

“THE INCOMBUSTIBILITY OF GENUINE FAITH”

DANIEL 3:13-30

Theme: Genuine faith trusts in God’s power to fulfill God’s purposes in God’s time.

I. Genuine Faith Confides in God’s Power – 3:13-18

A. *THE CRISIS OF FAITH* – vv. 13-15

1. Each of us faces occasions when our faith is put to the test. These crises of faith provide the opportunity to demonstrate the reality of our ability to trust in the hand of the Sovereign God.
2. This situation brought about by the exercise of faithfulness by the three Hebrew young people, was a true crisis, their lives hanging in the balance.
3. They were hauled before an extremely angry king, whom they had defied: *“Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.”*
4. They were forced to respond to this irate king concerning their defiance of his command to worship his image.
5. There were then once again threatened: *“If you will not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”*
6. This last phrase serves as the crux of the crisis – they had to come to a resolve concerning whether they really believed in the power of God to deliver them or not. They had to answer whether they really believed that their God could deliver them.

B. *THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH* – vv. 16-18

1. They responded at the most critical moment in their entire lives that they were indeed confident in the power of God.
2. They begin by admitting that they are guilty of the charge of not bowing to the image by stating: *“O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.”* - basically stating “no contest!”
3. The, they confess their confidence in God - *“If it be so . . .”* does not demonstrate a lack of faith that God was able, only an uncertainty whether it was His will.
4. They state that *“our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand,*

O king” - one way or another.

5. Then they state something that demonstrates to totality of their devotion to God: *“But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”*
6. The previous statement demonstrates that they were truly trusting in God, while these words demonstrate that they were truly submissive to the will of God whatever course it took.
 - a) “They recognized that God’s will might be different from what they would find pleasant, and they were willing to have it so, without complaining.
 - b) Also, they did not make their own obedience contingent upon God’s doing that which was pleasant to them.
7. They found their object of affection in God Himself, not in what God did for them.”¹

II. Genuine Faith Cooperates with God’s Purposes – 3:19-23

A. *THE ANGUISH WITHIN THE WILL OF GOD* – vv. 19-21

1. Believers cannot only follow and trust God when things go the way they want they to.
2. Things went “down-hill” fast at this point, with the three youths ostensibly discovering that it was not God’s will to deliver them.
3. *“Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward [them]. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire.”*
4. Some at this point might be tempted to renege on their commitments to God and denounce Him for failing to deliver them from their crisis.

B. *THE ACQUIESCENCE TO THE WILL OF GOD* – vv. 22-23

1. However, despite the anguish and pain of the moment, the three youths were steadfastly committed to fulfilling the will of God – whatever might be the result – cp. Philippians 1:20.
2. The result was that they *“fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire all tied up.”*

¹ Wood., p. 89.

3. In all of this, there were consequences on those who were attempting to harm the servants of God – the valiant warriors were consumed – v. 22.

III. Genuine Faith Confirms God's Power – 3:24-30

A. *THE CONFIRMATION THROUGH THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD* – vv. 24-27

1. *“Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he responded and said to his high officials ‘Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said to the king, ‘Certainly, O king.’ He answered and said, ‘Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!’”*
2. There were two possibilities concerning the actual identity of this fourth person:
 - a) He is an angel sent by God
 - b) He is the Lord Jesus in a pre-incarnate appearance (Christophany).
3. I believe that it was indeed Christ, who with tender care and love, having permitted the men to be cast into the horrifying furnace, but in doing so He had literally gone in with them! - [Hebrews 13:5-6](#).
4. Seeing the faithfulness of God, Nebuchadnezzar calls *“... come out, you servants of the Most High God and come here!”*
5. God's unique power and place is recognized through the exercise of His glory and might – an event occasioned by the faithfulness of genuine faith.
6. They examine the state of the men and observe the incredible degree of God's faithfulness to His servants:
 - a) *“Fire had no effect on the bodies”* - the most severe impact
 - b) *“... nor was the hair on the head singed”* -
 - c) *“... nor were their trousers damaged”* -
 - d) *“... nor had the smell of fire even come upon them.”* - the least severe impact

B. *THE CONFIRMATION THROUGH THE FASCINATION OF THE LOST* – vv. 28-30

1. At this point, the pagans who were so diligently denouncing the God being professed by the Hebrews, who had been slighted by Nebuchadnezzar's statement: *“what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”* (v. 15b), they confess Him as unique and give blessing - v. 28.
2. Now, the very one who had mocked God, becomes the mouthpiece

extolling God and commending His faithful servants.

3. When they had stood before Nebuchadnezzar's image, they thought that they might lose everything including their lives.
4. Now, *"the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon."*

Genuine faith trusts in God's power to fulfill God's purposes in God's time.