

It's football game yesterday. The Bison mascot parachuted in. I wanted to do that. We couldn't figure it out here. So anyway, hey, some of you might know part of my role here at Sherwood Oaks.

I'm the director of the newly formed Unleashed Network. Tagline, Unleashing the hearts of pastors in their churches. So encouraging other pastors within Bloomington and even around the counties. So occasionally, once a quarter we have. They're already out there.

These oversized greeting cards we'll send to pastors to encourage them. And I always. We always put in gift cards to restaurants of their wife's choosing. So this time I thought we'd honor four pastors and their wives who are all retired and live in Bloomington. The first one to the left.

Some of you might know Tom and Elsie Ellsworth. Major, major part of building the church here. And not building like physically, but just the disciples here. 50 years of total ministry. Preston and Laura Massie ministered in Bloomington all around the country.

Actually 45 years. Doug and Kathy Schroeder, he was Emanuel Baptist here in town. 50 years total. And David and Jill Crumb. I've had lunch with all these guys.

They. They are finishing well. So this time we give the cards. The cards say honor on it. Cause scripture says to honor those who have been in ministry and finishing well.

So there's cards back there for each one of these guys. For Tom and Elsie though, I made a super size card. So that's back there. But we have Sharpies. Just sign it.

You can write a note in there, but just seeing a rainbow of colors, of signatures. And again, I put restaurant gift cards in there, I think as an encouragement and in this case encouraging the men and women who have finished well and they've served God's church well. So anyway, so just make sure you get out and sign that.

I grew up in a church and we had all these Sunday school songs and it drives my wife crazy. Cause I can remember some of these songs I learned when I was seven years old. One of our early fights on our honeymoon was I was singing these Sunday school songs. She's like, why are you keep remembering those? I don't know, I just can't help it.

But one of the songs was this song right here. And you probably don't know it, so I'm not going to ask you to sing it. But here's how it goes. And the fact that I can remember all the words kind of just. It's kind of weird.

Okay. I'm just weird. All right, Go this way. Three Good men lived

very long ago Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. To an idol they would never bow Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego To a fiery furnace they were cast Nebuchadnezzar thought they'd never.

You go slow there never last. But God was there. He never let them go. Shadrach, Meshach, Nebadne Go. All right, sermon's over now.

I'm done. That's all you need to know. So no, but I sing that. Cause it's a Sunday school story and it's really fun. It's a kid's story, but I'm 63 and this story challenges me.

So it's not just a Sunday school story. It's got a real happy ending in that sense. But it's way more than that. Cause it teaches us two things. I'll tell you right away.

The takeaway points already are going to be courage, which is doing something when I'm afraid. And trust, which is believing in the promises of God, even when the odds are against you. So I know we have some kids in the service today because it's a fifth Sunday, no child's programming today. So if you have one of these kids worship notes and if you're an adult, you can probably grab one too. I don't know, they might have crayons out there too, if you want one.

But today I pray for. I'll tell kids right now the word's gonna be courage. Pray for courage. And it says today I'm thankful to God for. I'm just gonna ask you to write down all the heroes who trust God.

So courage and trust are the two things for the day. All right. But here's the story. So if you were here last week, Shawn talked about what happened was Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, they had their own Hebrew names. And they were living in Jerusalem, southern part of Israel, which was called Judah.

This is like 2,500 years ago. There's a lot of sin going on. And God gave them over. Scripture says to the invading forces of Babylon that were like modern day Iran. So Babylon sieged Jerusalem and destroyed it.

Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon also decided to take a bunch of exiles all the way. I'm kind of walking the map from Israel all the way to Iran exiles. Cause he only. He wanted some of these young, intelligent, good looking, strong people to come help them. So that's all of us.

We're all good looking, strong and young. Right. It's all of us but he wanted that. So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, along with Daniel, who we talked about last week, were part of that group that were chosen. And they were chosen because they were strong and good looking, well educated, they had poise, they were given leadership training, they were learned the new language, they learned the ways of the culture.

So all of a sudden they're put up in the government and they have important roles. And right before we hit chapter three, which is what we're looking at today, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego got another promotion and they were in charge of a whole province. So these foreign young guys, probably by now, maybe in the early 20s at most, had been appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to these high rolls. So they were well respected, well educated, well esteemed. But here's what happens.

