

HARRINGAY UNITED CHURCH-BAPTIST
SUNDAY 2ND AUGUST 2009.

Facing the killer Test

Introduction:

Last Sunday you were encouraged to resolve not to defile yourselves as the young Hebrew lads, Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael did even though they were unpopular with this decision and their lives were in danger when decision turned the other way. Yet they trusted their God rather than the authority of the king, rather than the popular opinion of the students who are being fed with the king's delicacies.

They knew the God they were taught to worship that He is to be trusted and obeyed and they did just that. We would soon see how God will react to their faithfulness, obedience and resolution, just keep your ears opened, keep coming and bring at least one person each Sunday so that you can share the good of our God with them.

Today, we see how the most powerful and influential king was thrown into dejection and confusion with a dream from God and how the wise men, astrologers, enchanters and the young graduates of Babylonia University were subjected to a killer test.

Let us have a test that is not killing as I promised you last week that I am going to test you.

Let me say something about dreams.

The web dictionary defines three types of dreams

1. A series of mental images and emotions occurring during sleep; "I had a dream about you last night" –
I define it as revelation that occurs during sleep as opposed to vision which is revelation that occurs when we are awake.
This is the one we are talking about today.
This type of dream can be induced in two ways, by God when He wants to show or reveal thing to humans.
It can also be induced when we want something desperately hence it goes to our subconscious mind and we dream about it during our sleep and this is related to the second definition of dream.
2. Imaginative thoughts indulged in while awake; "he lives in a dream that has nothing to do with reality"
3. An ambition: a cherished desire; "his ambition is to own his own business"

Dreams occur throughout the Bible and in Christian lives as omens or messages from God:

- Jacob dreams of a ladder to heaven (Genesis 28);
- his son Joseph dreamed of his future success (Genesis 37) and interpreted the dreams of the Pharaoh of Egypt (Genesis 41);
- Solomon conversed with God in his dreams;
- Daniel interpreted dreams (in the Book of Daniel);
- The Magi are told in a dream to avoid Herod on their journey home (Matthew 2).
- Joseph, husband of Mary, was directed to flee to Egypt (Matthew 2);
- Paul was told to go to Macedonia (Acts 16).

God distresses the king

Kings and presidents can be surrounded by security guards and barriers, cameras and gadgets, but they are never out of the hand of God and when He does what He pleases with them.

In his sleep God touched Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, he had a dream that he did not tell his wise men, astrologers, enchanters and learned people but insisted that they tell him what the dream was and its interpretation.

There are two opinions about this. One believes that he had forgotten the dream, but the dream impacted him so much that its effect really shook him that he wanted to know what it means even though he had forgotten it.

The second opinion is that he withheld the dream and wanted to test his advisers to see if their advice and wisdom was genuine.

Luxury and honour versus death

The king called all the experts and advisers to tell him the dream and its interpretation. They asked him to tell them the dream and they will interpret it for him. Instead, he king determined that they must tell him the dream and its interpretation. He offered them gifts, rewards and great honour failure which their bodies will be cut into pieces and their house will be burnt into ash heap.

The advisers tried to buy time but their trick did not work, the king would not change his mind instead he re-affirmed his decision which he said I will never change and now accused them of lying and corrupt words.

With no way of escape, the advisers accused the king that his request was unreasonable, and no one has ever asked such a thing. They said that the request can only be met by the gods whose dwelling is not with man.

They were right in this aspect because it is only God that tells the future it does not belong to any other god. God is sovereign and He chooses who He reveals things to and through. As I have mentioned earlier on, He even uses the pagans to bring about what He is about to do.

Isaiah 41:21-23

21 "Present your case," says the Lord.

"Set forth your arguments," says Jacob's King.

22 "Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen.

Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome.

Or declare to us the things to come,

23 tell us what the future holds,

so we may know that you are gods.

Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear.

NIV

God disgraces the wise and powerful people

People may be very clever and educated and come out with first class, people may be so powerful and strong but when God wants to deal with them, He turns their wisdom to foolishness and their strength into weakness.

Paul rightly said in 1 Corinthians 3:19-20 "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." NIV.

They had no answer to the king's request and the king would not waver from his decision, he commanded that all the wise men, enchanters, astrologers and Chaldeans be destroyed and of course this includes the new graduates Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Would God help in this situation?

Conclusion:

What is the lesson here?

As Christians, we will find ourselves in places where intense pressure will mount on us to compromise and join the multitude in order to protect our jobs that provide us our daily meal. It may come in the office, community and other areas of our lives. I want to admonish you not to panic or be anxious because we are serving a living and faithful God who will always back you up by His word as he promised in Psalms 138:2b 'For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.' NKJV.

If we will rely on him and resolve not to compromise or defile ourselves, He will always bring a solution to every problem; answer to every question and direction to every step we need to take.

As Christians, we too might face the test of our lives, the test of life and death that made us to be cornered and the test that we know we would never be able to pass and the way of escape blocked without the intervention of the Most High.

I want to assure us that God is with us in whatever circumstance and situation. Because God is not a man that He should lie or the son of man that He should change His mind, if He promise, He will ensure that it is carried out. And He promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us Deut. 31:6 & 8 and he said that he will teach us what to say, Exodus 4:12, Matthew 10:19 and Mark 13:11.

All what we need to do is to trust God's word, no matter what the circumstances and the consequences; He cannot fail but will always prevail.

If individual Christian faces the killer test in his/her life, the Church faces it too. People may rise up against the Church in their community, put killer test before them and there may seem to be a way of escape, this is the time God works His miracles because He told us in Psalms 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." NIV

Do not compromise with the pressures around, stand by God and He will stand by you. Do not give in to the threats of the enemies with their killer tests. You will not die but live so that you may declare the glory of the Lord in the land of the living, Psalm 118:17 and God will soon crush them under your feet, Romans 16:20.