

Courageous Faith | Trusting God When the Heat Is On | Walking Through Fire with the God Who Saves

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[0 : 00] We're going to go to Daniel 3, if you've got your Bibles. Looking at faith, courageous! Tested faith. We see Daniel 3. As God's people, we're called to courage. And here's an example! The easy thing for us to do is fit in. We know. Conform. It's the easy way. Go along with the crowd. And there's a whole load of voices out there, isn't there? Social media, culture pressure, peer pressure. We think of the expectations of a godless culture. Woke workplaces and universities and schools, even kindergartens. Kindergartens now, they're getting a whole lot of woke brainwashing, really. And the voices are calling out all the time, calling out, demanding compliance. And they shout out, blend in, bow down, just go along to get along. And don't resist or you'll face consequences. And this is a story about just that. As God's people, we're called to courage. And God calls us to this kind of higher standard to stand firm. And that's what these three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were their

Babylonian names. They were non-conformists. They were willing to stand out from the crowd. And here's a testimony of faith that refuses to bow down. And we're going to pick it up there from Daniel chapter 3 verse 1. We see this truth of conformity. It's what happens all the time in our world today. And this challenge this morning to live boldly, live godly, these three young men, they're exiles here in this foreign land. And at the time, we call them the Hebrew children, but really they were in their late teens to mid-20s. And they faced this choice to conform or to stand firm. And it's the same for you and me today, isn't it? The world's standards, the world's demands are that we go along with all of the woke agendas. Will we stand firm?

Will we stand firm in our faith, trusting our Lord, or will we bow down? So look at this story together about faith that survives a furnace, and faith that thrives and glorifies God and inspires others. And the testimony here of this courageous faith. And we can have that same faith. Think about it. Will we bow down to the world's idols, the golden images, or will we stand tall, trusting our Lord, walking with Him through the fire?

So think about this pressure, this pressure to conform, the pressure to fit in, to go with the flow, conformity. It's a factor that we face every day.

[2 : 57] So we're going to check out Daniel 3. And here's King Nebuchadnezzar. He's built this huge golden image. It's 90 foot high and 9 foot wide on this plain of Dura, like this desert plain.

And we pick it up there from verse 1. Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold. His height was three score cubits, the breadth thereof six cubits. So 90 foot high, 9 foot wide. And it's in this plain of Dura, in this desert kind of place in the province of Babylon.

And this was no ordinary statue. It was an idol, really. And this towering symbol, it was a symbol of his pride, of political power, of paganism too.

And the king summoned everybody to come and bow down to this massive idol, whether it be the governors, the princes, all the people from every nation and tongue, to bow down before it.

We pick it up from verse 2. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king said to gather together the princes, the governors, the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

[4 : 14] Verse 3. Then the princes, the governors and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces were gathered together.

So you can imagine this huge crowd of people. And the order was that they were to bow down, to bow down. It tells how he made this order when the music played that they must bow down and worship.

Verse 4. Then the herald cried aloud, to you it is commanded, O people, nations and languages, that at what time you hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all

kinds of music, you fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up.

So this was a decree that was universal. All peoples, all nations, all languages. And the consequence for refusal was clear.

Death in the fiery furnace. Verse 6. And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace.

[5 : 27] Picture it, the scene was electric. Imagine the atmosphere, the blaring trumpets, the hypnotic music, the overwhelming presence of the king's authority, the fear of standing out, of being different.

And the whole group bowed down. It reads, they were swept along by this groupthink, fear, the desire to fit in. Verse 7. Therefore, at that time, when all the people heard the sound of all the instruments, all the people, the nations, the languages, they fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

It's like the pressures that we face today, brother, sister, in our own lives, the golden images of our world. They may not be a physical idol, but they're just as real.

It could be the pursuit of popularity, the approval of peers, the allure of success, the demand to follow along with all the cultural norms of society that contradict God's truth.

Perhaps it's the pressure, too, to stay silent when your faith is mocked, to stand firm in the workplace, and the pressure to compromise your values, to get a promotion, or to conform to society's views on morality that clash with scripture.

[6 : 46] And social media amplifies this pressure. Think of the world today. It rewards conformity with likes. And if you dare to raise a different voice, you face punishment, mockery, and hate.

