



Suffering.

Suffering is the test of our faith in God.

When I face or see suffering, will my faith stand out or will I shut God out?

SERIES BIG IDEA:

Live a faith that stands out in a culture shutting God out.

Resilient faith stands out because of adversity.

Resilient faith is being faithful to God no matter what.

¹³ Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, ¹⁴ and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? ¹⁵ Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand.

¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

Daniel 3:13-18 (NIV)

TEACHING BIG IDEA:

A Daniel Generation trusts God no matter what.

The Hebrews believed in a resurrection (Daniel 3:17).

Jesus Christ's resurrection proves that suffering and death don't win. (1 Corinthians 15:26)

When I trust in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, I share in the power of His resurrection that destroys the curse of sin and gives me life forever with God. (See all of 1 Corinthians 15)

Because of Jesus Christ's resurrection, I will trust God and be faithful to Him no matter what.

Suffering is the crucible that tests my faith in the love and goodness of God.

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰ and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹ So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. ²² The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ²³ and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

²⁵ 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."



²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!”

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire,²⁷ and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “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.

Daniel 3:19-28 (NIV)

God’s presence with me in my suffering is more powerful and meaningful than God removing my suffering.

Resilient faith, characterized by a willingness to give up one’s life or let go of what one desires to honor God, will stand out to those shutting God out.



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TEACHING SUMMARY:

Suffering and pain will either drive people to God or cause people to shut God out. What faith you have will determine if you shut God out or trust God no matter what. When we trust that God is with us in our suffering, we discover something more powerful and meaningful than having God rescue us out of our suffering.

Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were in protest to a new Babylonian law that required everyone, including the Israelites, to bow in worship to the 90 foot tall idol when the music would begin to play. Their faith was in the only True God; therefore they remained faithful to honor God above all else and trust God no matter what, even if God did not come to rescue them.

That resilient faith is anchored in a good and loving God whose power is stronger than death. These Hebrew men believed this about God and trusted in God’s faithfulness at all costs—even if it meant death. That resilient faithfulness to honor the True God stood out to the Babylonian King who had shut the True God out by making an idol.

TALK-IT-OVER:

Who has been an example of resilient faith in your life? What makes them stand out?

What is your response to suffering? Has it shaken your faith or deepened it?

How does God’s presence help you through the trials of your life?

What is a next step for you today?

Who do you need to tell about what you’ve learned?

DAILY SCRIPTURE READING:

- Day 1) Psalm 71:19-21
- Day 2) 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5
- Day 3) Luke 12:4-7
- Day 4) James 1:2-4,12
- Day 5) 1 Peter 1:3-9
- Day 6) 2 Peter 2:4-9