenges to come to us externally, we're also challenged internally.

John Calvin said the human heart is an idle factory. We're perpetually tempted to take good things that God has created and make them ultimate things.

[20:22] We use them for meaning and purpose. We worship them when we do so. But they aren't God. And they will disappoint you. As Augustine famously said, you, speaking of God, have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.

God's people will be challenged to compromise their convictions. You are challenged every day to compromise your beliefs.

And in that way, we are like these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The second truth, God's people will be criticized for refusing to compromise their convictions.

God's people will be criticized for refusing to compromise their convictions. And so when the time came to bow down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, three men

remained standing.

Now, it's interesting to me to note that these three men didn't organize a protest. They didn't pass around a petition for people to sign.

[ 21 : 31 ] They didn't shout in defiance of what was going on. They didn't say or do anything that disrespected Nebuchadnezzar as a person in any way. They simply remained standing when everyone else fell down.

This was a quiet and humble act of civil disobedience. But it didn't escape notice from some certain men who, verse 8 says, maliciously accused them.

In Hebrew, that phrase literally says that they ate their pieces. They sank their teeth into them. They ate their lunch.

They chewed them out. They're saying to Nebuchadnezzar, these people are a problem, O king. And if you let them get away with it, if you let them continue on with this, if you let them stand, then it's going to be an issue for us and for you.

I believe that when people know deep down that what they are doing is wrong, they seek justification from others.

[ 22 : 40 ] And if others won't support their beliefs and their actions, it makes them feel guilty. And they don't like to feel guilty. All that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did was stand.

Everybody else fell down. All they did was stand. That's it. Remember when I was in seventh grade, we used to have something called see you at the pole.

I don't know if they still are doing that or not. Good. I'm glad that they are. But what we did is Christians from, Christian students from our school, we gathered together early in the morning. We met around like seven o'clock and we formed a circle around the flagpole that was at the front of the school. We had a couple of youth pastors there and we were there for the purpose to do this, to pray for our fellow students, to pray for our teachers, to ask for God's blessing upon our school and everyone inside it and his protection.

And that was it. Then I got to my first hour class and it was as if something horrible had happened. Now, all the students were talking about what were they doing out there?

[ 23 : 55 ] Were they worshiping the flagpole? And then they were trying to figure out who was out there around the flagpole and one of my classmates recognized me out there and he said, Mike!

Mike was out there worshiping the flagpole? And I remember thinking, you know, all we did was gather together to pray for you.

That was it. But you know, people should know that you are a Christian and you should not be surprised when they criticize you for it.

Third truth, God's people will be coerced to compromise their convictions. God's people will be coerced to compromise their convictions. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are brought before King Nebuchadnezzar now for questioning.

He wants to know if the reports he's heard are true, if the charges are correct, that they in fact stood when everyone else fell down to worship his statue. But before he allowed them to answer his questions, he gave them a second chance in verse 15.

[ 25 : 07 ] Maybe he suspected that their accusers were simply jealous of them because they held important positions in his government. Maybe he was trying to provide a way out for them in order to avoid the political mess that their standing had caused.

If they would just seek his forgiveness, if they would just bow down the next time to his idol, all would be well. But he makes sure that they understand the consequences if they didn't.

And so he's trying to coerce them here. He's basically saying, you know, just go with the flow. What's the big deal? Bow down.

Don't cause problems. And you'll keep your jobs. And you'll preserve your lives. But at the end of verse 15, Nebuchadnezzar asked the question that is really key to this entire chapter.

He asked them this, and who is the God who will deliver you out of my hand? To say that Nebuchadnezzar thought highly of himself is an understatement.

[ 26 : 19 ] But when we read this passage, you know, we don't naturally incline ourselves to identify with Nebuchadnezzar, do we? But perhaps we should.

Do you sometimes exalt yourself and your feelings and your opinions over what God has said in his word? Do you seek to draw attention to what you've done?

Are you trying to preserve your own kingdom? You know, sometimes I think we're convinced that we are doing something for God when reality is we're really doing it for ourselves.

Do you often act as if your destiny is in your hands instead of God's hands? We should want to be more like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, but in order to do that, we must first ascertain our own level of humility before God.

Asking ourselves these questions, who do I trust? Who do I trust to deliver me from sin? Who do I trust to deliver me from my pride? Who do I trust when everything seems to come undone in my life?

