

Fireproof Faith

August 17 – 18, 2024

Welcome back to wk. 3 in our series, Fireproof Faith. Today we are gonna again follow the story of Daniel and his faithful fireproof friends, and see how their faith was tested by one fo real kine fire. And learn and apply those faith lessons of 2.6K years ago to our lives today when we face our life's challenges where we too have the choice to bow down and blend in OR stand up and stand out for God. And as God's special people, I hope we too, choose like Daniel and his faithful fireproof faith friends, to stand up and stand out for God even if those choices place us in the fire where there's pain of maybe losing of your reputation, maybe even a relationship, or a job. But as we'll learn from today if you choose to stand up and stand out for God, not only will God promise to be there with you giving you the strength to withstand bowing down to all those temptations, but he'll promote you, raising you to higher positions of influence. Are you ready to learn how to stand up and stand out as God's special people in all the places God has placed you? Great! That's good because we all face the pressures of this world to bow down and blend in.

Pastor Mark kicked off our series two wks ago speaking about who we are as believers of Jesus, we are different, as Apostle Peter points out, we are aliens and strangers in this world. We live by different values and convictions. And that this world is not our home and we are just passing through.

Now remember who you are: You are sons and daughters of God almighty, you're a prince and princess, fellow heirs with Jesus, you are royalty, Agents of Aloha. So that means you should stand out and not blend in and adopt the values and

convictions of this world. And today, we'll see how Daniel's friends, and who are they? Rach, Shack, and Benny. And see how they stood up and stand out for God.

Remember we have the one secret weapon of God as we heard last wk from PLori. We have the power of prayer, power to connect and commune with our almighty God.

Tonight/Today, we'll look at the key story regarding fireproofing our faith. It's a great story that was the story that our youth learned and sang about at Youth Camp, learning that they are castaways in a world.

You may know this story, but I'd like all of us to focus on the lessons we can learn from this story and apply them to our lives today. Let's read together this story. We'll learn together as I have some pre-reading questions to help you follow the story.

Prereading Questions: (keep these questions up after reading the story)

(KEYNOTE) Have those Qs come up one at a time.

1. What were the people called to do by the King?
2. How did the people respond to this order?
3. For those who disobeyed this order, there were consequences. What was the attitude and response of those who disobeyed
4. Did they know how God was gonna save them? Were they saved from the fire? What happened to them in the fire?
5. What was the end result of those standing up and standing out for their God?

(Keynote the entire story).

1King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. 2Then he sent messages to the high officers, officials, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials to

come to the dedication of the statue he had set up. 3So all these officials came and stood before the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4Then a herald shouted out, “People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king’s command! 5When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar’s gold statue. 6Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”

7So at the sound of the musical instruments, all the people, whatever their race or nation or language, bowed to the ground and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 8But some of the astrologers went to the king and informed on the Jews. 9They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “Long live the king! 10You issued a decree requiring all the people to bow down and worship the gold statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments. 11That decree also states that those who refuse to obey must be thrown into a blazing furnace. 12But there are some Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up.”

13Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him. When they were brought in, 14Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? 15I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?”

16Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. 17If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. 18But even if he doesn’t, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

19Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with rage. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. 20Then he ordered some of the strongest men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. 21So they tied them up and threw them into the furnace, fully dressed in their pants, turbans, robes, and other garments. 22And because the king, in his anger, had demanded such a hot fire in the furnace, the flames killed the soldiers as they threw the three men in. 23So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, securely tied, fell into the roaring flames.

24But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?" "Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied. 25"Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a god!" 26Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the flaming furnace and shouted: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stepped out of the fire.

27Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn't even smell of smoke!

28Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue his servants who trusted in him. They defied the king's command and were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. 29Therefore, I make this decree: If any people, whatever their race or nation or language, speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn limb from limb, and their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble. There is no other god who can rescue like this!"

30Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions in the province of Babylon (Daniel 3 NLT).

Discuss passage and show picture while going over those pre-reading Qs
(Keynote)

In our world today, do we face having to bow down to a 90' tall and nine feet wide gold statue? But we bow down to so many other present day idols. The idols of today are still alive and well and people are bowing down to them.

The God of this world is more sinister than King N. as he doesn't always force us to bow down to him, but he lures us to bow down to him and his values. He allures us with the glamour and glitz of this world and he tricks us to bow down on our own accord.

We can get guidance from what John says in his letter about what the world offers.

15Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. 16For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. 17And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever (1 John 2:15 – 16 NLT).

