

Stand Firm for God: Lessons from Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Bible Heroes | Daniel 3 Sermon

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[0:00] Going to God's Word to Daniel 3 is where we'll just start off from but it's really just a launching pad on the theme of standing for God.

! Stand fast. Daniel 3 is where we'll get to shortly. Have you ever felt pressured to compromise your faith? There's many Bible examples of men and women who were challenged and stood, stood firm, stood up in their faith.

They stood in devotion unto God even when it was costly. And we think of the three young Hebrew men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

We can consider them as prime examples of those who stood firm and stood really quite alone in their devotion, in their faith.

And we read from Daniel 3 verse 16, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

[1:07] So the context there is of the challenge they faced as they were the few, the three that stirred when the whole nation bowed down. When the king's rock band beat up the tune and the order was that everyone was to prostrate themselves before the golden idol, that these three were alone, standing, not bowing.

And it reads on, 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.

They stood firm. And we'll see this as a recurring theme. As we think about the Bible heroes that had the same stand, to stand fast. And this call to stand for God is right through scripture.

It's commanded of us. We see, for example, another example, Ephesians 6.13, in the context talking about the armour of God. And it tells us there, So you see two words there, withstand and to stand.

[2:32] Having done all, stand. So when it comes to the end of the day, the bottom line is this, stand. Having done all, to stand. It means to stand firm, to hold one's position.

Don't give way. Hold your ground. It's talking of this active, deliberate stand. This stance, not a passive endurance, but a soldier-like determination.

As in the context there, of the military, of the standing. As soldiers would stand. And it's called here also, notice it says, That you may be able to withstand.

To withstand. So, alike to the stand, is withstand. It's got the sense of a standing against opposition. So it's really, it's the same root word, but it's also talking about a withstanding, as in opposing that which is contrary to our stand.

And it's saying, withstand in the evil day. It's got the sense of further, of standing, of standing your ground. It's a telling of a resistance against opposition.

[3:45] That's grounded in God's strength, not human effort. So stand and withstand. And we see it's commanded. It's a command to us to stand for God.

And Paul tells the Corinthians likewise, He says, Watch ye stand fast in the faith. Quit you like men. Be strong. Watch ye stand fast in the faith.

Quit you like men means to act like men. Or acquit yourselves, is the sense of it. So it's this stance of standing firm. So stand firm. To stand fast in the faith.

It's a call to remain steadfast. A call to consistency in faith. This faith that we stand in, is a faith that we stand fast in.

And we have a manly stance. A courageous stance. It says they'd be strong. It seems like these days, weakness prevails, doesn't it? There's a whole lot of weakness.

[4:45] And we know we're confronted with so many things in this woke world, like we had a bit of a taste of, that I mentioned this morning, from the preachers sharing about his awareness of these things.

That right across the nation, there's a weakening of godly values, of godly stance. And it's not just in the worldly settings of the politics of this world, but it's in churches too.

There's a weakening, a weakness that's prevailing, a weakness that people are weak on the gospel. They're weak on doctrine. There's a weakness that's prevailing. And this is the time that we should act like men, that we should be manly, that we should be strong.

We have need for boldness, for courage. And when we stand, as Noah stood, we think of standing for truth in a world that is wicked. Noah is another example.

Noah stood tall. And he stood for righteousness when the whole world was corrupt. We know the context there. Genesis 6, verse 5 tells us, And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

[5:55] The world has got this plague, this endemic heart of evil. That seems to pervade humanity, doesn't it?

The whole of humanity seems like it's a lost cause. And that was the time of Noah. And it reads, Of Noah though, But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. So the context there, Great wickedness, continual wickedness, but Noah.

There was a difference about Noah. That Noah found grace. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And these are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man. He was righteous. He was perfect.

There was a fullness of his faith. That he was perfect in his generations. And Noah walked with God. Of course we know that he wasn't entirely perfect, in that he was still a man subject to sin. As we see later, has happened with him, that he wasn't without his faults. But we see that he was given grace by God. And that he was able to receive God's saving.

[7:06] And Noah stood up for God, didn't he? And he had obedience in a time where wickedness was prevailing. And was great in the earth. But Noah stood. What an example for you and me.

Can we stand like Noah stood? Even though we might be absolutely outnumbered. You think there was only eight saved of the whole planet. That Noah was given such grace.

And he stood. Even when it was unpopular and not convenient. And it reads on about Noah, verse 22. Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

He wasn't falling for the disobedience and the wickedness. His faithfulness saved his family. And he was used of God in God's plan. And so, brother, sister, for ourselves too.

Isn't it important that we stand? Even though we might feel like Noah sometimes, when it seems hopeless, we're outnumbered in the setting of workplace, of the society, to commit to obeying God.

[8:06] It's counter-cultural, isn't it? And we get, I know, in workplaces, I know, amongst our number, there's influences, there's evil expectations on people, even in workplaces now, to do certain courses, and to have certain indoctrination, have certain views, and not to dare to speak any contrary view.