[ 27 : 31 ] When I'm under pressure, who do I turn to first for help? Will I let the world coerce me into doubting who God has revealed himself to me to be or not?

The world will try to coerce you to compromise your convictions. Next, we see this truth that God's people must be courageous to resist compromising their convictions.

They must be courageous. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not trust in themselves and they would not be coerced by Nebuchadnezzar despite how powerful he was.

Even if it cost them everything, they would not bow. In fact, they seemed glad to answer that question.

Notice how in their answer they show respect for Nebuchadnezzar, but their true devotion is unquestioned. Verses 16 through 18. O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter, right?

[ 28 : 41 ] Because for them the question had already been settled in their minds and their hearts a long time ago. 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, because our God is greater than you and our faith is in him, not you.

But then they say, 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.

So what they're saying is if the choice is to worship the gods of this world and be praised and applauded by men in this life for doing that or to worship the one true and living God and be burned to a crisp for it, it's really no choice to us at all.

We will not bow down. In Acts chapter 4, Peter and John are brought before the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem.

You remember that? Jesus has been crucified. Jesus has been resurrected. He has ascended to heaven. The church has been born. These two men are prominent leaders within it. They're preaching and they're teaching about Jesus and the Jews who crucified Christ didn't like it and brought them to them to order them to stop it.

[ 30 : 04 ] Acts 19 says, but Peter and John answered them, whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.

In other words, yeah, we're not going to do that. We're not going to stop teaching. We're not going to stop preaching about Christ because if you know God, if you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, then you know that what you have received from him is infinitely more valuable than anything that this world would have to offer you and you will not make that trade.

And those convictions that you have will make you courageous to live your life in praise and worship of him alone always.

Your convictions are the things that you believe. They are unshakable beliefs. They are beliefs that no situation or circumstance can change.

And your convictions determine your mission. By mission, I mean your purpose. These three men were men of conviction and I believe they saw their situation as a means to carry out their mission and they did so courageously.

[ 31 : 24 ] And so we can glean their convictions from the answer that they gave to Nebuchadnezzar in refusing to bow down. They're saying we trust in God's power and protection and entrust whatever happens to us in this life to his providential plan.

We are convicted of that. We are convicted that we will not be coerced by popular opinion to disobey God. We are willing to lose everything if it comes to that because even though we don't pretend to know God's plan and purpose and everything, we know that he is good, we know that he is better.

Whether we live or die, we will worship God and he will be glorified whatever the case might be. And you know what an amazing demonstration to the nations that Nebuchadnezzar had gathered. He had collected the nations to himself. This is a declaration on the part of these three men of their absolute trust in God.

Deliverance and rescue was not what they were after but to glorify God who was due their worship. They were men of conviction. Those convictions determined their mission and as a result of refusing to bow they stood to testify to the people of the world that God is better than anything else in this world.

[ 32 : 47 ] Nate Saint died in 1956 when he was martyred as a missionary by a tribe of indigenous people in Ecuador.

Prior to his death he penned these words. The way I see it we ought to be willing to die. In the military we were taught that to obtain our objectives we had to be willing to be expendable. Missionaries must face that same expendability. Every one of us whom Christ has saved is called and commanded by him to live a life that is a cross-bearing life.

our mission isn't self-preservation but a life lived in service to him a life of self-denial and promotion of Christ and all that we say and all that we do we must ask ourselves how will Christ be glorified in this?

Cowardice is often displayed in people whose conviction is only self-preservation. Courageous people are those whose convictions and missions seeks greater things than that.

[ 34 : 15 ] Jesus Christ did not seek to preserve his life when he walked this earth. He gave it. He expended it on the cross that by faith in him we shall live.

And if you know him you know you can trust him because you know that he is worth it and you know the price that he was willing to pay and did pay for you.

So now the fifth truth the fifth truth God's people can be confident that the Lord will honor their faith in the fire.

Once again Nebuchadnezzar the head of state the most powerful and influential man in the known world at that time was filled with fury and he ordered the furnace to be heated so intensely that the men that threw Shadrach Meshach and Abednego into the furnace were consumed and killed by the fire.

