

# Advent 2017 – PEACE

## Daniel 3

What they faced:

- Cultural pressure to conformity (even though God said worship was for Him alone)
  - Conformity was to idolatry, not godliness
- Outrage from a lack of conformity (v.13) – led to use of power against God’s people
- If not conformity than compliance (v.14-15)

We have peace because God is in control

- Peace – wholeness, not tranquility

### They knew God

- “Who is a god...our God” (v.15-17)
- Track record: Egypt, Red Sea, wilderness, Promised Land, Philistines, Goliath, etc.
- The only reason they were there was because God had chosen to deliver them INTO the hands of the Babylonians
- Knowing = intimacy, not merely information (faucet)

They knew three things regarding God

1. He is in control – Daniel 2.45, Ps. 115.1-3
2. He is worth speaking up for (v.16)
3. He is worth following (v.18) – proof that you know Him (1 John 2.3-4)

### They trusted God

- He will deliver us or we will die
  - Those were the two options as they saw them
  - Role of emotions in relation to faith
    - Both present and powerful, but don’t have to take priority
    - If your feelings have the final say instead of your faith, what you have is insecurity clamoring for comfort and a desire to make the feeling of being unsettled go away
  - The importance of “we” – it’s good to have friends to stand with you (though you have to stand by yourself at times)
  - “My world may be out of control, but my God is in control” – their peace allowed them to be faithful
  - As so often He does, He came up with an unanticipated way of deliverance
- Better than deliverance was presence - He was with them

Communion as a reminder that God is with us

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are three examples of cultural pressure to conform to a cultural standard (or idol) that you personally have experienced? When and where did it happen? What was the result? Was there pushback (or outrage) to deal with?
2. What stories from the Bible can you point to that show God is in control? Are there commonalities you can discern from the stories your group identified? How do those work to strengthen your faith in light of what you may be facing right now?
3. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were willing to be obedient, even if it cost them their lives. What is the most difficult thing God has asked you to do in obedience to Him? Read Philippians 2.5-11. How does Jesus serve as our example?
4. Reread 1 John 2.3-4. Read John 14.15-23. What is the test of our knowing God and loving God? Read James 2.14-17. Between these three passages (and many more like them), why do you think God keeps holding obedience as the true measurement of our faith?
5. In Daniel 3, God came up with a third, unanticipated way of deliverance. Reading from 3.24-30, what were the outcomes of that deliverance?