And yet, we're called to be a people of God, to maintain our integrity, to stand for what is right, in a world that is lost. And to have that difference from the lost, that we prioritise, for example, worship over worldly distractions, that we can have an obedience, we can have a firmness of our faith.

Notice Elijah is another example of that. Elijah stood alone, against the prophets of Baal. He was totally at number two, 850 to one. 1 Kings 18, 21, And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long hold you between two opinions?

How long are you going to sit on the fence for here, between these two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him, Not a word. He called

them to make that stand.

Are you going to stand with God, or are you going to stand with Baal? And when you stand, don't think that it will be easy too. Expect that it will be hard. We know in workplaces, I've encountered it myself, that you can expect it to be hard, to maintain a strong Christian testimony, when there's so much rubbish out there, that's bombarding you, and it's woke stuff.

[9:46] We could talk about the kind of things, the kind of pressures that are on people, to wear certain colours, and to make certain statements, that actually it's not really biblical for me to do that.

And I can't do that. In good conscience, I've got to stand for God. And there's a cost to standing. You see, standing for God, it brings opposition, doesn't it? As Paul urged Timothy, he says, hey, you can expect some persecution.

He says, yea, in all that will, live godly in Christ Jesus, shall, shall suffer persecution. When you stand firm for your faith, you stand with conviction, you stand for your convictions, you refuse to participate, in questionable, or sinful activities, at work, that you're going to face mockery, and persecution.

I wonder if in these modern days, we've lost something of that resolution of the faith, that we're willing to stand, even though it's going to cost us, to stand even though it's going to hurt, even though we might lose favour.

God honours faithfulness too, doesn't he? We know there's a story, a familiar example, during World War II, there was a Dutch watchmaker, named Corrie ten Boom, and she hid Jews from the Nazis, in her home.

[11:06] She and her family, knew that the Gestapo, could come any time, arrest, torture, or death. They were real risks, and one night, they were betrayed, and Corrie was sent, to a concentration camp.

Yet later she wrote, there is no pit, so deep, that God's love, is not, deeper still. She was standing for God, when it cost her everything, but she stood, anyway.

She stood, anyway. Standing is going to cost you. We're living in a hostile world, we should brave up, and be prepared. Be prepared, to face tough times, knowing that God will see you through, he'll help you stand.

So, another aspect, is we ought to have, the courage to stand, the courage to stand for God. No matter what, when we're standing, facing persecution, as the example of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we saw their courage, the boldness, that they had.

Everyone else was bowing down, but them. That should be the heart, we should have, shouldn't it? That spirit, that hey, everyone else is bowing down, just because everybody else is doing it, doesn't make it right.

[12:17] I'm going to do what's right, according to my conviction, from God. And, they refused to bow, to Nebuchadnezzar's idol. As we read, again, that they said to the king, 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.

Not only did they stand up, but they spoke up. And these young men, they made their stand. Some might have thought, well, maybe I could just bow down, for a quick bow, and that would cover it, and sort of, no one would pick on me.

You know, just do a little bow, and think nothing more of it. But no, they weren't, they weren't about compromising, in the, eensy weensy little bit. They said, we're not going to bow at all, because we know that's wrong.

And, so it led the king, afterwards, to acknowledge their God, the power of their God. We can see that God, vindicated them, and blessed them, and, brought something good, out of that, difficult situation.

[13:30] Now, brothers and sisters here tonight, can I tell you that, Christians are being killed. They're being killed, in the Congo. They're being killed today. Our brothers and sisters, our brothers and sisters in Christ, there's a recent article, of 70 Christians, were beheaded, in a Protestant church, in the Congo.

It's happening right now. If we're in a different place, in a different setting, well, the same setting, of worship, of fellowship, that this could happen.

It's real. It's real people. We're just removed from it. But if we're in the nation, or Congo, we would be facing it right now. It could happen tonight. That's a very real thought, isn't it?

We should be confronted with that. Will you stand? Will you stand in your faith? Will you stand for Christ? And your stand can point people, to the Lord. We see that we ought to be ready, to explain the hope, that is in us, to every man, that asketh us the reason, of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.

We should be ready. Ready to stand. And ready to be a witness. Witness. And it can be hard, in a workplace setting, can't it? Of course we need to be respectful, of it's the boss's time, we're getting paid.

[14:46] But hey, we can still be that witness, for Christ. And take the opportunity, when it comes. It's going to take some courage, for you to stand. It's going to take courage, for you, to share that faith, with others.

We see that Daniel stood, when it was the king's decree, the law of the land, that banned him, that barred him, from praying, to the true God.

So what did Daniel do? Now when Daniel knew, that the writing was signed, the law, was made law, he went into his house, and his windows being open, in his chamber, towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees, three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks, before his God, as he did a full time.

He did just what he always did. He stood true. He stood firm. He didn't change his convictions, to suit the environment. Standing for God, often means standing, against the crowd, being willing to stand alone.

How will we respond, when the rubber hits the road, when the test comes? Will we stand? Or will we cower? Will we compromise? Will we, kind of scurry away?

[15:58] Will we fail the test? Or will we stand? Stand. We may feel afraid. It's natural.