

Faithful Resistance

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[0 : 00] Amen. Well, please open up your Bibles to the book of Daniel. We'll be in Daniel chapter 3 this morning. We've made our way to Daniel chapter 3. And so when you found that in your Bibles, let's stand for the reading of God's Word.

Daniel chapter 3. King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was 60 cubits and its breadth 6 cubits.

He set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then king Nebuchadnezzar sent together the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that king Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that king Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And the herald proclaimed aloud, You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

[1 : 32] And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning, fiery furnace. Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Therefore, at that time, certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever. You, king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music shall fall down and worship the golden image.

And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning, fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

These men, O king, pay no attention to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar, in a furious rage, commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought.

So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?

[2 : 55] Now if you are ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good.

But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning, fiery furnace. And who is the God who will deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace. And he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated.

And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to cast them into the burning, fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning, fiery furnace. [4 : 12] Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace was overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning, fiery furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, Did we not cast three men bound into the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king. He answered and said, But I see four men, unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning, fiery furnace, and he declared, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out and come here. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men.

[5 : 19] The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him and set aside the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own god.

Therefore I make a decree, any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses laid in ruins for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. This is the holy word of God. If you would, let's pray once more.

Lord, we have read your word, we've opened it up, and now we seek your help to understand it. So we pray, Father, would you give us ears to hear and hearts to receive your word this morning. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. Amen. On April 18, 1521, Martin Luther stood at the Diet of Worms in front of Emperor Charles V where he would have to answer two questions.

[6 : 49] Question number one, did he actually write the 25 pieces of literature that they had assembled there together for their examination, which according to them contained heretical teachings against the church and her doctrine?

And if so, question number two, would he recant? Luther was already officially excommunicated from the church, but now he faced an additional threat of the imperial ban, which would come with it, the threat against his life.

So Luther, wisely so, requested a little bit of time to pray. He retreated and prayed and came back to face the emperor and gave one of what I believe is one of the most moving speeches in all of Christian history.

He said the following, Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason, for I believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves, I consider myself convicted by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, which is my basis.

My conscience is captive to the word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's own conscience is neither safe nor sound.

[8 : 06] Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me. Amen. Don't you love stories like this? Stories like this from church history of Christians taking a stand at risk to their own life.

They move us. We find encouragement from them because while we may never have to stand before the emperor, if we belong to the kingdom of God, we will face trials and temptations and tribulations here in the kingdom of man.

The stories like Luther's and like Daniel's and like Shadrach's, Meshach's, and Abednego here in Daniel chapter 3 this morning show us what can we expect as citizens of God's kingdom living here in the kingdom of man.

The question that I want us to ask this morning as we look at Daniel chapter 3 is simply what can we expect? What can we expect as citizens of God's kingdom here in the kingdom of man?

What should you expect if you are a follower of Christ here in the kingdom of man? I want to give us three expectations from Daniel chapter 3. Three expectations. Number one, first, God's people should expect temptation and tension.

[9 : 25] God's people should expect temptation and tension. Look there starting in verse 1 of chapter 3. You remember last week in chapter 2 God gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream of this great image.

You remember this dream? And the head of the image was made of gold. And you remember this represented Nebuchadnezzar and it represented the kingdom of Babylon. But the rest of the image it was composed of these different materials and these different materials represented different kingdoms that would come after Nebuchadnezzar.

This was God's revealed plan for the future. Well, it seems like here in chapter 3 Nebuchadnezzar has his own plan. He makes his own image.

This image, if we follow the measurements, it's about 90 feet tall and about 9 feet wide and it's not made up of different composite parts. What's it made up out of? It's all made of gold.

As if to say, as long as I can, for as much as I can, I'm going to rule over my kingdom and I'm going to get the glory. We need to understand this image is an image of pride and defiance.

[10 : 37] Which is interesting because Daniel tells us that Nebuchadnezzar builds this giant golden image in the plain of Dura, which is the exact place, geographically, where the Tower of Babel was constructed.

All these years ago in Genesis chapter 11, you remember the Tower of Babel where all the peoples of the earth, all the nations of the earth gathered together in defiance against God's command to scatter and spread the earth, spread his glory amongst the earth.

And they gathered together to say, let us make a name for ourselves. This was defiance and pride. History is repeating itself here. See, there's this theme, this thread of pride and defiance and self-exaltation that runs all the way through human history beginning with the Garden of Eden and that will not be finally done away with until the return of Christ.

This is characteristic of the kingdom of man. So we see here, this is a man-centered, self-exalting worship service.

