

This week, let's camp out in Daniel 3. Pitch the tent, collect wood for the fire, and plan on staying for a while. Read the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and try to forget that you've heard it before. Read it with new eyes and an open heart.

"From the depths of a purified heart, trust clings to the belief that **whatever happens in our lives** is designed to **form Christ within us**," wrote Brennan Manning boldly. This is true, isn't it? If we really believed this, we'd live like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who replied to King Nebuchadnezzar in verse 16, "...we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 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. **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."

"Even if He does not..."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that whatever happened, if they were thrown into the blazing furnace that was hot enough to kill even the guards who threw them in, still then, Christ would get the glory.

Verse 16 alone is enough to change our lives. When the three stood up against Ol' Neb, they didn't have the pleasure of knowing chapter 3 in its entirety like we do. We know it works out; we know that they make it, unharmed, not even *smelling* like the fire.

And the story doesn't stop there.

"Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, 'Weren't there three men, firmly tied up and threw into the fire?' They replied, 'Certainly, O king.' He said, 'Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods'" (vs. 24-25).

Our God is reliable. When we finally drop our misconstrued ideas of who He is, and realize He's faithful and will continue the good work He's started, our view of our Savior will change the way we live our lives.

Many would have bowed to the 90' tall, 90' wide gold statue at the sound of the "horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music" to save their lives. They did not.

Did God get the glory?

Nebuchadnezzar, who was completely wrapped up in himself, ended up proclaiming, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His angel and rescued His servants! They trusted in Him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God" (vs. 28).

Then read on, about how Neb formed a decree that would punish people of any nation or language, if they said anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. If they did...he'd have them cut into pieces and their houses turned into piles of rubble, "For no other god can save this way" (vs. 29).

Three young men stood up for their King. They knew He was reliable. Look at the impact this proclamation had, both back then, and today as we "camp out" and look at their example of running hard after Him.

Pray that you'd believe that whatever happens, when seeking His face and following in His footsteps, it will all be to form Christ within you.