

## Deeper in Worship

Intro - Daniel 3

### Joke

- I recently heard of a minister that was asked to perform a funeral for a dog.
- Pastor will you perform the funeral service for our dog?  
He meant a lot to us and we just want to show our final respects and give him a proper burial.
- The Pastor looked at them and said, I don't do funerals for dogs.  
I am a man of God who preaches the Gospel and I don't preach dog funerals.  
I suggest you call a Lutheran or an Episcopal or Methodist they'll probably do it.
- The family spoke up and said Pastor we loved our dog so much he was part of our family.
- As a matter of fact -- we had a will written for him to divide his belongings and a \$100,000 life insurance policy on him so when he went to the great "Dog House" up in the sky we could make sure he life was honored properly.
- A will and a life insurance policy for a dog! – said the Pastor?
- Yes - Within the will is a designation of \$2,500 for the minister who preaches his memorial service.
- The Minister lifted his head and threw his shoulders back and said why didn't you tell me he was an Assembly of God dog.

### Daniel 3:1, 4-6

<sup>1</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon

<sup>4</sup> Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: <sup>5</sup> As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. <sup>6</sup> Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

### Five Characters in this story

1. Daniel
2. Shadrach
3. Meshach
4. Abednego
  - All taken from a group of the sharpest young men in Jerusalem into Babylonian captivity and trained in the Kings Courts.
  - They worked among the Babylonian magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers.
  - Sometimes these men were referred to as "Wise Men"

5. King Nebuchadnezzar - King of Babylon – Completely absorbed in himself and power. He was evil, wicked KING.

### Set up

- King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. He pulls a power trip and tells all of His “**Wise Men**” that they have to not only interpret his dream but tell the King what the dream was.
- Argue – that’s impossible.
- They come to kill Daniel and he says wait a minute why are you in such a rush.
- They explain to Daniel the deal and he says – look let me go and make an appointment with the King so I can tell him his dream and interpret it for him.
- Daniel then goes back to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and explains the deal.  
**They start praying.**
- Knowing that you will die in a couple days unless God comes through **BIG TIME** has a way of rearranging your priorities.
- God gives Daniel a dream – In Daniel’s dream God reveals Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and gives Daniel the interpretation.
- Daniel goes to his appointment – tells the king his dream and interprets the dream.
- King Nebuchadnezzar reverses his decision to execute all of the “Wise Men” in Babylon.

### Daniel 2:46-49

<sup>46</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. <sup>47</sup> The king said to Daniel, “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

<sup>48</sup> Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. <sup>49</sup> Moreover, at Daniel’s request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

Chapter 2 ends

Chapter 3 begins

### Three things we can learn from this story.

- I. I will be tested.

### Daniel 3:1-7

<sup>1</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. <sup>2</sup> He then summoned the satraps, prefects,

governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. <sup>3</sup> So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

#### A. Unpack

1. Everyone is a worshipper of something.
2. Most of the time Idols are not this obvious.
3. The king shifted from acknowledging Daniel's God to making an idol.
4. He has a big reveal party for the new gold Idol. **90 feet x 90 feet.**
5. King Nebuchadnezzar tried to use **religion** to consolidate the many provinces he had added to his empire.
6. One World Religion.
7. He demanded worship of the image as a means of promotion loyalty to himself.
8. He was not the first, nor will he be the last, world leader to try to use religion for political gain or for self-exaltation.

#### Application

- Not all idols are made of gold and 90 feet tall.

<sup>4</sup> Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: <sup>5</sup> As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. <sup>6</sup> Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

#### B. Here comes the command.

1. When the band strikes up you must fall down and worship the image of gold.
2. Here is the threat – whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

#### C. Everyone did as they were commanded except three guys.

1. They stood when everyone else was bowing.

#### Illustration

- Think of the scene.
- Worshipping a statue.
- When you remove the death threat it is actually comical.

### **1 Corinthians 10:13**

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

### **Daniel 3:7**

Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

### **Unpack**

- The enemy wants to rob your worship.
- The enemy wants to rob your commitment
- The enemy wants to rob your relationship.
- One reason you need to be in a small group... You will be tested...

#### **D. When you are tested remind yourself of 1 Corinthians 10:13**

1. Everybody is going to be tested.
2. This is something every body faces.
3. God is FAITHFUL!!!
4. He will NOT let you be tempted beyond your ability.
5. But with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape.
6. That you may be able to endure it.

### **Application**

1. They had already made up their mind.
2. They were in the prayer meeting with Daniel.
3. They were aware of the death sentence the first time.
4. By the time the band struck up their demonic tune this was old news.
5. They felt the weight of the first time and saw God come through.
6. Why would they come this far only to bow down to the silly little 90 foot golden statue.

### **Application**

- They must have been thinking – I have already decided.
- We saw this once before and what got us through was faithfulness.
- Compromise didn't help us.

- Selling out didn't help us.
- Cowering down in fear didn't help us.
- Running and hiding didn't help us.
- What helped us was when we planted our feet on the ground and **STOOD**.