And Nebuchadnezzar sets up. He gathers all the officials, all his people, and he makes a proclamation, verse 4, that you are commanded, O peoples, nations, languages, when you hear the sound of all of these musical instruments that I will not read again.

[11 : 58] And every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. And whoever does not worship and does not fall down shall immediately face judgment.

They'll be cast into a burning, fiery furnace. Well, verse 7 says, the music begins to play, the worship service has begun, and all the people's, nations, languages fell down and worshiped worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up, all the peoples that is except for three.

The Chaldeans, they noticed these men refusing to bow down to the image. And so verse 8 tells us that certain Chaldeans came forward and ratted them out.

They said, these certain Jews, Nebuchadnezzar, who you appointed over the affairs of Babylon, sounds like a little bit of jealousy there, possibly. They pay no attention to you.

They don't serve your gods. They don't worship the golden image that you set up. And as you would expect, Nebuchadnezzar was furious about this. And he brought the men in before him. He said, is this true?

[13 : 07] Do you really not worship my gods? Do you really disregard my command? Do you really not bow down to this golden image that I set up? But he said, here's one more shot. I'll stand here and watch.

And when you hear the music, if you will bow down and worship, then well and good. But if you won't, there's a burning, fiery furnace waiting for you.

And who is the God who will deliver you out of my hands? And now, finally, we get to hear from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Verse 16.

Look there with me. I love how they respond to the king. They say, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

If this be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver from the fiery furnace. And he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, do you hear that? But even if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

[14:14] You know, this is the only time in all of scripture that we hear Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego speak. And it's here in this moving speech.

Now these three men, they give us an example of what it looks like to refuse to bow the knee to anyone or anything outside of the one true God.

Now these three men, they teach us how to resist the idols of our time and how to live in the tension that we all feel being a citizen of God's kingdom here in the kingdom of man.

Now I'll never forget when I was living in Charlotte, I walked, I took a walk one day, I lived down the road from a Buddhist temple. And I walked down the road and went into this Buddhist temple and I saw lining the walls were hundreds of physical idols.

These man-made images, these man-made gods that somebody had to craft and piece together with their own hands. Somebody had to pick them up and put them on the shelf. From time to time, somebody has to come by and dust off these dirty gods.

[15:20] They've got to walk carefully, they don't want to bump into the shelf because if they do, that god will fall off the shelf and shatter into pieces. But I saw people in there bowing down and worshipping these false images.

And to me, it seems so obvious. This is foolishness. This is empty. Why are they doing this? But church, we need to understand the truth is that all of us are tempted to worship idols.

All of us worship idols. We may never bow down to physical images, physical idols on a wall, but I want to be clear with you this morning. All of us are tempted to idolatry.

Every one of us is prone to worship and serve created things rather than the creator. That's idolatry. Idolatry isn't simply bowing down to a physical image on a wall or a golden statue that's 90 feet tall. Idolatry is allowing anyone or anything to take God's rightful place in our heart. So we may never bow down to a golden statue, but we may worship our bank account.

[16:30] we may bow down to the attention of others. We may not ever bow down to golden statues, but we may make idols of our spouse, of our children, of our grandchildren, of our jobs.

We may be drawn to adopt the idols of our culture. You realize our culture idolizes sex, self-determination, social status, social approval, the accumulation of stuff.

How much stuff can I get? The newest gadget, the newest thing, the nicer house, the nicer car. Church, whatever it may be, the kingdom of man would love to make anything the center of our heart's affection besides the one person who rightly deserves to be there.

We have to expect this and resist it. Not only this, these three men also teach us how to live in the tension as citizens of God's kingdom living here in the kingdom of man.

Do you ever feel that tension? If you're a Christian, again, your identity is that you are a citizen of God's kingdom, which means the Lord is your ultimate authority.

[17:44] You bow the knee ultimately to Him. But even so, we live here on earth, here in all in all, South Carolina, here in America. We are a citizen of this physical place and we live under earthly authority.

So how do we handle that tension? Our statement of faith, it has an article concerning civil government and it says this, it says, we believe that civil government has been divinely appointed for the benefit and good order of human society and that public officials are to be prayed for, honored, and conscientiously obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and the prince of the kings of the earth.

So on the one hand, we believe, along with Paul in Romans 13, we believe that we're called to honor and obey our earthly authorities.

We believe that they're appointed by God Himself and that means whether or not we like them, whether or not we voted for them, whether or not we believe they have rightfully taken that place of authority, we believe that we are called to pray for and honor those earthly authorities that have been placed over us.

But on the other hand, we believe that we must disobey any earthly authority who would command us to do anything God forbids or forbid us to do anything God commands.