You could get cancelled. You could get cancelled. I read this article just yesterday. It was posted. And it's headed, Christian doctor loses his career over social media posts.

And this has happened in the state of Victoria. Their medical board has suspended a Christian doctor from practicing as a doctor. Why? Professional misconduct.

What did he do? He put some social media posts about abortion, same-sex marriage, transgenderism, conversion therapy laws for some that he posted.

And now he's lost his career. They look to deregister him as a doctor. Why? Because a lack of respect for gender diversity.

[7 : 49] This is what's happening. This is Australia. Yesterday. Yesterday. The serious implications of free speech. They disregard that.

And it's like they're intruding into areas of personal belief, political expression, religious conviction.

And you think of this decision. It raises concerns about whether Australia will continue to allow employers, regulators, and the government to exercise power over free speech.

And the expression of personal political and religious opinions. Now you can read the article if you're interested. This is just yesterday's news. So you see there's pressure to conform.

It's real. It's real. It's happening in our workplaces. It's happening for all of us in some way in the secular workplace that we have these pressures upon us.

If you dare to raise a different voice. If you dare to put a view that's contrary to the mainstream view. And the world's decree is the same.

[8 : 53] Bow. Bow down or burn. And yet the Bible calls us rather to resist conformity. To rather be brave enough and bold enough to make a stand for Christ.

And we see for example Romans 12.2. It reads and be not conformed. Be not conformed to this world. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We think for us as God's people rather the word of God should frame our thinking. Shape our values. Our decisions. Think about it. What is the golden image that the world has for you in your life.

To urge you to bow down to. Pressure to conform. To compromise. To soften your stance for biblical truth. To chase worldly success at the expense of your faith.

Think about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They decided beforehand who they were going to serve. And we can think for ourselves how can we seek after God and look for his will.

[10 : 03] And decide to stand firm. No matter the cost. And that can be real for you. As we know secular workplaces are increasingly anti-Christ in some of the values they want us to bow down to.

It's like we're like a salmon swimming upstream against this powerful current. We've got to keep on pressing. Keep on going forward. Driven by our purpose.

It's the same for us, isn't it? As believers in our Lord. We're swimming against this cultural current. This torrent that's going the opposite way. But our faithfulness to the Lord must hold us steady and sure.

To please our Lord. That's what matters. And it can be hard, that faithfulness to God. But it matters, doesn't it? To consider the power of groupthink on the other side. Everybody bowed.

The pressure to just go along. To fit in. To take that path of least resistance. It's real, isn't it? This is real. And this pressure to conform is happening now.

[11:02] To go with the flow. With what's easy. Hey, that's the easy path. Just go with popular opinion. Social issues. Politics. Lifestyle choices. Whatever the pressure is to go along with.

Don't dare to be different. The world will tell us. And yet the word of God tells us to be different. To be that peculiar people. On Peter 2 verse 9. To have that discernment. To recognise the idols of our age.

To resist. To have strength to stand. We think of non-conformists down through church history.

They're the believers in Christ. They refuse to adhere to the established doctrines or practices.

The government of dominant churches. The established churches. The establishment. And they face severe persecution for their beliefs. In 1662 there was about 2,000 ministers.

Were ejected from their pulpits. Because of the act of uniformity in England. They just had to conform. But they said no. We're not going to conform.

[12:05] They rather upheld personal faith. Simple worship. And they resisted the state imposed religion. What happened? Their meetings were banned. They were declared illegal.

Once he had biblical faith. And worship. They were fined. And imprisoned. You think of some characters down through church history. John Bunyan. The author of Pilgrim's Progress.

John Bunyan. On the left there. He was in prison for 12 years. Why? Simply for preaching without a license. He wasn't part of the Church of England.

So he was unauthorized. And so he was preaching the gospel from his heart. Delivering the message of salvation. But he was cancelled.

Because he was a non-conformist. Richard Baxter. Another one. He faced repeated arrests.

Imprisonment. Why? For preaching. Simply for preaching. Non-conformists.

[12:59] Think of another couple here. We think of William Tyndale. He believed that every believer should read God's word. He said, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the scripture than the Pope.

He was executed by strangulation and burning. His final prayer. Lord, open the King of England's eyes. And his prayer was answered as the English Bible was then soon spread abroad.

