
Faith on Fire

What does **Faith on Fire** mean? What part does it play in our lives today? What can we learn from Faithful people in the Bible, whose faith was on fire?

During these days of struggles our faith is constantly being tested by the problems we are faced in this world.

Now the end of verse 24 in Mark chapter 19 has always stood out for me regarding our struggles to keep our faith, it says, ***I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!*** You see, we all do believe, but sometimes we find ourselves doubting our faith, when trouble comes our way. When it comes to faith, we need to be like children who have that ultimate trust in their parents and so we should have the same trust in God, our Father.

We can learn a very important lesson about faith and in some cases, our lack of faith from Daniel 3.

The example of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego in Daniel 3 will help us see it more clearly. These faithful men believed and knew that God *could* do something even as miraculous as saving them from the fiery furnace. Nothing is impossible with God (Mark 10:27). This is why they say, "Our God whom we serve *is able* to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace" (Daniel 3:17). They knew God's power and abilities. However, they were not so bold as to think or believe He would deliver them "at their request," or according to their personal desires and timing.

While they do say, "He *will* deliver us from your hand, O king" (verse 17), this statement refers primarily to their ultimate spiritual deliverance, not their physical deliverance from their present distress. How do we know this?

Usual Deliverance

God does not usually deliver us miraculously out of the situations of life or from the natural consequences of our own choices. He allows us to reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7). He does this for good reasons.

Recall the great numbers of people who have had to suffer over the centuries for being Christians. Some were thrown to the lions, beheaded, burned or crucified, yet God did not deliver them. Did they lack faith? Not necessarily. God's "failure" to deliver them occurred not because they lacked faith. We certainly cannot conclude that God could not deliver them. He chose not to deliver them out of their trial at that time for a reason perhaps only He knew. Maybe they had proven their faithfulness to God by holding fast and not giving in, and He judged that they had grown sufficiently in His image.

When Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were brought before the king, they acknowledged that they did not know what God would do for them. They just trusted that, since they had done all they could do to affect the situation, whatever happened did was according to God's will and plan for them. They were also sure that, no matter where matters appeared to be heading, they would not compromise their beliefs and faith in God's wisdom, judgment and determination on how their situation would finally turn out. They were living by faith (II Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 2:20), but

their faith was not necessarily the means of their deliverance. Ultimately, God decided that in this situation, at that particular time, that He would save them to His glory.

Being Disappointed

When we are going through a severe trial, we redouble our efforts to get close to God and seek His will on what we should do. It seems that quite often circumstances turn out far differently than we desire, and we react with disappointment, discouragement or dejection. Being disappointed when things do not go our way has little or nothing to do with a lack of faith, although it may show spiritual immaturity.

Our thoughts are not God's thoughts, and our way is not God's way (Isaiah 55:8). So, the fact that God answers prayers only according to His own purpose, in His own time and manner, tells us that things will rarely happen the way we ask for them to happen. His way of looking at what needs to occur is light-years different from what we might perceive needs to happen.

When We Pray

When we pray to God, we must trust and yield to God's own faithfulness toward us. We have to know without doubt that He *can* deliver us—and ultimately will deliver us spiritually. We must also learn not to be terribly disappointed when He does not intervene in the way we think He should. We have to trust that, if He does deliver us, there is a purpose for it, and if He does not deliver us, there is also a purpose for it. Whether or not God delivers us as we think He should does not necessarily indicate that we lack faith.

God is aware of all of the suffering that goes on in the ecclesia, in our families and around the world. He knows every hair on our heads and every sparrow that falls (Matthew 10:29-31). He, however, is working out a purpose, and sometimes our suffering plays a role in fulfilling it.

Often we do not know what our situation is all about, and God is certainly not quick to tell us. For us, it is a matter of believing, just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego, that no matter what, we will not compromise our beliefs. Although we may not like what is happening in the moment, we must also be willing to yield to whatever God allows. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were not keen on being thrown into the fire—and did not know if they would survive it—but they trusted and yielded in absolute faith to God.

You see, the true meaning of faith on fire, is how we respond when we are thrown into a fiery furnace of trials? How do you respond when your faith is tested? Let's look back at Chapter 13. Notice especially what the king says in verse 25. "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." Daniel 3:25 The first thing we need to do when we are thrown into a fiery furnace: Keep walking through the fire. Fiery furnaces are no place to stop! The king saw four men "walking around in the fire". You have to keep walking. Don't quit or give up when you find yourself in a fiery furnace, in a place of testing and trial. I see people get discouraged and they stop serving Jesus because they are going through a fiery trial. Don't give up now! Not in a fiery furnace. Keep moving so you can get out of there! Stay on course. It's part of living in this broken world that trials come, sickness comes, trouble comes. It is part of being a Christian and resisting the call to compromise and

sin that persecution and ridicule comes. But don't stop walking with Jesus when you are going through a fiery trial. I've got a feeling those three were staying as close to the fourth man in the fire as possible. Job in his fiery trial said, "My feet have closely followed his steps. I have kept to his way without turning aside." Job 23:11 Keep walking with Jesus through the fire! And remember, the important word here is "through." You are going through a fiery trial. You aren't going into this fiery furnace to stay. You are going through this trial and somewhere in it, or on the other side of it, or because of it, or perhaps all the above, you will see God's glory revealed! You're coming out on the other side changed, proven, tested, complete, victorious. Job said, "When he has tested me, I will come forth as gold." Job 23:10. One way or another, God is going to be glorified and you are going to experience his victory. If I live, I live with Jesus. If I die, I live with Jesus. Either way, I win. Either way, I'm going through! But keep walking with Jesus. Notice, these three guys had already made up their mind to keep walking, to keep serving the Lord, regardless of what happened. Remember they told the king, "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." Daniel 3:17-18 I don't know what the future holds, but I've made up my mind, whatever comes, I'm going to keep walking with Jesus. There is no place to stop, no place to quit. Keep walking with Jesus, regardless of the circumstances, regardless of how hot the fire gets. I'm going through this with Jesus. He will see me through to victory either here or on the other side. Either way, I'm going to keep walking with him through this fiery furnace!

Our Father will be with us!

The Lord is going before us and He will be with us. He will never leave us or forsake us. He is with you in the fire today and he is going to bring you through, shining like pure gold, tested and proven through the fire. His glory is going to be seen in you and through you. You are going to be loosed from shackles that held you captive. You are going to experience God's peace and presence even in the most difficult of times. You'll have greater faith for the journey ahead and greater confidence in God. He has brought you through thus far so don't be afraid. Don't be discouraged. Look around. You aren't alone in this fire. The Lord is with you. He has never left you or forsaken you and he's not about to start now.

Let your faith be on fire today!

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