

Mini Sermon Series – “STAND” Part 3

“I Will Not Bow!”

Pastor Dale Campfield - October 31st, 2010

Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Intro:

We are in a battle. The enemy does not like the fact they we are experiencing God in a New Dimension...and we are! We're seeing God move like we've never seen Him move before. Souls are being saved! People are being healed! Deliverance is taking place in people's lives, restoration of marriages, new ministries being launched, etc. The devil doesn't like it.

Today we will continue a short sermon series that I have entitled "STAND". This will be a three week series. We have been talking the last six weeks about Stepping Up. Stepping up to fulfill the call of God upon our lives. That call of God consists of two things: The Great Commandment, loving each other and God. The second being The Great Commission, going into all the world making disciples of all people.

Part One Was: “Not Even an Inch”

Last Week's Sermon Title: "Don't Just Do Something, Stand There!"

The title of this message today is "I Will Not Bow"

SHOW VIDEO

Our text today is taken out of Daniel 3:1-30

Today, we're going to look at the story of Daniel and the 3 Hebrew Children, how they refused to compromise, refused to bow to the pressures of the world. It's an amazing story. But first of all...

Question: What Does It Mean to Compromise?

QUOTES

Note.... That one form of compromise is good.

As spoken by...

Jane Wells

“Learn the wisdom of compromise, for it is better to bend a little than to break.”

In our marriages and relationships, we need a bit of compromise, which means to not have to have it your own way, but see it their way and make amends to that. However, when we begin to compromise our beliefs, God’s Word, our convictions, etc.... then it becomes a trap from the enemy, and we must beware! Compromise. The basic pressure in bowing is to try and get us to compromise what we truly believe. The enemy would love to get us to compromise.

As is spoken by...

Charles Stanley

“Everyone has principles they live by, but which are negotiable and which should never be set aside? The truth is, whenever Christians compromise their godly principles, they walk dangerously close to a deadly landmine.”

Janis Joplin

“Don’t compromise yourself. You are all you’ve got.”

Margaret Thatcher

“If you just set out to be like, you would be prepared to compromise on anything at any time, and you would achieve nothing.”

Let’s look at the Story...

Overview of the Story

DANIEL 3:16-18

Studdard Kennedy was a military chaplain during World War II. Like all people who experience the front lines of combat, military chaplains have extremely dangerous jobs. I’ve heard of some pastors who come out of churches feeling as if they’ve been in combat, but chaplains are the only ones I know who actually get shot at with live ammunition. And they can’t shoot back, because according to the Geneva Convention, chaplains must be unarmed. But during World War II, Studdard Kennedy was enduring a particularly rough and violent campaign ministering to the front line troops across France. He sat down and wrote a letter to his 10-year old son. He wrote: “The first prayer I want my son to learn to say for me is not, ‘God keep Daddy safe,’ but, ‘God make Daddy brave. And if he has hard things to do, make him strong to do them.’ Son, life and death don’t matter. But right and wrong do. Daddy dead is Daddy still, but Daddy dishonored before God is something too awful for words. I suppose you would like to put in a bit about safety, too, and Mother would like that, I’m sure. Well, put it in afterwards, for it really doesn’t

matter nearly as much as doing what is right.” Studdard Kennedy wanted his son to learn what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego showed us over 25 centuries ago. We know the story well. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were strangers in a strange land. Along with Daniel, they were taken captive and exiled when Babylon conquered Jerusalem around 600 years before Jesus was born. They now lived in the pagan country of Babylon, but their heart was in Jerusalem. They knew the Law. They loved God and purposed in their heart to serve Him no matter what the people around them were doing. Like Studdard Kennedy, they believed that right and wrong mattered. The sinful world around them demanded that they bow their knee and worship the god of the age. They refused. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Christians today live in a land that is not our home. The world demands we bow our knee and worship the god of the age. But by recognizing God’s ability and authority, and determining to obey Him, Christians today can refuse the sinful demands of a bowing world and stand when the whole world bows. A little bit later we’ll look at the two legs the Hebrew children were able to stand on, but first, let’s look at the world which was bowing around them. First, the bowing world accused the Hebrew children. Let’s back up and look at verses 8-12.

DANIEL 3:8-12

Let’s set the scene. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. Babylon had conquered Jerusalem several times. Each time they did, they would carry the best and brightest off with them to serve the king. They would send them through some pretty intense training and provide them with an excellent education. As they were going through this training, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had impressed their captors so much that they gave them positions of authority within the kingdom. Of course, it helped that their friend Daniel interpreted a dream for the king that no one else could. So things were going pretty well for them. They had gone from slaves to governors in just a few years. But just like anyone who lives captive in a land that is not their home, they ran into a problem. The king set up a golden statue of himself. Then he declared “national worship my image day” throughout the kingdom. Of course, being good, God-fearing Jews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused. Isn’t it interesting how anytime God’s people do something different than the crowd, someone is always there to accuse us? That’s what happened to them. Look at verse 8.