And we think of John Wycliffe. Another one. He translated the Bible into English. To have the language of the Bible in the common language of the people. And these were non-conformists.

It wasn't conforming to the establishment. And there's others you could name. John Huss. Who challenged papal authority. He asserted that Christ.

Not the Pope. Was the head of the church. And he was tried for heresy. Burnt at the stake. He reportedly sang hymns as he died. Non-conformists. We ought to be in their tread.

[14:00] Amen. We ought to be like these ones. Who are strong enough. Brave enough. In their faith enough. To trust Christ enough. To see them through. To be non-conformists.

To resist the trends of the day. And this is what happened in Daniel 3. We see the conviction of these men. That was the opposite of conformity. They had conviction.

Conviction. The courage of conviction. But look how what happened here. That these three men.

They were different. They did not take the easy way. Of conformity.

They did not follow the crowd. They took rather the path of conviction. And so can you. Brother. You can take the path of conviction. To stand with faith and courage.

For what is right. We see Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They stood tall. When all the others bowed down. They did not bow. That would have been the easy thing. To do.

[14:55] And what happened. We see that jealous rivals then. Took offense. They accused the Jews there. Verse 8. And they said to the king. O king live forever.

Thou O king has made a decree. That every man. That shall hear the sound. Of the cornet, flute, harp, sack, put. Sultry and dulcimer. And all kinds of music. Shall fall down.

And worship the golden image. And he so falleth not down and worshipeth. That he shall be cast into the midst of a burning. Fiery furnace. And then they pointed out.

Hey look at these three. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They have not regarded thee. They have not served thy gods. Nor worshipped the golden image. Which thou hast set up.

So when these jealous ones heard about. The faithful ones. They told Nebuchadnezzar. And he was furious. He was. He got steaming mad. It says here of the rage.

[15:50] Of his rage and fury. And he commanded these ones who did not comply. And he sought to give them a second chance. To bow down. He says there verse 14.

Is it true. O Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. That you do not serve my gods. Nor worship the golden image. Which I have set up. And so he gave them a chance again.

To bow down. He told them again. The order. But if you worship not. You should be cast. The same hour. Into the midst of a burning. Fiery furnace. And who is that God.

That shall deliver you. Out of my hands. Look at the arrogance of the man. Versus this courageous faith. The arrogance. Of this man. He's full of arrogance there.

Who is that God. That's going to deliver you. Out of my hands. And we see then their response.

Verse 16. That they answered. O Nebuchadnezzar.

[16:48] We're not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so. Our God whom we serve. Is able. To deliver us from the burning. Fiery furnace. And he will deliver us.

Out of thine hand. O king. But if not. Be it known unto thee. O king. That we will not serve. Thy gods. Nor worship. The golden image.

Which thou hast set up. Look at the courageous faith here. They say. Our God is able. Our God whom we serve. He's able. They showed this confidence.

In God's power. Our God whom we serve. Is able to deliver us. They knew God's might. They knew the faithfulness of God. God. They'd seen it in their lives.

And they had a commitment to his will. But if not. Hey. If it's God's will. We'll trust him anyway. Even if it means our death. We'll trust him anyway. We'll trust his will.

[17:42] And then they had a courage. For God's glory too. We will not serve thy gods. Nor worship the golden image. They knew. That their loyalty. To the one true God. Was something that's non-negotiable.

And. Even if he does not. Deliver. They had that faith. It wasn't a lack of trust. It was really a surrender. To God's plan. Whether it be deliverance.

Or. Their death. God's will. And so their conviction. It wasn't some impulsive thing. They knew the truth. That only God was due. Their worship. As in Exodus 20.

Worship the Lord thy God. We see. Only he is due. Our worship. And so this was their trust. In God's character. They would not bow. They would not bend. Think of other examples.

In the scriptures. For example. Job. He had the same resolve too. When the heat. Was applied to Job. He says. Though he slay me. Yet will I trust him.

[18:41] Yet will I trust him. We see. That Job. Had that kind of faith. And. We've got that trust in God too. Like the. Man in Acts 5. Where.

The challenge came. And they said. We ought to. Obey God. Rather than men. It's obeying God. That's my first priority. And they chose that. As their focus. No matter what.

I'm going to obey God. No matter what. And that's true courage. Isn't it? When we face with these things. Where our convictions. Are under threat. We must stand firm. And.