### **Ephesians 6:10-14a**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm...

## **II. I need unconditional faith.**

### **Daniel 3:8-12**

<sup>8</sup> At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. <sup>9</sup> They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live forever! <sup>10</sup> Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, <sup>11</sup> and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. <sup>12</sup> But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

#### A. Unpack.

1. Their witness was obvious.
2. When the lives of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were surveyed this is what was said about them.
  - a. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.
  - b. Oh they worship but when they worship it is not to your gods or the image of gold.
  - c. In other words, **They are different.**
  - d. In other words, **They won't compromise.**
  - e. In other words, **They are faithful to their God.**
  - f. In other words, **They are not like everyone else.**
  - g. In other words, **They have a holy defiance.**
  - h. In other words, **They are different.**

## B. Names

1. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were not always their names.
2. Shadrach.
  - a. You call me Shadrach but my momma called me.... Hananiah.
  - b. Shadrach is my Babylonian name.
  - c. Shadrach means "Command of Aku," or "inspired of Aku" which was the Babylonian God of the moon
  - d. Hananiah means – God has been gracious or God is gracious.
3. Meshach
  - a. You call me Meshach but my momma called me... Mishael
  - b. Meshach means "who is what Aku is" Babylonian God of the moon'
  - c. Mishael means... "Who is what God is" or Who is like God.
4. Abednego
  - a. You call me Abednego but my momma called me... Azariah
  - b. Abednego means... "servant of Nego" Nebo is the Babylonian God of wisdom.
  - c. Azariah means... Yahweh has helped... or God has helped.

## C. Why the name changes?

1. What made the boys' Hebrew names unacceptable to the Babylonians?
2. The meaning of their Hebrew names centered on the one true God.
  - a. Daniel – *God is my judge*
  - b. Hananiah – *God has been gracious*
  - c. Mishael – *Who is like God.*
  - d. Azariah – *God has helped.*

## D. Assigning new names was a common court practice in the ancient world.

1. Its blatant intention was to change the entire identity of the bearer until the life matched the title.
2. Actually, God is the one who originated the concept of a name change back in Genesis.
3. God changed Abram's name to Abraham, meaning *Father of many*.
4. Jesus gave the apostle Simon the name Peter which means *Rock*.

## Matthew 16:18

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it.

## Application

1. When we became believers – we either were given the name or took on the name "Christian" – *one who follows Jesus Christ*.
2. The intent of the name changes for the Hebrew captives was to change their identity until their life matched their name.

### Question

How intent are you as a Christian to change your identity until our life matches the meaning of our name ***Christ follower***?

### Ephesians 5:1-2

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

So . . . What's in a name???

### Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

- I want you to see the reaction that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego got when they were obedient to the LORD.

### Daniel 3:13-15

<sup>13</sup> **Furious with rage**, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, <sup>14</sup> 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? <sup>15</sup> 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?"

e. Unpack.

1. Their stand and obedience to the LORD led to threat.
2. You do this or else.
3. Do what everybody else is doing!
4. If you comply then VERY GOOD!
5. If not your will be tortured to death.
6. Then Nebuchadnezzar questions the power of God.
7. Nebuchadnezzar puts himself above GOD
  - Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?

All idol worship questions the legitimacy and authority of JESUS CHRIST as the MESSIAH – the SON OF GOD

### Illustration

1. Look Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego I think your God is cool too.
  2. I mean Daniel interpreted my dream so that really helped me.
  3. I like Daniel and believe it or not I kinda like you guys.
  4. I don't have a problem with your God – really I don't – but you see what I have done here and I need you guys to get in line.
  5. Look you don't even have to like it just bow down like everyone else so we can move on.
- Look at the reaction that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had.

### Daniel 3:16-18

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.”

f. Unpack.

1. We don't need to defend ourselves.
2. In other words when it comes to our allegiance to God and our worship of him we don't need to defend ourselves.
3. God is our defender...
4. Our first priority is to the **KING of KINGS**.
5. If you throw us into the blazing furnace God can deliver us from it.
6. And he will deliver us from YOUR MAJESTY'S hand.
  - They acknowledged Nebuchadnezzar's office and earthly authority.
7. But even if he doesn't deliver us from this torture and death we **WILL NOT** serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.
  - It's just not going to happen.

### Illustration

NO COMPROMISE

### Illustration

1. What gave these guys such confidence?
2. An intimate relationship with God – they knew God and his power.
3. This boldness did not come from their personalities.



### **Illustration**

1. These guys decided long before they were in the presence of the king that day what they would do.
2. They did and so should you.

### **Application**

1. You must know the LORD.
2. You must decide right now what you will do.

### **Daniel 3:19**

<sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual <sup>20</sup> and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. <sup>21</sup> So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. <sup>22</sup> The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, <sup>23</sup> and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

- g. Unpack
  1. Look what happens.
  2. Tell the story.

### **III. I have the promise of HIS presence.**

### **Daniel 3:25, 26b-27**

<sup>24</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

<sup>25</sup> He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

<sup>26</sup> Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, <sup>27</sup> and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

**Daniel 3:28-30**

<sup>28</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup> Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.”

<sup>30</sup> Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

**Illustration**

1. Intimate with Christ

**Application**

1. Jesus desired intimacy.

**Joshua 1:9**

<sup>9</sup> Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

- 3 x in first chapter