



Culture Shift The Furnace – Week 3

Announcements

401 Small Group Training – Get equipped to help people grow in their relationship with Jesus as you fulfill the Great Commission to “*go and make disciples.*” September 28th at 5:00 pm at the Little Creek Campus. For more information email smallgroups@churchoftheking.com.

Women’s Night – Tuesday, September 30th at 7:00 pm. Don’t miss this night of encouragement and fun with guest speaker Holly Wagner. We will also be beginning a 6-part small group series following this event based on Holly Wagner’s book *God Chicks*. Make plans to join a God-Chicks group!

Warm-up

Our society has gone through an amazing transformation in recent years because of the development of technologies like the internet and mobile devices. What are some ways that this technology has improved your life? What are some ways it has brought unexpected challenges to your life?

In Babylon, Daniel’s three friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego) faced a serious test: would they follow along with everyone else and worship a golden idol? We are going to discuss how these three men passed the test and continued to put God first, despite facing enormous pressure from those around them.

Word and Application

Like their friend Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were Hebrew exiles in Babylon. In Daniel 3, we see that these men were ordered to bow down to a statue of the King Nebuchadnezzar and worship it. Doing this would have dishonored God. Despite facing imminent and painful death, Daniel’s friends stood firm and trusted God. As a result, God delivered them from death and used these men as a powerful witness to God’s supernatural power.

Because Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego trusted God even to the point of death, they were able to resist the pressure to conform. By standing up for God in front of others in spite of the consequences, these men were rescued from death in a miraculous way. Their story continues to inspire us today as we must also stand up to the many idols found in our culture.

How can you trust God to make a public stand for Him, even when everyone around you is doing something different?

Read Daniel 3:1-3. In our culture, we do not face pressure to bow down to idols made of gold like we read here. However, our society values many things more highly than God. What are some examples of modern-day idols that you see around you every day?

Three common idols in modern society are possessions, pleasure, and prominence. While none of these things are bad in themselves, they should never take a higher priority in our lives than God.

Read Daniel 3:4-12. Failure to bow down resulted in death. Many stepped forward to hurl accusations at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. What sort of pressure does society put on us to join in the worship of modern-day idols?

Read Daniel 3:13-18. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had no guarantee that God would deliver them from death. How did they respond in spite of this (verse 18)?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego stood firm in the face of King Nebuchadnezzar's fury, even though disobeying him resulted in a very painful death. Their relationship with God was so strong that they were more afraid of disobeying God than disobeying man, even if it resulted in their own suffering.

What are some ways that you face pressure in your own life to conform to the idolatry of others? How can you strengthen your relationship with God so that you have the strength to overcome this pressure?

Read Daniel 3:19-25. Despite the fire being so hot that it killed the guards who escorted Daniel's friends to it, they themselves remained unharmed in the furnace. They were even joined by a fourth figure who provided supernatural protection and encouragement to them.

Read Daniel 3:26-30. Having seen God deliver Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego from the fire, King Nebuchadnezzar began to worship God. He also passed a law forbidding anyone to speak against God, and gave the three men a promotion.

God completely delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego from persecution and death. Their willingness to stand against idolatry allowed many people to see the power and glory of God.

How can you trust God and take a stand against idolatry in your life?

As Christians, we are to put God first, regardless of what others might say or do to us. Doing this is not easy, and requires us to trust God no matter what the consequences of our obedience. When we do this, God will defend us and will use our conviction to help others see the power of the Gospel.

Prayer

Pray for everyone in your small group to have the boldness and the trust to put God first in all areas of their lives. Also, take time to ask for specific prayer requests from those in your small group.