Know what we believe. And why. Think of how we can spend time. In the word. To strengthen that faith. And not fall for that compromise.

Perhaps by saying silent. It can be a compromise. When a colleague mocks our faith. Or we bend our principles. To go with what the pressure is.

[19:37] Decide now. Before the pressure comes. That you'll honour God. First and foremost. And take to heart verses like. Joshua 1 verse 9. That can strengthen your resolve.

Have not I commanded thee. Be strong. And of a good courage. Be not afraid. Neither be thou dismayed. For the Lord thy God is with thee. Whithersoever thou goest. Wherever you go.

It says the Lord thy God. He's with you. Amen. We know that. He is with us. And. This is the kind of faith. That won't move. Even when the world.

Attacks. You can think of these three. That they had their convictions right. And so they'll come before. The storm. And they were ready. When the music plays.

They were ready. To keep standing for Christ. To stand for the right. And notice how their courage. It wasn't born. In the moment of crisis. But it was in that daily walk. That they had. We know right back in Daniel 1.

[20 : 35] Where Daniel. And the three men. They. Determined then. To live differently. To not defile themselves. They wanted to keep. Right.

They wanted to keep things right. And to keep faithful. So the right back then. In Daniel 1. Verse 8. That they decided. Not to defile themselves. And it's the same for you and me.

As we cultivate that kind of faith. That's his conviction. That is sure. And through our. Daily. Receiving of his word. When the furnace comes.

We'll be ready. Because we've already got those habits. That sustain us. We've already got that foundation. And so courage. It's a call for courage. I know.

I like to. Kind of tongue in cheek. Refer to. A time when I. Had courage. And. Sought to give my wife courage. As she lay. On the operating table.

[21 : 30] As we had. Our first son. Was about to be born. And they. Painted her stomach. With the red. Stuff. And. I was there. I was brave. I thought.

I was bold. I was courageous. I entered into the operating theatre. To witness the birth. A cesarean. And when they painted the red stuff. On her tummy. I thought. Oh no. I started to get a bit queasy. And I said. Hi honey. I said to her. As she was laying there. Ready for the operation. Hi honey. Take courage. I've got to go now. I've got to faint. And.

So. I shot for the door. And the nurse helped me. As I was. I was just all drained. And white. And. Take courage. But. I didn't have the courage myself.

I wasn't the one. Getting operated on. But you think. Sometimes it's easy to say. Have courage.

And. But we've got to. When the. When the rubber hits the road. It's. When it really hits home. Isn't it.

[22 : 26] Can we have courage. When the furnace comes. You think. Of the fire. That they face now. The crucible. That these three men. They face the fire. The.

These three men. They stood firm. In their. In their conviction. Rather than to conform. They had this courageous faith. That was willing to face the crucible. You think. This word crucible.

You can refer to like. A severe trial or test. That refines. That purifies. Or transforms. Our character. That intense suffering at times. Or challenge.

Think of a crucible. It's like this vessel. Where they. Use it to melt. And purify the metal. There's extreme heat there. It symbolises the process of pressure.

Of purifying. Of strengthening. And this crucible experience. It was this kind of pivotal moment. This. Significant adversity. You might have your own crucible.

[23 : 22] Experience. That crucible. Moment. That you're going through. Where there's some test. There's some pressure. There's some challenge. And. Ideally. It will lead to growing. To.

To spiritual. Emotional. Personal. Growth. And we think. Of these moments. Of the crucible. You might have been there. You might say. Pastor. I've been there. I've been there.

Where it's been. A crucible experience. Where it's been. That time. Of testing. Of health. Of trial. Of struggle. Where my faith is tested.

And. Sometimes we can. Think. Why is this happening? These experiences. They're often painful. But they're purposeful too. We see. It tells us in 1 Peter.

Of this trial. Of your faith. He says. Though now for a season. He says. You greatly rejoice. Even if you're in this heaviness. He says. Through manifold temptations.

[24 : 15] And tests. He says. That the trial of your faith. Being much more precious. Than of gold. That perish. Though it be tried with fire. Might be found. Unto praise. And honour.

And glory. At the appearing. Of Jesus Christ. There's a painful experience. And yet. It can be purposeful. The trial of your faith. That moment. Of the crucible. When your faith is tested.

