

God's Delivery Service

Sunday Morning, August 28, 2016

What would happen if we responded to life's difficult situations or problems based on the knowledge of the abilities of God?

Summary of Daniel 3:

In Daniel Chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar creates a golden statue, but Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (a.k.a. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego) refuse to bow before it. The three are thrown into a fiery furnace, but they emerge unscathed. Nebuchadnezzar is impressed; he promotes the three to important public positions and emphatically praises their God.

(Daniel 3: 14-18)

14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?

15 Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

(Key verse 17 and 18 on next page)

17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.

18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego believed and relied on God's love, wisdom and abilities to take care of them the best way possible. In their case, He chose to personally deliver them.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego aren't the only ones we can read about in the Bible that have faced a life or death choice and had to depend on God. Let's read another account found in

(II Corinthians 1: 8 – 10)

8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,

10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,

This level of commitment to God is desperately needed in our culture and our world today!

We need to believe that God can deliver us too! We just need to understand that His idea of delivery may be different than our own idea of delivery.

As Christians, we face relative challenges and consequences for standing up for God in today's culture. I will share with you a few examples:

In Feb. 2016, A bakery owned by a Christian family in Longview, Texas is being deluged with threats and hate mail after the owners declined to bake a wedding cake for a gay marriage. Soon after the story was published, irate LGBT activists posted vulgar and derogatory reviews on Yelp and other social networking platforms, targeting Edie and David Delorme, who own the Kern's Bake Shop. Others made actual threats against the business & family.

In Dec. 2015, in Texas more than 50 students protested at Santa Rosa High School, saying the school district unfairly punished a math teacher for talking about God in the classroom. Administrators spoke with math teacher Charles Zeissel last week, said Superintendent Heriberto Villarreal. District policy forbids instructors from talking about God or religion during class time.

In 2014, according to the Washington Post, political-minded ministers were disobeying federal tax law by preaching politics from the pulpit as part of a nationwide movement to defy the Internal Revenue Service. The IRS has taken virtually no action against the pastors, whose churches risk losing their tax-exempt status over their election messages. So what shall we do?

Stand for God no matter what the threat.

Believe what we learn about God, His character, wisdom, love and abilities from the Bible.

Live by God's standards.

Be faithful and courageous, when our commitment to God is challenged.

Always be a bold witness.

It took great courage for Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego to stand for God in the midst of adversity.

Godly courage comes from trusting God's ability.

They knew God could deliver them from the flames that would be their death or be martyred for God and be secured in eternity with God. Have a genuine commitment to be faithful to God regardless of consequence.

Felix Manz lived as a leader of the Swiss Anabaptists in the early 1500's. They believed infant baptism was not scriptural. They believed baptism came after confession of Jesus Christ as Savior. The Zurich Council had ordered that anyone found re-baptizing would be drowned. After a baptismal service, Felix was arrested. When he was 29 years old he was delivered to the executioner. He was bound and taken by boat to the Limmat River. His mother entreated him from shore to remain true to Christ. He sang "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." The water closed over his head.

He was not delivered miraculously in the same way as Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. And yet, his deliverance was even better. He was delivered gloriously in to God's presence.

(Romans 8:18)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

So, I asked in the beginning, "What would happen if we responded to life's difficult situations or problems based on the knowledge of the abilities of God?" The answer is that we would be able to stand courageously bold in life's most difficult & challenging circumstances. We would stand and wait for His delivery service!