

**HARRINGAY UNITED CHURCH-BAPTIST**  
**SUNDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2009.**  
**GOD CAN DELIVER YOU FROM BLAZING FURNACE**

Daniel 3:19-30

Last Sunday, we saw how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down to the gods and image king Nebuchadnezzar commanded even though they knew that the consequence of their decision was immediate death in blazing furnace, they made the choice to die for God than to live for the idol. What a brave decision?

There was a story that I missed last Sunday which I will relate today. Two men fully masked with submachine guns swooped into a Church in an angry manner. They stopped the service and said that God offended them and they want to revenge on His (God's) children.

They commanded that anyone who is not a child of God should get out so that the bullets will not hit them. Only the pastor and handful of people who claimed to be Children of God stay for the bullets and the rest rushed out to escape the bullets. After a couple of minutes they unmasked and said to the Pastor 'we have got rid of the hypocrites for you. You may now start the service and have a wonderful time with the Lord'.

That story may seem remote and unbelievable but I tell you it can happen here right in United Kingdom. If it does, where would you be outside or inside and will you be prepared to bear the consequence of your choice?

The last statement made by the three Hebrews was this:

Daniel 3:17-18 "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." NIV

Though these men were given the second chance opportunity which I regard as bait, they were vehement in not serving other gods. They understood Satan that he has three principal baits to tempt God's people. 1 John 2:16 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." KJV.

The king was furious with anger at these people who would not bow down to him and his gods. There are potential consequences of this action from these people.

1. It constitutes insubordination to the king and if allowed to go unchecked will bring disrespect to the king and his kingdom and which may lead to collapse because of his perceived weakness.

2. It is a public disgrace to the king as the order was given publicly and its defiance was public too. It is a complete shame to the king and he must save his face.
3. It undermines the gods of Nebuchadnezzar whom they believed have helped him thus far otherwise he would not have become so powerful and conquered the world like that.
4. The Jews may become so powerful and constitute insurgency to the king's administration

All these might be going on in the mind of the king, hence he ordered that the furnace be heated seven times more. This is an urgent order and must be carried out without delay. Understanding of heating the furnace seven times is not literary, it is meant to be so hot that whoever is out in it will die immediately so that there will be quick end to the insubordination so quick. The furnace is already very hot because it is used for smelting iron and other metals and it has opening where they see what is going on inside of it.

Each of the Hebrews was bound with strong rope into one block so that they will not escape or struggle. The king's anger got the best out of him because his order would limit the pain and agony of the people he wanted to kill by making the fire very hot. It is known that a less hot furnace prolongs death and causes more pain and agony.

Sometimes when people make decisions to hurt you, little did they know that their course of action will enhance your elevation and breakthrough?

In today's lesson, we see how these Hebrews displayed their faiths in the face of death. Nothing could test our faith more than death. They knew that and they prefer the termination of their lives by this painful death. That type of faith is a living faith and it has these qualities.

### **1. Their faith confounds their enemies:**

The Devil who is our arch enemy is a bully and he uses death as a threat to intimidate us but what God want us to know is that the Devil has no power over our lives because God gave us lives. God can allow him to touch our jobs, bodies in form of disease and affliction but He will never allow him to touch our lives. Job is a very good example.

Death meant nothing to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego but God meant everything to them. They knew that they were made from the earth and will go back there one way or the other but their soul will return to their God and they cannot bear the condemnation that will follow if they bow down to idols.

I am sure many people would have thought to themselves, what is the big do, just to bow down?

Their enemies too who went to report them too would wonder. Although they were not happy with them because they came from a foreign land and occupy the positions of authority that were meant for the citizens (the Chaldeans). They may not be thinking that the King would issue a death edict against them but only to demote them.

To Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego positions and death meant nothing compared to obedience to their God their creator. Not only will their enemies be confounded, everyone will because it will bring glory and honour to our God.

If you display your absolute faith in God today, your enemies and everyone around you will be confounded too. Nothing must be precious to us than God and obedience to Him is the only proof of our genuine love for Him.

Luke 9:24 "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. NIV

## **2. Their faith challenges God's reputation:**

Everything starts and finish with God. He gives lives and He only can take it and he demands that we worship Him only which He backs up with promise never to leave us nor forsake us. Although He is sovereign meaning that He chooses what to do without anyone being able to query Him but He is careful to fulfil His promise. If you confess Him, he will confess you too and if you deny Him He too will deny you.

Matt 10:32-33

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>33</sup> But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Since God says this, would He not fulfil His promise? If we can count on Him to fulfil His promise would it be out of place for Him to count on us to fulfil our promise as well?

Friends I want you to know that whenever you obey God and not waiver, He will never disappoint you as His reputation is at stake and because the situation will embarrass heaven.

This has helped me live each day victorious and not worry about anything because I am in the safe hands of the Almighty God.

## **3. Their faith confirms God's promises:**

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil? And 2 Corinthians 1:20 "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. NIV

Absolute faith in God makes Him responds in a way that confirms His promises. He ensures that He honours his promises. The more we trust Him the more we see Him work and make Himself known. He has all the resources to do what He promised to do without reducing anything from His stock.

Psalms 138:2 "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. KJV. His promises are as good as their fulfilments therefore our faith in Him brings the fulfilment of His promises.

#### **4. Their faith is a true faith:**

True faith is not a presumptuous, that is taking God for granted but trusting God's words not minding the present circumstances and the future consequences it will have.

It is not a commercial faith where you think you can twist God's arms. They did not obey God or Trust Him because of what he will give them but because of who and what He is.

#### **The Results:**

The men were tightly bound and thrown into the fire. The radiation even killed the soldiers who threw them into the fire. Because the king was eager to see what would happen to them, he looked into the furnace and instead of seeing people in agony and crying for help, he saw four men walking in the fire. This means that their fetters were loosed their clothes did not burn and they were not hurt. But the fourth man he saw was an unusual person. He had a look of a deity, the person who does not know the living God describe the fourth person as the 'Son of God'

You cannot see the hand of God and not recognising it, you cannot face the glory of God and not be radiant and you cannot be in the presence of God and not feel Him.

Isaiah 48:11 "For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. NIV.

Yet for one more time He has made His will known and His power acknowledged by the one who thought he was all in all. Now he accepted that there is a God in Israel who is sovereign and all powerful and all knowing.

#### **Conclusion:**

The home of some of you may be a blazing furnace; the blazing furnace of some of you may be the office or your family. No matter where that furnace is, I want to assure you today that the fourth man is with you in that furnace and He will rescue you as He has done for the three Hebrew men. He is the same yesterday, today and for ever more.

Isaiah 43:2 "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

The way He was with the people of old He can be with us too if we take Him as the people of the old did.

Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah defiled the king's order for the King of kings, they did not bow down to gods made by hands but only to the true God. Today I am encouraging you too to defile any law that is against the law of God do not bow to policies and rules that go against God's will.

Once we do this we can be confident that He will help us too.