[19:22] You hear that? We must disobey any earthly authority who would command us to do anything God forbids or would forbid us to do anything God commands.

Well, clearly here, Nebuchadnezzar commands them to do something God forbids and so they remember who they truly serve and church, so must we. We would be wise to expect temptation and tension here in the kingdom of man.

If we're a citizen of God's kingdom, we should expect temptation and tension and second, we should expect that when we resist temptation and when we resist our earthly authorities here in this world, we should expect that that will not be well received.

The second expectation here for God's people, God's people should expect trials and tribulations here in the kingdom of man. God's people should expect trials and tribulations here in the kingdom of man.

You know, there are some people who think that if you are one of God's people or maybe if you just have enough faith that you won't face any hardship in your life.

[20 : 43] You won't face any trial. If you're right in the center of God's will, all should go well with you. You won't face any issue, but I want to make as clear as I possibly can this morning that's false.

Story after story after story after story from God's word, story after story after story after story from the history of God's people and church history tells us that here in the kingdom of man, God's people should expect trials and tribulations.

You know, about a month after Luther's speech, the emperor, you can imagine, did not receive that well. The emperor condemned Luther as a notorious heretic and an enemy of the state and he forbid the citizens of the empire from reading or spreading any of Luther's ideas and he even gave permission for any citizen to kill Martin Luther without any consequence.

His resistance was not well received. And here, after Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego give their speech in front of the king in verse 19, we see again Nebuchadnezzar is filled with fury and he orders the furnace to be heated seven times more than it was usually heated and he orders some of the strong men of his army to tie them up and to cast them into the fire and in fact, verse 22, it says, the fire was so overheated, his order was so urgent that the flame killed those strong men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and these three men fell bound into the fiery furnace.

They were persecuted for their loyalty to the Lord and to his kingdom. And of course, we know how this story eventually ends and we'll get there, but I'd like to point out here in the second point that if their story ended right here, with these men being thrown into the fiery furnace, with these men being punished and persecuted for bowing the knee to the Lord, if their story ended right here, it would be a fairly common story in church history.

[22 : 54] The extraordinary part of the story is not the suffering. It's the miraculous deliverance from the suffering that's extraordinary. But the suffering here, the consequence for being faithful in the present evil age, that is to be expected for them and church, for us.

1 Peter chapter 4 tells us, do not be surprised when the fiery trial comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you.

Don't be surprised by it. Expect it, in other words. You know, this sounds strange to our modern ears, doesn't it? Because here in our current time and our current place, here in America in 2024, we have it pretty safe, don't we?

It does seem strange when a fiery trial comes upon us, doesn't it? But we need to understand that the comfort that we enjoy here, right now, is not the norm for the history of the church, and it's not the norm for the global church, of which we are a small part.

Open Doors released the results of their 2024 World Watch List study. It's a study that analyzes Christian persecution throughout the world, and their most recent numbers show that on average, 13 Christians are killed every day for professing faith in Christ.

[24 : 22] That's about one every two hours. And so, from the time we gathered for Sunday school to the time we go out here to celebrate and eat cookies, church, a brother or sister has given their life for professing faith in Christ.

During their research period, they found that over 4,000 Christians were detained without trial, arrested, sentenced, or imprisoned. 3,900 believers were abducted, more than 46,000 Christians suffered some sort of abuse, nearly 300,000 Christians were forced to leave their homes, go into hiding, or flee their country of origin, and more than 14,000 churches, Christian schools, hospitals, and other buildings were targeted last year, which was a 700% increase over the previous year.

I don't share all of that to worry you or to scare you, but to tell you that we ought to expect this sort of thing here in the kingdom of man.

And Jesus tells us what to expect in Luke chapter 21. He told his disciples, you will be hated by all for my name's sake, but not a hair of your head will perish.

By your endurance you will gain your lives. Church, I just want to ask, does that sound strange to you? I'll give you another example, another story, this one from the book of Acts, where Paul comes to Lystra, and the Jews come from Antioch and from Iconium, and they come and they beat him so badly that they dragged him out of the city and they thought he was dead.

[25 : 59] You know this story? But it says that he gets up and the very next day he goes on preaching the gospel, and then when they preached in that city and made many disciples in that city, it says he went back to Lystra and back to Iconium and back to Antioch, right back where he was just beaten half to death, right back where his enemies had just come from, and it says he strengthened the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

Y'all better believe that's a sermon they would not forget. Church, we will suffer on the way to glory. We have to expect this. And that may sound intimidating, it may sound discouraging to you, but we also should take comfort, church, that for the children of God no trial is wasted.