This is Daniel, chapter three. King Nebuchadnezzar, for whatever reason, arrogance, probably the main one, built this 90 foot tall gold idol.

And he wants people to worship it. And here was the prescription. Whenever you hear, he's told this to the people. Whenever you hear the sound of these musical instruments and you read the passage in Daniel 3, there's instruments we've never heard of. Just based on when you hear all this noise, musical noise, everybody, everybody has to bow down to the idol.

It's honoring King Nebuchadnezzar's power as well. It's about if you don't, they were told immediately, throw it into the fire furnace and you die. So this was no small thing. It was a big deal. If you don't bow down, you die.

Well, there were some Babylonian officials that didn't like the fact that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had been elevated to leadership. And they saw that these guys didn't bow. And they go to Nebuchadnezzar and oh, great king, blah, blah, blah, those guys didn't bow.

The Bible tells us. I think it's kind of funny. I mean, it's not really funny funny. But they refused to bow. And it says, Nebuchadnezzar flies into a rage.

He was angry. He knew these guys, he promoted them. But he's angry, flies into a rage. He's not just irritated, he's in a rage. So he calls him in.

Cause he's gonna figure out what's going on. They didn't send him to the furnace right away. He calls him in, he's gonna give him another chance.

So this is a little bit of a, I call this a freeze frame moment here Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego come in and they're gonna talk to Nebuchadnezzar. Because Nebuchadnezzar is going to give them what for and threaten them one more time because they didn't bow down.

And so he. I'm gonna. I'm gonna play the role in Nebuchadnezzar. You all are gonna respond by reading what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego say and reply, right? So I'm not gonna.

I'm not gonna fly into a rage. So don't be worried about that. But this is what he says to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Who would not give in to the demands of the culture and deny the true God that they worshiped. That's the key here.

They would not give in to the demands of the culture to accept of the other gods. This is what Nebuchadnezzar says. Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my God or to worship the gold statue I've set up? I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I've made. When you hear the sound of the musical instruments.

But if you refuse, be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what God will be able to rescue you from my power? All right, so you're Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego. Respond. 1, 2, 3, go.

We do not.

One more slide.

Stop that phrase again.

One more time. Go on.

So now we're told that Nebuchadnezzar, which is me, is furious. And his face, Bible tells us, was distorted with rage. I'm not gonna try to do that. Cause I'm not an actor, but you know what I mean? He was furious.

His face was distorted with rage. He heats up the fire four times hotter. Cause he's gonna. He's done with these guys. Now, let me stop here for a second because I'm going to have a little conversation with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego about this.

We're going to freeze frame here. You just gave that reply. We're not going to bow down ever. God can rescue us. Even if he doesn't.

We're not going to give in to the threats to become like you. So I'm going to ask Shadrach, Meshach in a minute ago. This. Okay, guys, is it really that big of a deal? I mean, are you making a mountain out of a molehill?

You can't just bow down a little bit. I mean, you're going to die. Can't you just kind of compromise a little bit? I mean, do you want to die? I mean, maybe there are other gods, maybe there's not.

Can we. Can you just. I mean, you're going to die. You could do way more influence in your positions of government leadership. You have a lot more influence for God there, wouldn't you, than dead?

And I'm saying that because that's sometimes the challenge we have when we're trying to figure out how do we. Do we assimilate to the culture that says, there's way many more ways to know God, or assimilate to the culture that says everything about a certain sexual morality is okay to be given to that, but they're like, no. So I could talk to them all I want, but they're convinced because they have courage from God and they trust God. They believe his promises even when the odds are against them. And this moment I'm gonna call this, this is their moment of crisis.

This two and a half, three minute conversation where Nebuchadnezzar threatens them and they say, no, we're not gonna do that, and God's gonna rescue us even if he doesn't. I love that line. It challenges me. So this moment of crisis, and we all have those. A moment of crisis is a situation where you're on the spot, like Steve Alford shooting free throws.

That's a moment of crisis. But I guarantee you he didn't just try to figure out it. When he got on the free throw line, it started. His preparation for that moment started when he was probably three, four, five, probably thousands, hundreds of thousands of free throws. When a musician gets ready to play a really complicated piece for their recital at iu, they don't just wake up that morning and say, I better figure this out.