Remember not too long ago those weeks where we had over 100 degree temperatures I remember being out at Jack's game sitting in metal bleachers and the sun just melting us you know imagine that but then also being like right in front of a bonfire that would be really uncomfortable right that's nothing compared to the heat that was contained in this furnace most likely the furnace had an opening at the top where these men were dropped in and then on the ground level there was a window or an opening so that you could see what was going on inside and what Nebuchadnezzar thought he was going to see was a cremation these men would be incinerated and remember by this time Nebuchadnezzar had soundly defeated Israel he had leveled their temple it appeared to him that both he and his gods were superior vastly superior to the god these Jewish men worshipped and their immediate incineration would be proof of that but there was a problem they didn't die and they were no longer bound and they were walking around and amazing as all of that was though three men were thrown into the furnace a fourth man had joined them in the fire one who

[ 36 : 57 ] Nebuchadnezzar described as being like a son of the gods who was that fourth man spoiler alert later later in verse 28 Nebuchadnezzar identified him as an angel but I think there is a better theological answer than the one that this pagan king provided some theologians say this is a theophany a theophany is a visible manifestation of God's presence and I believe that but I believe more than that I believe that this is a Christophany a pre-incarnate appearance of the second person of the Trinity Jesus Christ the Son of God and I believe that it was Christ who met them in the fire and that is awesome while God did not deliver these men from the fire he met them in the fire and then he delivered them out of the fire and

Nebuchadnezzar sees all of this and he's astonished he called them out of the flames and verse 27 reveals that all the influencers all the all the nations all the people who were summoned to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image marveled at a greater wonder than what they had come to see that these three men had had their lives preserved not a hair not a thread of their clothes had been singed and they didn't even smell like fire I think that's amazing you ever go to a campfire you know how you just smell like a campfire forever they didn't smell like it as a result of their faith and their

courage and their simple act of civil disobedience just refusing to fall down when everybody else did God used that simple action that led to a universal decree from Nebuchadnezzar hey don't say anything don't you speak any evil ever again about this God who has delivered his faithful servants from the fire so what do we learn from this whenever you stand for the truth whenever you stand for your convictions in Christ you may and you probably will face fiery trials but take heart because Christ is already there waiting for you Charles Spurgeon said beloved you must go into the furnace if you would have the nearest and dearest dealings with Christ Jesus 1st Peter 4 12 through 14 we get these words of encouragement from the apostle beloved do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you but rejoice in so far as you share Christ sufferings that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed if you are insulted for the name of Christ you are blessed because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you so here's the main point of application your convictions will determine your mission and inform your vision what were the convictions of Shadrach Meshach and Abednego there is one God he is the only God and we will only worship him what was their mission we are going to make him known we are going to make him known in our lives people knew by their actions that these men were different that they followed and served a different God and they knew where they were going they had vision their vision tells you where we're going hey we're going into this furnace! what idol you might be worshipping question number two Shadrach Meshach and Abednego faced enormous pressure to conform how does our culture pressure believers to reject God and conform to the status quo you need to be prepared for that you need to know what your convictions are so that when the time comes like these three men you already know how you're going to respond in your refusal to conform to the status quo and then finally how should the presence of [ 42 : 20 ] Christ in the furnace affect the way you face temptations to compromise your convictions how does knowing that Christ is there already waiting to be there with you to deliver you how should that strengthen you and encourage you not to compromise let's pray Lord God we live in a time we read Romans 1 18-32 and it's just clear that that the world that we live in the culture that we live in it just matches that passage perfectly unfortunately and God I know for many of us that is that's heartbreaking it's confusing it's frustrating we long for times when things were different but Lord this is our time and this is our place you have called us to this moment to be your people in this culture and so

God I pray that we would take courage from your word that we would be like Shadrach Meshach and Abednego that we would refuse to bow that God we would do so in a way that honors and glorifies you that we would be prepared to handle whatever fiery trial may come as a result of that and that we would still refuse to bow knowing Lord that you have already delivered us from sin and from death and knowing Lord that we have a mission to proclaim you and that gives us the opportunity to do it and understanding that you have a place prepared for us in heaven and that we aren't going to trade that for anything in this world so God I pray that we would be men and women teenagers and children who are marked by our conviction and our dedication not to bow to anyone or anything other than you we ask these things in Jesus name!  
Amen! Amen!