



## Faith in God's Plan

This week I had the opportunity to build our worship theme around the book of Daniel. As I browsed back through that all-too-familiar book, more than just the stories of the lion's den and fiery furnace, what stood out to me strongly was the theme of faith. Often times we want to think of biblical figures like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as superhumans with special means of withstanding temptation. However, we have to see them for who they are: people just like you and me, but who rose above their own fears and trusted God.

*“King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 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. 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.”*  
Daniel 3:16-18 (NIV)

These three men fully acknowledged that God had the power to save them but, more importantly, that their faith transcended some miraculous intervention from God. And we have to remember, they had no miraculous insight into what God would do. Daniel was the same when he trusted God and was thrown into the lion's den: he believed in God regardless of the outcome.

In so many other places we see God's servants suffer unjustly. In the latter part of Hebrews 11 we read:

*“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions,*

*quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.” Hebrews 11:32-38 (NIV)*

Ultimately, Jesus uses the phrase “Son of Man” at his trial, quoting Daniel 7, that ultimately was the “proof” that the Sanhedrin used to condemn him. Like those mentioned in Hebrews 11, Jesus’ faith did not deliver him from suffering. Rather, it kept him focused on eternal blessings as opposed to temporary hardships.

I pray this week’s worship time will bless you with encouragement, grace and a strengthening of your own faith as we look to the examples from this great book.

- David Shaw