No. That moment of crisis was preceded by years of preparation. Hours. Hours of preparation.

Have to have surgery in the next couple weeks. And I sure hope that surgeon doesn't wake up that morning and be like, I'm gonna read a book on this. No. They have been training for years for that moment of crisis. So we get that when it comes to sports or music or medicine.

But the same is true in your spiritual life and my spiritual life. These moments of crisis, the moment of crisis that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego faced, it wasn't like they woke up that morning and like, we're gonna be this way. No. It was probably started when they were kids. Their parents probably raised them to understand, to know the great stories of the people of God before them.

They probably knew. They knew the prayers. They were. They prayed. They knew God's word.

They knew what God wanted. They had relationship with God. It was prayers and scripture and worship. That's like us. So they were ready for this moment that they had no idea was going to happen years prior.

Just like you. There's moments you have. You will have a moment of crisis where you have to choose for may not be as grand as this. Your moment of crisis may be like, do I really wanna tithe my money to

ministry? It's a lot of money.

Or do I really wanna choose this and not that? I mean, you choose the way of Jesus or the easier way. That's usually the moment of crisis choice. So in this moment of crisis, they were ready for it. They were ready for it and they chose Jesus, the way of Jesus.

I mean, Jesus wasn't there then, but you know what I mean? So they're thrown to the fiery furnace. Nebuchadnezzar's contorted with rage. A fire is so hot that the soldiers that bound them up and threw them in, the soldiers died because they were so exposed to the heat. Then we read that Nebuchadnezzar's kind of weird when you think about it.

He's sitting there watching them. So it's like entertainment. And it says he suddenly jumped up in amazement. And he said, didn't. Didn't we tie up three people?

I see four, and the fourth one looks like one of the gods. I mean, he's just shocked because they're not getting burned up. And then he says, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, your God has rescued you. Come out of here. So they come out of the fiery furnace.

And again, it's one of these things where it's like, if you would just slow the story down, it's pretty incredible. I mean, what were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego thinking and feeling when they were tossed in there? And then all of a sudden, there's like, they're good. They walk out and says, no smoke on their clothes. Nothing was burned.

Not even a hair of their head was singed. Couldn't even smell the smoke. I mean, God delivered them. And this is what Nebuchadnezzar said in response. Because now he has total change of heart.

From face distorted with rage to this. He says, this is the starting of verse 28 of chapter 3. Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He Sent his angel to receive his servants who trusted him. Trust.

Believing the promises of God, even against the odds. That's what trust is. We all have that to some degree, but we all have way more to go. In trusting God in that way, they trusted him. They defied the king's command and were willing to die rather than to serve or worship any God except their own courage.

Therefore, 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. I mean, this guy's a violent guy. Burn people, tear them limb to limb. Their houses will be turned into heaps of ruins.

And then he says this line, big conversion. There is no other God who

can rescue like this. There's no other God that can rescue like this.

Rescue. So we love. We love the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Cause in the end, they're out of the fire, right? Next week, Sean will be talking about Daniel and the lion's den.

And spoiler alert, Daniel doesn't get killed by the lions. And we're like, yeah. And then you look at the stories of Moses and the Egyptian overwhelming army, and they're like, yeah, God delivers them. And then all the other stories where people are, you know, people of God get delivered because they had courage and trust.

But I want to also point out that men and women in the Bible and throughout history have had courage and trust. Their stories, earthly stories, did not always end that way. And I'm not trying to be a downer. I'm saying they see a bigger picture, right? Because we love Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Moses, Daniel, all these stories where they are delivered.

But then Book of Acts, what about James? One of the first disciples gets beheaded early, and then Stephen gets stoned. Why weren't they delivered? They had the same courage and trust. God did not abandon them, but his delivery of them was a different, larger scope.

And it's interesting because in the New Testament. So, again, I'm grateful for the end. I want to be like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And I'm assuming you do, too, in terms of depth of courage because of what God has done in their lives. And depth of trusting God, again, it was prepared over years because they knew what God could do.

But in the book of Hebrews, in Hebrews 11. And I'm kind of jumping to this because it talks about those people go, put that up there. So there are stories of faith that the writer says. And he actually refers to rescued from the flames, rescued from the lions. He talks about Gideon.