When you're faced with. Some great challenge. That. Yet. He is with you. And. It's the making of you. We see.

In Job's example. It says. He knoweth the way that I take. When he hath tried me. I shall come forth as gold. I shall come forth as gold. Think of that refining.

That purifying nature. Of trials. Job says. He knows the way that I take. When he hath tried me. I shall. I shall. That's faith. I shall come forth as gold.

[25 : 09] There's a refining. There's a purifying. Through trial. We see in Daniel 3. Nebuchadnezzar was raging mad. We see his fury. It had reached its peak. He wanted to save face.

By making a show. Of the punishment. Of these men. Who dared to defy his order. And we see the order there. That the furnace be heated. Seven times hotter.

Than normal. So intense. Was this fire. That the soldiers. Who threw the three men in. Were consumed by the flames. It says there. Verse 19. Daniel 3 again.

There was Nebuchadnezzar. Full of fury. And the form of his visage. Was changed against Shadrach. Meshach. And Abednego. Imagine he was steaming mad.

His face flushed. With rage. Steam coming out of his ears. Yeah. Grinding his teeth. Therefore he spake. And commanded. That they should heat the furnace. One.

[26 : 03] Seven times more. Than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded. The most mighty men. That were in his army. To bind Shadrach.

Meshach. And Abednego. And cast them into the burning. Fiery furnace. You got these big bulky men. These wrestling men. These strong men. And he grabbed a hold of them.

By the scruff of their neck. And they cast them into the burning. Fiery furnace. Says there. Verse 21. These men were bound in their coats. Their hosen and their hats. And their other garments.

And were cast into the midst. Of the burning. Fiery furnace. Therefore. Because the king's commandment. Was urgent. And the furnace. Exceeding hot. The flame of the fire. Slew those men.

That took up. Shadrach. Meshach. And Abednego. So these big burly men. They just expired. They capped it. Before they could even get. Near the flame.

[26 : 57] And so this was. Really. A hot moment. This hot. Burning. Fiery furnace. Verse 23. And these three men. Shadrach. Meshach. And Abednego. They fell down.

Bound into. The midst of the burning. Fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar. The king was astounding. So he got this astonishment. He was surprised. There was something happening. This was something unexpected.

It says he rose up in haste. And spake. And said unto his counsellors. Hey did not we cast. Three men. Bound into the midst of the fire. They answered. And said unto the king.

True. O king. So here they were. Bound and cast into the fire. They faced what seemed. Like certain death. Yet a miracle unfolded. And the king was there. Peering into the furnace.

He saw not three men. But four. Walking. Unbound and unharmed. In the midst of the fire. The fourth. Like the son of God. We see that there. Verse 25. As he speaks to these ones.

[27 : 54] That were his aides. He said. He answered and said. Lou. Look. I see four men loose. Walking in the midst of the fire.

And they have no hurt. And the form of the fourth. Is like the son of God. God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace. And spake and said. Shadrach.

Meshach. And Abednego. You servants of the most high God. Come forth and come hither. And Shadrach. Meshach. And Abednego. Came forth of the midst of the fire.

And the princes and governors and captains and the king's counsellors being gathered together. Saw these men. Upon whose bodies the fire had no power. Nor was a hair of their head singed.

Neither was their coats changed. Nor the smell of fire had passed on them. So when they came out. These men. Not a hair was singed. Their clothes untouched. No smell of smoke upon them.

[28 : 51] And the fourth man. The fourth man was there. The fourth man is a powerful picture to us of the presence of God. And we can perceive it to be the pre-incarnate Lord.

Our saviour was in the fire. God didn't prevent the fire. But he joined them in the fire. He protected them. And burnt away only their bonds. Brother, sister, when you face the crucible.

Know God's presence. His nearness. His closeness. For you. He's for you. He's with you. He doesn't abandon you. We see another scripture of this theme.

He shall cover thee with his feathers. And under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Know that God is for you. He's close. He's near.

He's with you. His ever-present faithfulness. He does not fail us in time of trial. He never leaves you alone. He's always there. And so this fire that this king meant to destroy them became this platform for God's glory.

[29 : 55] As God displayed his power. And no trial is too great for his power. We can take heart that God's promise of his presence is for us in such times.

In the crucible itself. In the fire. The very fire. As Isaiah 43 reads, Notice that.

