

“Mighty God Will Deliver Us!”

Daniel 3:13-18

Intro. – One summer evening during a violent thunderstorm a mother was tucking her little boy into bed. She was about to turn off the light when she heard, “Mommy, will you sleep with me tonight?” The mother gave a reassuring hug and said, “I can’t, Honey. I have to sleep in Daddy’s room.” There was a short silence until the little guy looked up at his mother and said, “The big sissy!”

Is our God in any way a Sissy? Do you think of God being weak and if so in what way? Just how mighty is our God and can we depend upon Him to strengthen, deliver and sustain us?

The book of Daniel contains accounts of the Bible that hold some of my fondest boyhood memories. In the opening verses of Daniel we learn of four young men who immediately become the focal point of this Biblical narrative. Their names were: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (1:6).

These four fit into this important portion of God’s Word. Because of Judah’s sin, Nebuchadnezzar was permitted by God to come and take captive Jerusalem and the Jews 586 B.C. (Babylonian captivity). These four Jews were taken and put into the court of King Nebuchadnezzar. In chapter 2, the king has a dream. Nebuchadnezzar orders all magicians, conjurers, sorcerers and the Chaldeans to not only tell the dream itself, but to tell the meaning of it. He did this with the threat of death (2:10). Daniel prayed and asked his three friends to pray as well. God gave to Daniel a detailed picture of the dream and its interpretation (2:31-35). Nebuchadnezzar’s response is remarkable --2:47 *“The king answered Daniel and said, ‘Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.’* It sounded as though the king was about to be converted doesn’t it? But he was far from that, for we read in chapter 3 that Nebuchadnezzar erected a golden image and demanded all to worship it... (Read the text)

As a song writer put it: “They wouldn’t bend, they wouldn’t bow, they wouldn’t burn!” What a faithful trio these three were. Look at the text once more. How we ought to write on our hearts “...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king...” Whenever a hard testing of our faith comes, may we remember these three men of God!

There are thirty verses in chapter 3. Thirteen times their names are repeated like a song of victory – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego!

Purpose: to reinforce our faith in the fact that Mighty God will deliver us

Not suggesting God has promised to shelter us or absorb all troubles/difficulties, but I am reinforcing God’s promise to deliver you and me from sin and death by His grace alone! Let us consider these four men and in doing so we will better realize how mighty our God truly is:

I CONSIDER THEIR POSSIBLE EXCUSES

- note: Daniel and his three friends only recently saved the others of the king’s court... Now in v 8 we read they are in trouble and in vv 14-15 are brought before the king and threatened... How they could have so easily rationalized their way to unfaithfulness in view of their circumstances:
- A. “There is No Use in Resisting”
 1. After all we’re slaves... no one will blame us... resistance is futile...
 2. Situation ethics in 586 B.C.?! – Joseph Fletcher has been credited with being the “father of situation ethics” writing of such in the 1960’s... however, way before he came on the scene...
 3. Point: never a right time to do a wrong thing! Isn’t it more honorable to die in standing for truth/right than to live on in the wrong?!
- B. “We Are in a Foreign Land”
 1. If we were in Israel we would do differently... there would be a law against it there, but here...
 2. Is this what determines our morals – what laws permit?
 - a. in Las Vegas, NV they have legalized prostitution... Does that make it right?
 - b. since 1973 we have legalized abortion... Does that make it right?
 - c. recent moves in state legislations to legalize same sex marriages... Does that make it right?

3. Does the crowd we're with set the stage for our behavior? Is not God the God of all lands/people?

C. "We Are Men of Position"

1. These were set over the affairs of Babylon...i.e. though slaves they were men of position and status in a foreign land...
2. This is the very thing we hear today isn't it? – politicians abandoning their convictions – e.g. how many political figures have you heard say, "I am personally against abortion, but, the will of the people must come first...?"

D. "We Must Not Let This Opportunity Slip"

1. For advancement, influence and power... rubbing elbows with the king etc. ...
2. These three used no such rationalizations...

E. "Our Act Will Only be Symbolic"

1. Won't bow as a religious matter or act of worship, using it as a means of recognizing the king and look at it as a purely political expedient...
2. Rationalizing by saying, "We aren't being called upon to deny our God. Let's bow..."

F. "Everybody Else is Doing It"

1. Probably close to true for the first time in history... Others didn't like it but they did it anyway...
2. How much of today's fads/fashions are determined by the mob? Dare to be Daniels...

Other: "Do more good by being alive..." "What will one time hurt?..."

II CONSIDER THEIR ADMIRABLE CONFIDENCE

- v 16 "... we do not need to give an answer concerning this..." KJV "...we are not careful to answer thee in this matter."

- these 3 had confidence in the Lord, led to confidence each other and proper confidence in themselves!

A. Recognized Their Position

1. Didn't think it was their place to have to concoct an answer to the king – their trust was in God
2. How we need to know God's answer and to have holy confidence in it!
3. Be assured, if we stand for God's purposes, He will stand with us!

B. Plainly Spoke of Their Faith

1. "*If it be so, our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us...*"
2. They truly believed God could save them – had power and authority... God truly is mighty – able to do whatever we could possibly ask or think...

C. Believed God Would Deliver

1. "*...He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.*"
2. Even if they did burn in the fire they would be out of reach of the king's authority!
3. Isn't that the kind of faith we need to have when pressured to choose the wrong path?!...
4. Our God WILL deliver us! It may be in the ultimate sense... but that's most important anyway!
5. We're not promised miraculous healings, quickie solutions or mounds of money even though our God is ABLE to do this and MORE... point is that God promises ultimate deliverance!

III CONSIDER THEIR DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS

- think of the depth of their commitment to God! In effect, they are saying, "You might be a big time king, but there is nothing in your kingdom to make us renounce allegiance to Mighty God! We will not bend, bow or burn no matter what!"

A. Loyalty Did Not Hinge on Deliverance

1. Not striking up a deal with God – i.e. "You save us and we'll serve You..."
2. Remember Job (13:15) "*Though He slay me, I will hope in Him...*"

3. Their plea/conviction was plain: “whatever God’s will is...
4. Point: they didn’t know if it was God’s will they burn, but they did know it was not God’s will to bow to pagan gods!

B. They Determined to do God’s Will at All Costs

1. Their very lives were the cost they were willing to give in order to be faithful to God.
2. They gladly/willing gave those lives to be found faithful

Conclusion: Is this a path too hard for you and me to walk? Certainly, it’s not an easy road, but it can be done with the presence of His Spirit in our lives. God has given His promise never to leave us or forsake us... to not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to handle...

Here are three matters of great importance that Daniel and his three friends exhibited we need to emulate:

1. We must have a clear sense of God’s presence... that He sees us, is with us and will help us in ways we can never imagine...
2. We must have a deep sense of God’s holiness and divine law... especially “You shall have no other gods before me...”
3. We must have a greater sense of God’s divine love... realizing it is possible to betray so great a love...
Let’s join the roll-call of the faithful. Mighty God will deliver us!!