Other stories of the Old Testament where people were rescued. Great stories of faith. But then the writer in chapter 11 says, but others.

And the next few words were but others were tortured. So it's like, wait, wait, God. Can't we all have the Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Endo ending? Can't we? No, others were tortured.

And he talks about men and women who had courage and trust. And their story earthly didn't end like this. And you can read it on your own in Hebrews 11. But there's some pretty gory ways. The writer tells us how these people died who had deep faith, deep trust and deep courage.

And those stories are kind of hard to read sometimes. Cause you think,

why doesn't God rescue them? But God sees things differently. God has a huger plan. But they still had trust and they had courage.

The Bible tells us they were too good for this world. So I want to not necessarily focus on the great ending of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. And it was, I want to focus on at this moment of crisis. They had deep trust, believing the promises of God, even though the odds were against them. And deep courage, which is doing something.

And even though you're terrified, afraid. So I'm gonna talk about that. I'm gonna talk. And what I wanna do today, I'm gonna actually talk about. You can read stories about the martyrs of the Christian church throughout history.

And those stories, they unsettle me and they challenge me and I hate them and I love them. Not the people, but the stories. So I'm gonna share just four stories throughout church history of people who had the same level of courage and trust that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. And at their moment of crisis, they also chose for the way of Jesus instead of their own comfort. Whether it was economic comfort or whatever.

So let me go four stories. First one is this. Perpetua and Felicity. Perpetua is a one of the first known written up martyrs of the church. Cause she kept a journal when she was in jail.

She was in Carthage, North Africa when she became a follower of Jesus. Her dad was so mad he wanted to disown her. And he kept going to prison to tell her, just stop talking about Jesus so much. Just be like the rest of us, okay? With all the gods.

And Felicity was a friend of hers. But Perpetra was from a well off family. And in March 203 AD this was not in Rome, but it was in North Africa. She was thrown into the arena. And you know what they do when they throw people in the arena.

And they both died. They had courage and they had faith. And those stories challenged me. They inspire me. This is a young woman, two young women.

Next story.

Cristiavo Ferea, Christian missionary to Japan in the 1600s. And at that time, the Japanese leadership with a shogun, you know, the shogun military leaders. And they hated Christianity because it was dividing the loyalty of their people. So what they would do, and this is all in a book called Silence by a guy named Shagenko Endo. There's also a movie by the name.

But it's. It's probably the one book that's challenged me in terms of



this kind of faith and trust in more than anything else. So what they would do is they would try to get these Christians, whether this was a Portuguese missionary, but they were also Japanese Christians. And they would have something about this size. And it was.

They'd put it on. And this has a picture of Jesus on it. They had some of the different icons of Jesus. They'd put it on the ground and they would say to this person, they said to Cristiavo and other Christians, Japanese or Portuguese, step on that.

Step on Jesus. Basically, a public renunciation of Jesus. If you don't do that, we're gonna torture you until you do courage and trust. But this is where it gets kind of, really kind of evil. What they started doing was, if you don't step on that, we're not gonna torture you.

We're gonna torture your friends and family in your hearing until you do that. And I'm reading this, and I'm just getting torn up on the inside. Do I have that? What does that look like? I get that kind of courage and that kind of trust.

And I included this one. Cause he actually did. He actually did renounce it. I'm not gonna do it myself. He stepped on it, saved people's lives.

But then he was known as somebody who denied Jesus. But I include this guy's story because later in life, most historians think he basically said, no, no, I'm gonna say, I do wanna follow Jesus. And he died then. And I'm saying that. Cause some of you may have already denied Jesus in certain environments, or you've made choices you wish you wouldn't have.

Your story's not over. You can redo your story with Jesus. That's why I included this particular story. But when you read about these Things that test whether or not I read that. When I read this book, I was like, do I have that kind of faith?

Do I want to have that kind of faith? Do I want to be. It's not a death wish. I'm not that kind of person. Neither are you.

But when I read the stories of the martyrs, I was like, do I have that depth? I want that depth of faith. I want that kind of trust and courage. Next one, there's two more. Next one is a guy named Charles Luanga, Uganda, 1886.

