

## Knowing My Purpose Pt 3

### I am in Service for God

- After Joshua had led Israel into the Promise Land, fighting and winning many battles, before he died he gathered the people together and he addressed them saying > **Josh 24:14-15**- “**as for me and my house we will serve the Lord**”, that’s the part of the verse most people remember. What I like about this chapter is the testimony it gives about Joshua and the influence that he had upon everyone who he was around > **Josh 24:29-31**- all the days of Joshua and the elders whom he led Israel followed the path of the Lord Wow!
- This should also be our attitudes as well when it comes to living for and serving the Lord, that no matter what anyone else is doing I am going to serve the Lord in such a way that if you are going to be around me then you are going to serve Him too or there is going to be a rift. Now that is not a popular thing to say these days, as we are in a time when society says we are to get along with one another no matter what, and if you have to compromise what scripture says and what you believe then that is what you should do in the name of unity.
- There is a wonderful story found in the book of Daniel, and interestingly enough it deals with many of the same obstacles all of us face when it comes to our service to The Lord. **Dan 1:5-8** Daniel a teenager who’s been taken from his parents, his homeland and everything that he’d known, is told that in order to succeed he had to be renamed, and re-educated, as to how to think, how to eat, and how to worship.
- But Daniel although young quickly understood what the Babylonians were really trying to do, to get him to forget all about what he had been taught about The Lord. This is a test for all of us as well, as we are whether you know it or not, are being told what you should do in order to be accepted and successful in this world, its called being “**Conformed**”. **Rom 12:1-2** warns us not to be conformed to this world, a conformer is one who’s life is controlled by pressure from without, but a transformer is one who’s life is controlled by power from within
- In order to do that Daniel had to “**purpose**” in his heart, that means he determined in his heart that he wasn’t going to give in to the outside pressure that was being applied to him and his friends to be like the Babylonians. **Prov 4:23** says we are to keep our hearts with all diligence, in doing so we’ll have a heart that **loves the Lord, trusts the Lord, obeys the Lord**, and has no problem making choices that **please the Lord**, even if it displeases others
- **V9-20** the person taking care of them didn’t want to honor their requests of eating like Hebrews and not Babylonians because if they start to look unhealthy it will be bad for his health as he would be killed as it was his duty to take care of them. But notice God gave them favor, **1<sup>st</sup>** with the eunuch, and **2<sup>nd</sup>** in their appearance, **3<sup>rd</sup>** in their understanding.

- I want you to fast forward twenty years later, its one thing to serve the Lord when your young but what about when you get older, and the person who led you to the Lord and was such a strong example for the Lord is no longer around! Dan 3:4-7 King Nebuchadnezzar has set up an image that was made of pure gold that stood 90ft. tall and 9ft. wide, I mean this thing was a sight to behold, when you were around it you couldn't miss it.
- But Nebuchadnezzar didn't just want this thing to be admired or even just looked upon, he wanted it worshipped, sounds familiar doesn't it people. The world doesn't just want Christians accepting of other people's alternative lifestyles, belief systems, or ideals, but we are to also celebrate these things as well, and if you don't then expect to be called out.
- **V8-12** well while everyone else is doing what the King asks and bowing down certain Babylonians noticed that certain of the Jews, not all of them but a few of them **V12**, are not bowing down in worship of the image, in fact they don't serve your gods, because they really don't respect you. **V13** Oh Oh! The King flew into a rage, and as we see those who told the King this also knew the exact names of which of the Jewish people weren't worshipping like everyone else, don't ever believe Satan doesn't know who serve him and who doesn't.
- **V14-15** once the three Hebrew men are brought before the King he gives them a chance to avoid his rage, offering them another chance to bow down before everyone and worship his image and all will be forgiven. But he also warns them that if they don't they will immediately be cast into a fiery furnace, and no one will save them from this fate not even Their God Who has gotten them in this trouble in the first place!
- **V16-18** for some this would be quite the dilemma, but not to men who long ago had "**purposed**" in their hearts that they would **love The Lord, trust The Lord, obey The Lord**, and even if it costs them their lives, **please The Lord**. You see in impossible times like these is when you really find out Who and what you are trusting in, because tests are never meant to destroy our faith, they're meant to develop our faith.
- For a faith that can't be tested, can't be trusted, as false faith withers in times of trials, but true faith takes deeper root, grows and brings glory to God. Up to this point we had never read a word about them speaking, for it was with their actions that spoke loudly in chapter one, now instead of Daniel speaking up they in one accord telling an angry King, jealous peers, a fiery fire, and certain death, they have no need to defend God, they know He is fully capable of delivering them, but if not so be it, but they will not bow down to his image Wow!
- **V19-23** Nebuchadnezzar was so angry at the three men that he commanded them to heat the furnace up seven times hotter than normal, and for his best soldiers to tie up the three Hebrew men and cast them into the furnace. The fire was so hot that the heat coming from it caught fire to those who came near it killing even the soldiers who threw them in.

- **V24-25** before the only thing hotter than that furnace was the King's anger, but now his anger turns into astonishment, as he looks into the fire and sees something that amazes him. So much so that he asks as if he didn't already know the answer "**didn't we cast three into the fire, and they answer true O King, look I see four men loose in the fire, and are not hurt, and the form of the fire is like The Son of God**".
- The only thing affected by the fire were the ropes that had them bound, it's the same for you and I, we also are being accused, threatened, told to bow down or else, sadly too many give in before they can see the powerful miracle God wants to do in our lives by whole heartedly serving Him. **V26-30** notice the King's tone changes, and calls out to them calling them "**servants of The Most High God**" he recognizes that they don't need to bow down to his image, or give in to his threats, but that he needs to bow down to their God.
- He tells all of the people in leadership that they are to never speak bad about The God of the three Hebrew Men who were delivered from the fire, not having one hair singed. A whole nation was witnessed to by three men who were willing to give their bodies to the flames in order for the glory of their God to be beheld > **Mk 10:29-31**- whatever its cost to follow The Lord it will be worth it in the end as none of us can outgive The Lord.