



## Chapter 3: Faith in the Furnace

### Collect

God of truth, whose servants Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego chose the fiery furnace rather than worship any other God, grant that we may also be ready to give an answer for the faith that is in us and to suffer gladly for the sake of Jesus our Lord.

**AMEN**

### How do we obtain peace – when we're under pressure?

#### Clear perspective of who has authority

There are plenty of authorities in our lives which tell us what they think we ought to do or think. Most of the while we are quite comfortable with what is expected of us – but sometimes we feel it puts our faith under real pressure.

Work – Join in the office gossip

Friends – You don't need to go to church every week

Parents – Never mind what your husband/wife says

Adverts – Look after your own needs first – you'll buy this if you're worth it.

We need to have a very clear idea of who is in charge. Our friends, our work, our parents... even our spouse hold a deputy position. The highest authority is God. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had a very clear idea of who really was in authority. Yes, they found themselves in a foreign land with Nebuchadnezzar in charge – but God is the higher authority.

It was quite a shock when Nebuchadnezzar discovered that the reason why these Hebrews has worked so well, served in a hostile state, learned the culture and executed the duties of their influential positions with loyalty was because they were serving God first and foremost. They saw this very clearly, "O King we do not need to defend ourselves to you in this matter". God's will was clear to them and so there was no question.

### Leaving the consequences to God

If we focus on only our immediate needs as if *they* had authority, we will always be their victims:

- I couldn't do the right thing because I would lose my job.
- I couldn't do the right thing because my dad would have got angry.

The idea that because we might suffer for doing right and therefore we should do wrong doesn't hold water. Often we won't know what God is going to do about the consequences: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't.

"We believe our God can save us" they say "But even if he does not, we want you to know that we will not serve your gods"

Once we have sorted out where real authority lies, we can deal with the implications. We have to work out what God is asking

us to do in all the complexities of our situation but then we need to do it and do it, leaving the consequences to God

Leaving the consequence to God brings great freedom. We have a huge God, we have earth-shattering beliefs – we do not have to live lives focussed inwards on self-protection and success. We can live generous, open-hearted, humble lives. We can realise that he may be leading us through a tough situation not just for our benefit – but for the sake of others. Instead of asking questions are “Will this be good for me?” or “Can I get out of this?” we stop focussing on ourselves. We can ask “How can I serve?” and “How can I in this difficult situation bring glory to God?”

### **God will do the work**

We do not know what good God will bring out of the situation. My mum used to say, “Do your best and leave the rest to God Almighty’s willing”

Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction with these Hebrews stripped him bare. He had tried to exercise control over them, but found there was a greater power. In the end he came to his senses and found his place in God’s creation, content to be a man and not a God. God works through people who obey him. We probably won’t know what good he is going to bring, but the knowledge we have made the right choice will bring us peace.

If God be our God, he will give us peace in trouble. When there is a storm without, he will make peace within. “The world will make trouble in peace, but only God can create peace in trouble.” Peace with God is a gift we can all enjoy because of Jesus.

### **PRAYERS**

Almighty God,  
We thank you for the gift of your bible to all of us  
May it be a torch showing us the way when the world seems dark

And a strength when we are tempted  
Take us and use us to love and serve  
In the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of your Son  
Jesus Christ our Lord

### **AMEN**

We pray today for all whose faith is in the furnace  
For all who face difficult decisions which will affect their lives  
and the lives of their loved ones  
Decisions about jobs; about marriage; about where to live;  
about money;  
We pray for whom, there seems to be no way through their  
problems  
Help us to see like Daniel, that you rule the Universe  
and we can trust you with our lives.

### **AMEN**

God, give me strength to run this race  
God, give me power to do the right,  
And courage lasting through the fight;  
God give me strength to see your face  
And heart to stand till evil cease  
And, at the last, O God, your peace

### **AMEN**

Archdeacon Sally Gaze

For more resources on Daniel go to

[www.light-wave.org/onlineworshipresources](http://www.light-wave.org/onlineworshipresources)