He was one of 22 young men, ages 13 to 22, that were all killed because they became Christians and because the king, the king of Uganda at the time, Mwanga, did not like their divided loyalties because he knew they would not do things that he wanted them to do because they followed Jesus. These 13 to 23 year olds all lived in the king's court. They would not do what he wanted. They would divide

their loyalties and specifically they would not participate in the sexual perversions that that culture and that king wanted. And that really ticked off the king.

So Charles Iwanga, he was the head of them all. He was a leader of that group of young men and young boys, actually. And they all walked to their death. They were all burned. And again, I'm not trying to be gross, I'm just saying that's faith, that's trust and courage.

And when I look at that, I was like, I don't. I want that. I'm 63, but I have more. I still wanna grow with a deeper courage and deeper trust in God. There was a number of years ago I actually read a book on trust and I actually told God, I don't think I really have to trust you.

I've got a house, I've got two cars, I've got car insurance, I've got life insurance, I've got a good salary. And I actually said to God, I wanna trust you more. So whatever you have to do, shake me up a bit on that. And he did. And I've grown in trust.

Sometimes I wish I wouldn't have prayed that prayer, but I'm so glad I did. Maybe that's you. It's not about, you're not gonna maybe die. It's not like going to get burned up or anything. But maybe if you wanna trust God or if you wanna have a deeper courage to do what you know God wants you to do, tell God that he'll put you in that situation and your soul will grow and expand in ways you will Never wanna look back.

Last one. It's one of my. Sounds weird to say it's one of my favorite martyr stories. It sounds like I'm making. I'm not saying it that way.

Some of you might know the story. Jim Elliott, and he was. There were five guys. Jim Elliott, Roger Udarian, Ed McCully, Pete Fleming and Nate Saint. All five of them, they were strong, good looking, well educated, common sense young men.

Some of them were college athletes, some of them were like academic all stars in their colleges.

And they felt distinct call from God that they needed to reach a tribe in Ecuador. Stone age tribe called the Alphas. Never heard about Jesus. And so these five smart, well educated, athletic, strong men decided, no, that's what God wants us to do. Their moment of crisis was deciding we want to reach them.

And they knew there was a risk, courage, doing something when I'm afraid. They knew there was a risk, but they were so motivated by what Jesus could do in that tribe. So for a number of months they flew over this tribe, tried to drop down gifts, they tried to figure out how to make contact with them because this tribe was known. They weren't just

stone age, they were known for being murderous, killed any outsiders. Actually, even within their own tribe, you were esteemed if you killed your friends.

It was weird. Murder was kind of seen as a. It was just dark.

And so these men for months planned and figured out how to. And every one of them had to choose in their moment of crisis. Am I still in on this mission to tell these people about Jesus? And the story ended on January 8, 1956, when for a day or so none of their wives heard radio contact.

And every man was found speared to death. And the world. My mom remembers this. I think it was in Time magazine, the world press called it, or the American press called it. What a waste.

What a waste of these lives. Strong, good looking, educated, smart men. What a waste of life.

Was it that kind of trust, that kind of courage? Jim Elliot, he made one of his quotes before he. I mean, he was years before this. One of his famous quotes was, he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. Were they foolish?

Was it a waste?

Meshach and Abednego being kind of foolish, putting themselves at risk. Think about, you know, James, Peter, Paul, all the apostles. Were they a little bit foolish to put themselves at risk because they were so committed to this guy named Jesus?

Do you want to be that way? I mean, I read these stories and again, I'm like, ugh, I don't want to. How would I do if I was in those situations? How would I have done if I was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? But I would have been like, I think I'll bow to save my life, guys.

I don't know. Or if I was with Jim Elliot, would I say, I'm out on this flight. I'm not gonna go. I'm not sure. I do know this, and I'm pretty sure most everybody here would say this.

We want to have that kind of faith. It scares us to think about it, but it's not a death wish. I want to have that kind of faith. I want my faith to grow. And I want to be prepared through scripture and prayer and how I handle my money and how I handle my social life.

I want to be prepared. So when those moments come, I choose Jesus. I do a. And this is a small example, but it kind of blew me away. I teach some classes at IU occasionally, and every week we do a thing where I talk about everybody has to go around and name something good

that happened to them that week.