The fulfilling of the self, everything fo “Me” idol. Everything that feels good, da stuff of this world (all the material stuff, accumulation of stuff, the more), pride of achievements, those are our real American idols of today. Not the T.V show.

It was John Calvin who famously wrote, The Human Heart is an Idol Factory **(keynote)**

Idols don’t come from Apple, Amazon, or Acura. Idols come from inside of us, from our hearts. Just as pain is a symptom of a diseased heart, idols are a symptom of spiritual heart disease. Idolatry is the heart disease of replacing God as the center of all things with anything else and it is something that our heart is attracted towards so naturally.

Those can be in a form of a material item, comfort, a relationship, achievement/ career advancement, and as good and God things as those could be, they can become idols. The God of today will dangle lessor gods, idols and attract and lure us to pursue them, bow down to them.

Share how we are lured like Octopus/Tako by what seems good, but will snag us.

That’s why we gotta guard our hearts.

Rac, Shaq, and Benny knew their God, knew their identity, and knew that their God is worthy to be honored above all other Gods. They had the integrity to stand up, stand against, and stand out amongst the crowd.

We all need a heart check. When was the last time you did a heart check? Where are your affections, attention, and attachments in your life? Ask our God to search you and know your anxious heart and ask him to lead you to the path everlasting. That was David's prayer. **(Keynote)**

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalms 139:23 – 24 NIV).

Examples of today: Then we rush out to buy the newest item, garment or gadget and the whole process starts over. This insatiable desire for more, better, and newer stuff is nothing more than greed, envy, jealousy, and covetousness.

Second big idol, we worship at the altar of our own pride and ego. This often takes the form of an obsession with careers and jobs. Workalolics, spending way more than 40 hours a week. Even on the weekends and during vacations, our laptops are humming and our minds are whirling with thoughts of how to make our businesses more successful, how to get that promotion, how to get the next raise, how to close the next deal.

Finally, most destructively, we make the idol, the altar of the pleasure & fulfillment of the self and no care about nobody else except "me". This shows itself in self-indulgence through your own interests, alcohol, drugs, sexual sins, and food. Whatever makes you feel good, at the moment that is.

God is looking for the Rac, Shaq and Bennies of today who are willing to stand up, stand against, and stand out in this world for Him. And when you do, he promises to be with you, like he was with Rac, Shaq and Benny.

If we can't stand up for God against all those allures of this world, we'll fall for anything. God has placed you in your field of Dura just like those three. And I

hope God has placed others around you to stand up together to make a stand for Jesus cuz we mo betta togedda! No foget dat!

God's promises to be with you in your fire. This is what Peter says. **(Keynote)**

12Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. 13Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. 14If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you.

Peter says, welcome to the Aliens and Strangers, Agents of Aloha, club. Fiery trials are a part of our identity. So if you are insulted because you stand up, you'll be blessed as you'll stand out for Jesus. As the Hawaii Pidgin tell, "you goin be good inside".

And you can hold onto the promise that as you go through your fiery trial, that God will be with you and save in not necessarily from the fire, but will save you in the fire. Let's read. (KEYNOTE).

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand (Isaiah 41:10 NLT).

TESTIMONY: I want you to hear one young man's stand that placed him in his fire, hear how God was with him in the fire and most importantly how God elevated him through this stance.

When the heat is on, and you are tempted to bow down like everyone else, the test will be, will you shrink back like everyone else or stand up and stand out for Jesus. We will all feel the pressures of this world to conform or pay the price. It could be the death of a relationship, the death of our reputation, a job, etc.

Listen up real good. God's gonna place each of us in situations like that, why? Remember, we are aliens and strangers in this world. God's kingdom values are so different from this world's here and now, what makes me feel good to me values of this world. Remember who you are in those moments. You are Agents of Aloha. Know that God will be with you in your fire as you stand up and stand out for him. Remember God's promise.

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand (Isaiah 41:10 NLT).

Ohana Group Discussion Qs:

1. What did the Holy Spirit highlight to you from this message on fireproofing your faith?
2. Share a moment where you were/are tempted to bow down and blend in in a situation where you knew/know your faith in God was/is at stake? Share a victory story and a not-so-victorious story.
3. Reflect honestly on your life and share what are the potential idols that attract and allure you today?
4. In those moments of temptation, what will help you withstand bowing down to those temptations? What lessons did you learn from this message?
5. Pray for one another to stand up and stand out as Agents of Aloha, Aliens and Strangers in this world for Jesus.