



Devoted: But If Not

Daniel 3:8-18

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."

What will you do?

Saying "No"

- ? When is it okay to defy the government in place?
- ? How do you reconcile Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's decision against Romans 13:1-2? How can one know when to obey and when to defy?
 - o *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.*
- ? We may say that we should defy the government when they go against God. We must, however, remember the current season we are going through regarding vaccines and mandates. The answer is not always black and white. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
- ? What's the difference between toleration and celebration?
- ? Is intolerance ever appropriate? Explain.

Biblical faith is trust in God's sovereignty and goodness without demanding the outcome I want.

How to Protect Ourselves When We Have to Say “No”

- ? Value nothing more than the truth.
 - Is truth always black and white? Why or why not?
- ? Be empowered by biblical faith.
 - Are you an “if” faith person or an “if not” person of faith? Be truthful. What does it take to become an “if not” person of faith?
 - Trusting God isn’t an issue of commitment. It’s an issue of belief. Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - “If” faith wants the on-demand miracles. For example: “If I just believe enough, it will trigger God to give me what I want. If it doesn’t happen, somebody’s at fault.”
 - “If not” faith (see verse 18) believes without conditions. True biblical faith is trust in God’s sovereignty and goodness without demanding the outcome we want.
 - New Testament prophecy: How is God speaking to you? Why is it very important to distinguish between Old and New Testament prophecy?
 - Daniel and his friends were courageous in the face of fear. Are you experiencing similar circumstances? What are you going to do?
- ? Be strengthened with biblical courage.
 - The 4th Man
 - The spirit of Jesus is in you. Do you fully realize the power of the Holy Spirit in you? Why or why not?
 - What will you do when you have to say “no”?
 - Do you believe we’re in the final hours? Use the Bible to make your case.
 - Other than the three pieces of armor mentioned, what weapons are essential in gospel victory?

Biblical courage is obeying despite fear, with the certain knowledge that Jesus will be with you.

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 insofar as you share Christ’s 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. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

1 Peter 4:12-19

- ? How does the discipline of prayer and fasting help one to prepare for an overwhelming crisis? How does this discipline help us to hear and discern the voice of God with greater clarity?
- ? Why is control or the *illusion* of control such a powerful motivating factor in our everyday lives? Since the future is unknown, how does one find comfort in personal control and how does one, through prayer and fasting, relinquish control?