And we call it roses and thorns. So rose is something good. So students would usually say something like, I had a good meal with my parents or my class got canceled. Anything good? Yeah.

Some of you? Yeah. You know, this was last year. One of the students, she was sitting right there, actually. I remember she said, I'm really excited about my Bible study.

And I remember thinking, that's kind of gutsy because sometimes you talk about the Bible or Jesus among your peers or in your workplace, it's a little bit weird, right? You're seen as weird. But she had no qualms in saying, I'm really excited about my Bible study this year. And I told her later after class, that was a real. That was real boldness.

Thank you. So maybe it's even just talking about Jesus, not in a pushy way at your workplace or in your school, but she was just being honest. I'm excited about Bible study. So there's all kinds of moments. It's not, you're not waiting to get burned to the stake, but sometimes, socially, we don't want to get burned to the stake.

So I don't want to be one of those kind of Christians who's narrow minded. So I'm going to be okay with other religions. And they all lead to the same place. That's not what Jesus said. And Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, they weren't jerks about it.

They were still respectful to the king, called him to your majesty. But no, but we still. We know what we believe about the one true God. And we will not bow down to anything else. Socially, I'm not gonna bow down financially.

I'm only doing what Jesus tells me to do.

So here's in the writer of the Hebrews, when he talks about these stories, the good ending stories and the hard ending stories, he said, so then we are surrounded by this great. We are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses. Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus. So we're surrounded by the Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and Moses and Daniel. We're surrounded by Perpetua.

We're surrounded by Jim Elliott. These people, in a sense that cheer us on. We're not in this alone. We have great men and women from the Bible and great men and women throughout history who have faced those moments of crisis with incredible courage and a deep trust in Jesus.

And the world changes because of the that. So here's what I want us to do. We're going to. We're going to have you sing a chorus with me. You

don't know the chorus.

It's really simple. But it's called above all Else. Because Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego decided, above all else, we follow the way of God.

The Apostle James, Stephen, above all else, going to follow the way of Jesus. Jim Elliot, Charles Lwanga, the martyrs. But above all else, we follow Jesus.

And even if something else happens to us that's bad, even if God does not, we still follow Jesus. So the chorus is simply this. Actually, I want you to stand up with me. We're just gonna sing this chorus. And I want you to sing this and for whatever in your imagination.

We're singing this with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, with Jim Elliot. Maybe they're down this aisle and. But we're singing with men and women throughout Bible and throughout history who would say, this is what drives my life. All right, here's how it goes. Play this first note for me.

Above all else I adore your name above all else Tune my heart to sing your praise One more time above all else I adore your name above all else Tune my heart to sing your praise God, we want to be above all else kind of people. And we know that takes preparation on our part and courage and trust. But that's not all up to us, because your holy Spirit's with us. So we want to be those kind of people in our culture today, in our workplaces, in our neighborhoods, even in our families, in our classrooms. We want to be people who live with humility above all else.

I follow Jesus. I don't give in. I don't compromise. I don't assimilate other worldviews because I trust the man named Jesus. He's changed my life.

He's changing the world. Above all else. I follow Jesus. That's who we want to be, and that's who you have the power to change us into being. And we ask this on your name.

Amen. Go and have a seat. So every Sunday we do response time. And so over here, actually around the room, there's these little baskets, have communion bread and juice in the cup. And Jesus said, every time you eat this and drink this, remember me.

And I always like to tell people, remember certain things. Maybe this time we just remember that Jesus didn't promise us a smooth path. He promised, promised us that there might be these kind of trials. You're going to face a Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego moment. But he's with you.

He's with you in that fire. He's with you. And you might be in that situation now. You're trying to make a choice. You're in a moment of crisis.

Jesus is with you, and he's in you.

Maybe you've never followed Jesus. Maybe you want to be baptized. You can let their field pair with lanyards on that. You can let them know, and we'll arrange baptism. Maybe just want somebody to pray for you.

But we follow Jesus none other, even if he does not. And we will never, will never bow down to other idols. We're never bowed down to American culture. We'll never bow down to Republican culture, democratic culture. We won't do that because we follow Jesus.

Jesus, we love you. We follow you, and there's no one like you. Amen.