

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

June 3, 2018

Scripture: Daniel 3:13-18 (NIV)

13 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, 14 and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? 15 Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Congregational Prayer: “Our Father”

Our Father, Which Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven. Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread, And Forgive Us Our Trespases, As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil. For Thine Is The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory. Forever And Ever. Amen

Message: “The 3:16 Trail: Correct Answers”

Introduction:

- Christian band MercyMe has a song entitled “Even If.” The words are:
“I know You're able and I know You can, Save through the fire with
Your mighty hand, But even if You don't, My hope is You alone.”
- What an incredible response to adversity. God is the God who cares for us, loves us, and rescues us in times of trouble, but even if He does not do things the way that we would dream, we are to be serving Him,

loving Him, and expecting wonderful things from His mighty hand of grace. Today, let’s take a look at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to see their story of how God did just that.

Part 1: 3:16 Trail and Bowing

- The 3:16 Trail is about the 3rd chapter and 16th verse of many of the books of the Bible being so amazing. We immediately found God’s plan of salvation, then a God who watched over us at all times. Next a God who controls supernaturally, before we saw apostasy, and a God who sends us to our families to tell the truth about Him. Then we saw a God who takes away confusion replacing it with peace, and finally a God who gives us two choices – life or death.
- Today, we have story of Faith in Action. The Book of Daniel is about how the people of Israel became slaves because they have fallen away and rejected God, because there has been more apostasy, and lies, and deceptions about God. God finally allowed the people to be overrun by foreigners who exiled them in Babylon.
- The Babylonians believed in vicious military takeovers followed by assimilation. If you watch any of the Star Trek series, the Babylonians are akin to the Borg, whose motto is “Resistance is futile. Prepare to be

assimilated.” Therefore, after the Babylonians had taken over the Jews, they started turning the captives into good Babylonians. This is what Chapter 1 of the Book of Daniel is about. In verse 3 Israelites from the Royal family and nobility were brought to the king’s court, and those that were eligible were chosen to serve in the king’s palace [v. 4].

Among these that was chosen was Daniel, the author of this book, and three of his friends: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Chapter 2 of the book of Daniel is about a dream of the Babylonian king, and how Daniel interpreted this dream through the will of God, thus moving them into higher places of authority (v. 49).

- According to the Oxford dictionary, the definition of the word “hubris” is: “arrogant pride or presumption...” Pride in itself is not a bad thing. We should all have pride in the work that we do, in the way that we conduct our self before the Lord, and in the way that we carry ourselves as we proclaim Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Proper pride allows us to do our jobs and duties well, and to make sure that we are doing them for God’s glory. But, excessive pride, pride that is only interested in the guy in the mirror, is hubris. It is hubris that leads us astray. It is hubris that leads us into greater and greater trouble.

- Daniel chapter 3 is primarily a chapter about hubris. Take a look at verse one – a 90 foot high, 9 foot wide statue of gold of himself! Can you imagine a statue taller than our steeple on this Church made in your own image? Can you imagine how much gold that would take? How long would take to fashion just such an image?

- Now, to be fair to Nebuchadnezzar, most of the world deified their kings, seeing them as a God. And Nebuchadnezzar had successfully overran nation after nation, and managed to create a huge empire. But seriously, a 90 foot statue of gold to yourself! He is so full of himself that he commanded the people to worship it [v.5).

- Now look at verses 8-11. In comes the mutterers and the complainers, the tattle-tailers of their day. Notice the righteous indignation as they stand before this prideful man. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are their targets, and these men are in trouble. These three get called up before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar reminds them that they are supposed to worship his image or be thrown into the blazing furnace (v. 15). And look at the challenge that he throws at the end of verse 15:
“Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

Nebuchadnezzar is saying essentially this: I am all-powerful, I am able

to do whatever I want, and nothing and no one will be able to stop me from harming you in any way that I wish. Especially your God.

- We hear this sort of language today. We hear this type of speech in our world now. Our leaders today have an arrogance that is much like Nebuchadnezzar that is quick to suggest that no god nor any one thing will be able to stop the great and powerful “Wizards of Oz” that are in our world today. And our response is that we are supposed to be in fear, and in submission to all these power-plays in our world today.
- Let me assure you of this: there is no one more powerful than our God. There is nothing more powerful than the God of the Universe. Let me assure you of this: when you have the Lord Jesus Christ in your life, in your heart, guiding your soul, you have the greatest power ever. Nothing compares to our God. No one is greater than our God. No one is able to come anywhere near to His might and ability. The gods of this world are powerless. The gods of this world are human-made, or from Satan. The gods of this world are nothing compared to the One true God. We are to submit to human authorities, as the Bible says in 1 Peter 2:13, but know this: when they are opposing God, walking away from the truth of our God, and standing in opposition to God and His beloved people, we

must take a stand. Once again, let me remind you that elections are coming up this week in this province. It is a privilege to be able to go and vote, to stand for what is right.

- This goes back to Daniel chapter 3. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego now have a choice to make: are they going to bow down, or are they going to stand up? Will they give in to the evil, earthly ruler, or will they show their true allegiance to the Almighty God? Will they buckle under the pressure of this world [after all, it’s just a simple act to bow one’s knee], or will they stand up for what is right? What would you do? In what position would you be in the next 2 to 3 seconds? Would you walk away from all that you believe and submit in fear to an earthly man, or would you maintain your integrity before the God that you love and honour? If someone came into this Church right now and said: “Walk away from God or die,” would you be hitting the door would you be standing firm in the name of Jesus Christ? Here’s a tougher question: if the threat was against your children or someone else that you love, would you still maintain your integrity before God and others? As the end times get closer, this will be a certainty, as it was for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Part 2: The Correct Answer

- Question: If you are right, but you're the only one who knows that you are right, how do you react? When you know that you are the only one in the room that knows the truth, what do you do next? When it is clear that you, and you alone, are the only one that can speak righteousness into a godless situation, do you run, or do you take a stand?
- Notice that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego don't seem to hesitate at all. We don't know which one speaks in our 3:16 verse for today, but notice they are bold but respectful: "*O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.*" They are about to take a stand. They are about to speak the truth. They are about to demonstrate righteousness in a godless situation.
- Whenever you see the words "but" or "if" in the Bible be ready to see something amazing. Look at verse 17: "*If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O King.*" What a strong assertion. What a strong statement of faith. What a strong stand against evil. Our God will rescue us from your hand. And verse 18: "*But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship*

the image of gold you have set up."

- God can and does do amazing things. God can and does intervene strongly in this world. God can and does throw away the natural to create the supernatural. But, even if He doesn't, we are to be men and women of faith. God does His will in His time in His way for His glory.
- In this incredible story, the three emerge from the fiery furnace without even smelling smoky, much to the amazement of the king (v. 26).

Conclusion:

- Let me read Romans 8:28 (NIV) before we conclude: "*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*" This stop on the 3:16 trail is so important for all of us for one reason: it's time to draw a line. It's time for us to stand up for what is right. It's time to be men and women of the truth. Is time for us to stop cowering, and to boldly stand before unrighteousness, abusive power, evil words, and satanic notions, and even the subtle but devious wrong. We must be prepared to give the correct answer. And even if our God does not intervene and show His power and His might, we must all choose to serve, follow and honour The Lord for He is mighty and does all things for our good.