He says, I will be with thee. Through the floodwaters. Through the fires. He will not fail you. He shall watch over you. And we know the word of God tells us time and time again of his presence.

Of his strengthening. In trial. Psalm 23. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil. Why? For thou art with me.

Thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff. They comfort me. Believe God. When you face your own furnace. And brother, sister, it could be a rejection of your faith.

[31 : 07] It could be financial hard times. Of health crisis. Of persecution. Trust in the Lord. Trust that he will be with you. That he is with you. And he may deliver you miraculously.

As he did for these men. Or he may sustain you through the trial. Giving you that peace. That strength. To get through. Either way.

His presence is enough. Isn't it? His presence is enough. That you can lean on him through prayer and worship. And the word. Have courage.

Have courage. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? Is the Lord the strength of your life?

Is he your strength? Is he? Isn't he? He is my strength. Let's say that last scripture together. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

[32 : 04] Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? Amen. The fourth man is with you. When you're feeling overwhelmed.

He's walking with you. When you're in the furnace. The very crucible. The very testing place. The trial of your faith. We think of Corrie ten Boom. A Christian who hit Jews during the war. And she faced imprisonment.

In a concentration camp. And she was there amidst unimaginable suffering. And she wrote, There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still.

No pit too deep. God's love is deeper still. And her courage came from knowing the Lord was with her. Even in those darkest times. Those darkest moments.

And we know the promise of our Lord. Lo, I am with you all the way. Even unto the end of the world. We know his strength. Because we know his presence. And notice that the fire for these men.

[33 : 04] It burnt away the ropes that bound them. Not their bodies. We can think of trials that come. Of tests. Of suffering. Of difficulties. Of challenge.

Of health. Of employment. Of income. And we see the tests that come. And at times God uses those trials. To free us from what holds us back.

To make our faith yet stronger. That we'll not rely on our own self. That we'll overcome our fear. And the worldly attachments will drop off.

Because it's his presence is what matters. It's his presence that is enough. And we think of the furnaces of life. God's refining you brother.

He's refining you sister. He's helping loosen us from those things. That he wants to drop off. Like maybe people pleasing. To rather be bold for our God.

[34 : 03] And you think of the fire. It wasn't the end. It was a means to God's greater purpose. It was preparing. The glory of God. The furnace. Notice what happened then.

As we read on. Nebuchadnezzar gets awestruck. And he turns to praise. The God. Of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. It tells us there.

Verse 28. Nebuchadnezzar says. He says. Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Who hath sent his angel. And delivered his servants. That trusted in him.

And have changed the king's word. And yielded their bodies. That they might not serve nor worship any God. Except their own God. He saw that the Lord had delivered. His servants.

That trusted in him. And it says. He says. I make a decree. That every people, nation and language. Which speak anything amiss. Against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

[35 : 02] Should be cut in pieces. And their houses shall be made a dunghill. Because there is no other God. That can deliver after this sort. Then the king. Promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

In the presence of Babylon. So he issued this decree. Protecting their faith. And promoting them. So their courage. Did not just save them.

It turned a pagan king's heart. It glorified God. It influenced a nation. Think of it. For your stand. For your testimony. You don't know the ripple effect.

That it can have. As you point others. To God's faithfulness. As you give glory to God. As you trust God's power. In your own weakness. As you're faithful. Even under pressure.

It can draw others to Christ. As in the example here. Where Nebuchadnezzar was changed. Your courage. Can be a witness for Christ. You can inspire others. By your faith.

[35 : 57] Even those who oppose you. And whether it's speaking the truth. In love. Living with integrity. Refusing to compromise. Being willing to be a non-conformist. To not go with the crowd.

To go with the flow. To trust the Lord. Have that test me. That can impact others. Think of it. Of your courageous stand. It can have an amazing influence.

We think of examples. As many we could cite. Of believers of old. Read Fox's Book of Martyrs. We see an example. Polycarp. A second century Christian martyr.

He faced death. For refusing to deny Christ. And they ordered him. Polycarp. Curse Christ. And he said. Eighty and six years have I served him.

And he has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme. My king. And my saviour. His courage inspired others. And convicted his persecutors. We think.

[36 : 52] Of the faithfulness of these ones. The legacy. That flows from that glorification of God. And the world is watching. How we will. Take the pressure.