The very same fire that the kingdom of this world would use to destroy the people of God, the Lord would use to refine the people of God.

And we just sang a few moments ago, didn't we? When through fiery trials thy pathway should lie, my grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply. The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design your dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

See, the enemy, he intends the flame to destroy us, but the Lord designs the flame to purify us, to burn away the dross and to purify and refine the gold.

[27 : 42] I'll give you one more story. I told you Martin Luther's story, I'll share another. This one from the English Reformation. It's a story of Latimer and Ridley. Do you know those names? Maybe not.

Ridley was an outspoken critic of Bloody Mary who earned that name, if you don't know, by burning hundreds of Protestants at the stake. And both of these men were arrested and were tried.

They went to trial for treason and for heresy, which under Mary's new reformed heresy law came with the punishment, the sentence of being burned at the stake. And so, you know, this might seem like a good time to walk it back.

It might seem like a good time to beg for mercy, but instead what we see is they faced this trial with boldness and confidence in the Lord. Apparently, during the public trial, Ridley would put a cap on his head any time the Pope's name was mentioned.

When they brought up charges that Ridley denied the validity of the Mass, he simply said, Christ made one perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. Neither can any man reiterate that sacrifice of his.

[28 : 51] When the day came for them to die, Latimer walked slowly up to the stake. He was older than Ridley, but Ridley walked straight up as quickly as he could. And when they gave him the opportunity to recant his statements against Mary and against the Catholic Church in England, he said, so long as the breath is in my body, I will never deny my Lord Christ and his known truth.

And they chained these men to the stake, they placed a bag of gunpowder on their necks and they lit the wood beneath their feet. Fox's book of martyrs tells us Latimer called out to Ridley and said, be of good comfort, Master Ridley and play the man.

We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out. Church, how many stories can we tell?

Now, the day may never come for you to have to pay a price like that. It may. But whatever form it may take, while we're here in Babylon, church, we should expect trials and tribulations.

Are you ready? Will you remain faithful to your Lord? We should expect to suffer here on the way to glory. But third, we praise God that God's people should expect third, total deliverance in the end.

[30 : 16] God's people should expect total deliverance in the end. Now, this was the hope of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Let me read it again. Did you catch it? Verse 17.

It said, Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand. Do you hear that confidence? But even if not, even if He doesn't save

us from this burning, fiery furnace, even if He doesn't spare our life from this present persecution, we will not worship your golden image.

See, their ultimate hope wasn't necessarily that the Lord would deliver them from this trial, although they knew God was able. Their ultimate hope was that in the end, the Lord would deliver them from every trial.

We believe He's able and that He ultimately will deliver us. But even if not from this trial, Nebuchadnezzar, we will never bow the knee to any God but the one true Lord.

And we see that God does something extraordinary here in verse 24. It says, King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and he rose up in haste and he declared, Hey, didn't we cast three men into the fire?

[31 : 27] And they said, Yeah, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, that's three. He answered and said, But I see four men and they're not tied up anymore. They're unbound and they're not suffering.

They're walking in the midst of the fire and they're not in pain. They're not hurt and the appearance of the fourth guy is different. He's like a son of the gods. And Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace and he declared, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out and come here.

So they come out of the fire and all the king's men gathered together and they see that fire, that fire of persecution, that fire of this world's punishment of the people of God, that fire of suffering that the enemy would inflict on those who remain faithful to the Lord, that fire had no power over these men. Their hair wasn't singed, their cloaks weren't burnt, they had no smell of fire. And in verse 28, Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed, things flip completely on their head, don't they?

He said, verse 28, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him and set aside the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any God except their own.

[32 : 52] Therefore, I make a decree, any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses laid in ruins for there is no other God who is able to rescue in this way.

And the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. A complete reversal has taken place. Do you see it? This is complete, total, miraculous deliverance, not from the fire, but through the fire.

God has brought their ultimate expectation of deliverance into the present moment. It was exactly as God promised in Isaiah 43. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

Through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

What an incredible story. It's incredible. But what I want us to understand is that as incredible as this act of deliverance was, this deliverance, this salvation, this redemption from the fire is just a small image of the greater deliverance yet to come in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[34 : 23] I wonder if you notice here, church, that the same cycle has happened three times now in the book of Daniel. We're three chapters in. It happened in chapter one, in chapter two, in chapter three.

They all tell the same type of story. Have you seen it? It's not just aimless repetition here. God's people are in exile. They are tempted.

They are tested. They are refined through the fires of suffering and temptation, but the faithful resist. Even in the face of death, they cling to their identity as citizens of God's kingdom.

