

## Faith in the Face of Death

Ponder: Being faithful unto death

Scripture: “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” (Dan. 3:18, NKJV).

How many of us have had to choose between faithfulness to God and remaining alive? For Daniel and his friends, this was no theoretical issue.

Hebrews 11:33-34 briefly mentions ancient people of faith who “stopped the mouths of lions” and “quenched the violence of fire.” Who could miss the allusions to Daniel and his fellow-captives, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego?

Their faith had been tested shortly after their arrival in Babylon as King Nebuchadnezzar gave them food they couldn’t eat without violating the Law of Moses. Their obedience to God contributed to their becoming trusted officials in the royal court (See Daniel 1).

Diet was one thing; Daniel’s friends refusing to worship the king’s new idol was another matter entirely! Such treason called for death by profoundly unpleasant means! Unwilling to lose valuable servants, the king offered them an additional opportunity to obey his command, with the understanding that they would be burned to death if they refused. “And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?” (Dan. 3:15).

God had delivered His people from apparently hopeless situations before, and these Hebrew children knew He could do it again if He so desired. But even if He didn’t, they were ready and willing to die rather than sin. Happily, the Lord delivered them from the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:16-30).

Daniel himself shared that faith. Many years later, Daniel’s enemies tricked King Darius into issuing a decree forbidding prayer “to any god or man” except himself for thirty days (Dan. 6:7). Faithful Daniel, however, continued his practice of praying to God three times daily. Despite the king’s affection for Daniel, the law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed. Daniel was cast into a den of hungry lions. But he emerged unharmed! “My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me” (6:22).

Faith requires trusting obedience even under threat of death. Are you up for it?

Song: “Faith Of Our Fathers”

Prayer: Father, our lives are so easy it’s difficult for us to comprehend challenges like Daniel and his friends faced. Help us to be faithful in the lesser trials that come our way. In Jesus’ name, Amen.