How will we respond. Can we. Have that faith. That trust. That grace. To be a living testimony. Can your example.

Be a witness to others. Who knows. What impact you can have. For the glory of God. When we bow down. To the world's idols. Just conform.

Or when we stand firm. With biblical convictions. When we trust God. No matter what. We face. And when the outcome might feel uncertain.

Yet our courage can be a testimony. And though the heat. The furnace. Hotter and hotter. Our God is greater. Than the heat. Amen. And he walks with us.

[37 : 49] He protects us. And his faithfulness. Will come through. We see as we face our own trials. We can have the testimony. Of these three.

Our God is able. Isn't he? Our God is able. He is able. To deliver us. But if not. We will not bow. We'll trust him. No matter what.

The outcome. Even if it means persecution. Or testing. Even martyrdom. Yet we will not bow. Think about how you can be a non-conformist today.

How can you cultivate that kind of courage? Think about areas where you're tempted to compromise. Perhaps to stay silent about your faith. To conform to cultural norms.

God has not given to us the spirit of fear. He's not given you that spirit. He's given you the spirit of power. And of love. And of sound mind. You can have courage.

[38 : 44] To say. I'm not going to conform. I'm not going to conform. Even if it means. As in the case of this Christian doctor. It's a life altering confession.

Isn't it? The courage. To not conform. And think about. What's your golden image? Will you stand when the world bows down. And demands that you bow. Will you have conviction?

No, I've got conviction. That I'm a Christian. That's my testimony. And I stand. For my Lord. And you can know. That courage. That can confront.

All of these things. The world's demands. To bow. And we know. As the word to Joshua. Have not I commanded thee. Be strong. And of a good courage.

Be not afraid. Neither be thou dismayed. For the Lord thy God is with thee. Withersoever thou goest. Know that God is with you. Brother. Sister. Even if it be to the furnace.

[39 : 45] Even if it be. To face. The greatest challenges. The trial of your faith. It's much more precious than the gold. That perisheth. Have not I commanded thee.

Be strong. And of a good courage. And know. That the God of hope. Is with you. To fill you with all joy. And peace. In believing. That you may abound in hope.

Through the power of the Holy Ghost. Let us pray. Our Lord God. We thank you that. We see the account. Of these three men. These three.

Teenagers. Young men. Lord. We see their faith. That went through the fire. Lord. We see that. You are the fourth man. In the fire. Your presence. Was with them.

And the trial of their faith. Brought forth a gold. A precious gold. A precious testimony. Lord. Help us. We pray. As each one. In our own way. We know the pressure to conform.

[40 : 44] We know the world. Would try to conform us. Yet Lord. We must have conviction. We must have conviction. We must have courage. Lord. Not a courage. That's born of our own.

Self. Energy. Lord. Not a courage. That comes from. Within. But a courage. That comes from you. We know that you have.

Not given us the spirit of fear. But a power. Of love. And of a sound mind. We pray that each one might know. That hearts trust today. That. Lord. You've saved me.

I trusted you. We can make that confession. And Lord. We can have that conviction. That stands by that confession. Lord. Help us to have the courage. Of our convictions. Help us Lord.

As we know the world. Is ever more pressuring. For this conforming. That goes on. In every. Quarter of life. And every. Sphere of life.

[41 : 38] We see. This. This constant pressure. This pressure cooker. This peer pressure. Lord. In the schools. For our children. In the kindergartens. Even Lord. For.

Our workplaces. We know. The secular mind. The secular social media. It's all perverted. And against you. Lord. We pray. Help us to.

Swim against the tide. To. Go against the flow. And with that purpose. Like the salmon. Would swim upstream. We'll have that purpose. To stand sure.

And to go. Your way. Instead of the world's way. Lord. Not to bow down. To the idols of men. Of the idols of this world. Not to conform to this world.

But rather to be transformed. As your word does its work. In our minds. And lives. Our hearts. Give us that strength. We pray. Pray for every soul here. That will make that.

[42 : 35] Personal profession. Of faith. Of trust. And will walk in that truth. Lord. Help us. We pray. Lord. Work in our hearts. Lord. Help us to make today.

A turning point. For your glory. In Jesus name. We pray. Amen. Amen. Praise God. Amen.