They put their trust in the Lord and despite the enemy's best attempts to snuff them out, they are delivered, they are exalted, and God is praised. Have you seen that cycle?

Have you caught on yet? Exile, temptation, suffering, salvation, exaltation. There's a pattern here. Church, this is the pattern of every child of God in every age here in the kingdom of man.

[35 : 26] But here's what I want you to understand, church. This is our story because ultimately this is Christ's story. This is our pattern because ultimately this is Jesus' pattern.

If anyone was a stranger in enemy territory, who was it? It was Jesus who was king of another kingdom and yet he stepped down into our fallen world willingly.

Was Jesus not tempted? He was tempted and tried in every way as we are yet without sin. He faced temptation to worship and serve every idol here in the kingdom of man that we are.

Satan brought him up to the top of the mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of this world and said, all this can be mine if you will bow down and serve me. All this can be yours and yet Jesus faithfully resisted and for that church he suffered and eventually he died on the cross in our place. He would not just walk beside us in our suffering. He would take our place and suffer the wrath of God that we deserved in our place as a substitute in our place.

[36 : 38] He bore our wrath, our punishment. But church, death would not be the end for him. He would walk out of the grave resurrected, raised to life, vindicated and exalted and in his exaltation God is forever praised.

Do you see the pattern? This story is ultimately pointing us forward to the story, to Jesus and to our life in him.

Church, our pattern is Christ's pattern. By faith in him we are united to Jesus Christ. His life is our life.

His righteousness is our righteousness. His glory is our hope and our glory. So again, 1 Peter chapter 4, we rejoice insofar as you share in Christ's sufferings so that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Or again, as Paul says in Romans chapter 8, that we are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him that we may also be glorified with him.

[37 : 53] This is what we ought to expect and hope for. Church, we can cling to the promises of God in any suffering in any trial knowing that if we have been united with him in a death like his we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

We can expect total deliverance from every trial because Christ has defeated all our enemies and he is exalted and we are one with him through faith.

I'll remind you again of a quote that I know I've shared this before, Charles Simeon. He says, we must not mind a little suffering for Christ's sake. When I am getting through a hedge if my head and my shoulders are safely through I can bear the pricking of my legs.

Let us rejoice in the remembrance that our holy head has surmounted all his suffering and triumphed over death. Let us follow him patiently. We shall soon be partakers of his victory.

Do you believe this? Church, is this what sustains you during your trials and suffering here in this age? Nonbeliever, is this your hope?

[39 : 12] Is this what your hope is in? If you're hearing this and you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, I'm sure all of this sounds very attractive as a call to follow Jesus, right? This is really appealing stuff that you'll suffer here in this life.

Church, Jesus is worth it and the end is certain and the king commands you this moment to repent and put your faith in him. He has paid your price and he has victory over all the powers of darkness and it's yours by faith in the king.

If you have put your faith in him, the church, what do we have to fear? What can man do to you? What can separate us from the love of God and Christ Jesus our Lord? nothing.

Friend, what are you expecting life to be like here in the kingdom of man? I'd be willing to bet that when you pack up and you prepare for a journey far from home, if you knew you were going to be away, didn't know maybe how long, you would want to be as prepared as you possibly could.

You would want to know what to expect. Stories like this are gifts from a sovereign God through his word to show us what we can expect in the kingdom of man until he brings us home.

[40 : 35] I'll share one final expectation of all of God's people here as we close. This is our great hope. Ironically, it's the exact reverse of what we see happen here in Daniel chapter 3.

These three faithful men refused to bow to a false God and were tried for it and were found guilty and were cast into the fire. But when Jesus Christ returns and delivers his people at last, all who refuse to bow the knee to King Jesus will be tried and will be found guilty and will be cast into the lake of fire.

And instead of gathering to worship the idols of this world, in the end, Revelation chapter 7 tells us that all of God's people, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, will be standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

Church, that's our hope. That's our expectation. salvation. Let's be a church that faithfully lives each day here in this kingdom in eager expectation of that great glorious day in that kingdom when it

comes in full.

Amen? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for the gospel of Christ, the greatest deliverance from our true danger, our true enemy.

[42 : 16] Lord, our greatest danger that we face is not physical. Lord, it's our own sin, our own guilt, that we are not right with you, that you stand against us in our sin.

That's our greatest danger and yet, Lord, you've supplied the greatest escape by sending your own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, Lord, to pay the price that we have earned so that any who come to you in faith might know true life, might belong to your kingdom.

So, Father, we pray that we would live as citizens of your glorious kingdom even while we live here in the kingdom of man. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.