

# TWO WORDS THAT CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING

DANIEL 3:15-18

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE - JULY 21, 2024

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## SCRIPTURE READING

*Daniel 3:15-18, ESV*

<sup>15</sup> Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

## ICE BREAKER QUESTION

Why is God trustworthy even when you face challenging circumstances?

## SERMON RECAP

We can trust in God alone unconditionally no matter how life turns out.

1. There is power in the words "EVEN IF" because we can have confidence in the goodness of God
  - Don't confuse being 'safe' with being 'good'
  - Step to remember the goodness of God in your life
2. When we remember His goodness, we can face our situations with hope and resolve
  - God doesn't rescue us from the furnace, He is in there with us
  - We should resolve to worship Him
3. One COUNTER-IF to "EVEN IF" is "ONLY IF"
  - ONLY IF shows a desire that grows and becomes an expectation such that it becomes a condition for your worship
  - Very subtly our petitions can turn into expectations and demands, even idols by which we measure God's goodness
4. The EVEN IF declaration has power and weight when anchored in the Gospel because no matter what happens, our identity, our security is found in the unchangeable and satisfactory work of Christ on the cross!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Observation: What does the passage say?*

1. Read Daniel 3:15-18 aloud as a group. Let group members share observations. Try not to move into interpretation of the passage or application of what you read quite yet. Simply share what you observe.
  - As you read verse 15, do you see a promise or a threat and what is the difference?

- In verse 16, how would you feel if you were these three young men delivering this answer, and how would you feel if you were the king receiving the answer?
- What do you observe about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's response in verse 17-18?
- How would you summarize Daniel 3:15-18?

***Interpretation: What does the passage mean?***

1. The earthly king's intent and mistake. (Daniel 3:15)
  - Why might Nebuchadnezzar feel that he should give Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego one more chance to obey and worship him?
  - What has Nebuchadnezzar forgotten about God? (see Jeremiah 27:4-8)
  - Why is it so easy for earthly leaders to fall into the trap of wanting to be worshipped?
2. Confidence in the goodness of God is not defiance. (Daniel 3:16)
  - How does faith differ from defiance?
  - What is the basis of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's faith?
  - Why are they willing to lay down their lives for God's glory?
3. Courage is born out of reliance on God. (Daniel 3:17+18)
  - Why are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego courageous in the face of death?
  - Why is it easy to bow to the idols of this world and how do we do it?
  - How can we take a stand, rooted in faith and love, against worshipping worldly leaders

***Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?***

1. Be confident in the goodness of God.
  - What does it mean that God is good? How does it NOT mean 'safe' or 'predictable'?
  - What do you need to REMEMBER about the goodness of God in your life?
  - How has God delivered you from unpleasant circumstances or situations?
  - How is God delivering you as you live through trying times?
  - How do you know/sense that God is in the furnace with you?
  - How can our Church Group pray for things that challenge you right now?
2. Guard against the conditional COUNTER-Ifs that might hinder your worship.
  - What furnace(s) are you in today?
  - What conditions might you be placing on your faithfulness?
  - What conditions are ruling your heart today?
  - Where are you living in an IF ONLY manner rather than an EVEN IF way?
  - How can our Church Group support you in your battle against conditional worship?
3. Resolve to worship God for who He is.
  - How can you turn your IF ONLY tendencies to EVEN IF living?
  - How does the power and security of the gospel lead you toward EVEN IF living?
  - How could you become an EVEN IF warrior for God's glory?
  - What is your EVEN IF declaration today?
  - How can our Church Group pray with you to strengthen your godly worship?

**LEADER NOTES**

**SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE BREAK** | Annual Church Group rhythms include a break from Sermon Discussion Guides in August. During this month, please reference page 37 of the Church Group Leader Manual for a general discussion guide. Weekly Sermon Discussion Guides will resume on September 1.