DANIEL 3:8

The Chaldeans that brought the accusation were probably jealous of the fact that the Hebrew children had government positions they wanted. They were looking for anything they could find to bring them down and destroy them. In the world today, we as Christians are living in a land that is not our home. God has blessed us with positions of favor and authority by giving us jobs, homes, classrooms, friends, and family. But this is still not our home. Just because we may be comfortable in Babylon, doesn’t mean the temporary prince of this world isn’t trying to make us bow. You see, verse 8 says the Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. That word “accused” is translated from an Aramaic word that literally means, “to eat the flesh of,” or “chew someone up.” The Chaldeans were attempting to chew the Hebrew children up and spit them out. Isn’t that the same thing Satan tries to do with us? The Bible says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” How does he try to devour us? One way is by constantly feeding our lusts with immoral temptation and then telling us how weak we are and we just can’t help ourselves. Another way is by puffing up

our pride and then telling us that it's OK to be selfish because we deserve it or we've earned the right. Another way is by playing on our laziness by making us complacent to sin around us. Another way is by sowing seeds of petty discord among us so we battle against one another instead of against him. Look out! Satan is using the bowing Chaldeans of the world to accuse you and chew you up! Not only did the bowing world accuse them, the bowing world confronted the Hebrew children. Look at verses 13-15.

DANIEL 3:13-15

Nebuchadnezzar was furious when he confronted them. He basically told the Hebrew children, "I'm going to give you one more chance. And if you don't bow down like everybody else, I'm going to make you die the most painful death you can imagine." And then he mocked them. Look at the last part of verse 15: "And who is that God that shall deliver you from my hands?" Does our world today confront Christians? Ask the Christians in China who are thrown in prison for going to church. Ask the Christians in Iran who are publicly stoned every week on nationwide TV, simply for professing faith in Christ. Ask the Christians in the Sudan who are burned or nailed to boards in mock crucifixions. But you say, "Those places are a long way from here." Does our world here confront Christians? Every time you are mocked for your beliefs by your friends or co-workers. Every time you are kept from professing your faith at work or at school Every time you are told that your God doesn't exist or isn't able to deliver you. When you look at it that way, things haven't changed much since the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The bowing world around us is still in the business of accusing God's people and confronting God's people. So if the bowing world hasn't changed that much, maybe we can learn from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's example. What did they do when the Chaldeans accused them? What did they do when Nebuchadnezzar confronted them? What did they do when the whole world around them bowed? They stood. As everyone around them bowed the knee, each of the Hebrew children stood on his own two legs. So the question before us this today is, what are the two legs we must stand on to keep from bowing? The first leg is the leg of recognition. Look at verses 16-17:

DANIEL 3:16-17

After Nebuchadnezzar mocked God, they looked him right in the eye and told him, "We're not afraid of you. Our God is able to deliver us from anything you can possibly do to us. If you can dish it out, our God can take it." The Hebrew children recognized the fact that they served a God that was bigger than Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. We serve a God that is bigger than any problem you can possibly have. If Jesus Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, don't you think He can handle your physical problems? If He fed 5000 with two loaves and five fishes, don't you think He can handle your financial problems? If He spoke the world into existence from absolutely nothing, don't you think He can handle absolutely anything that could possibly come your way? Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from anything and everything! Recognizing that our God is able to deliver us from anything is one leg we can stand on. But in order to stand when the whole world bows, we need to stand on two legs. The second leg is the leg of determination. Look at verse 18:

DANIEL 3:18

But if not... What three powerful words. They knew that God was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, but He didn't have to. And if He chose not to, He would still be God. He would still be able. He would still be in control. He would still be on the throne. If He chose not to, their faith would not have been shaken one bit. So whether God chose to deliver them or not, they were going to do the right thing and trust Him anyway. That's faith! The Bible says that God's thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways. We don't always have the answers as to why bad things happen to us. We don't have answers for cancer and sickness and pain and heartbreak. What we do know is that our God is able to deliver us from those things. But real faith comes into play when we can say with the Hebrew children, "but if not." God, I know you can deliver me from this, but if not, I am determined to serve you anyway. I have the God-given determination to obey you. I am determined not to bow before the idols of this age no matter what happens to me. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were able to stand when the whole world around them bowed. They were able to stand in spite of the accusations being thrown at them from the Chaldeans. They were able to stand in spite of the furious confrontation with Nebuchadnezzar. They were able to stand because they knew God was able to deliver them. And they were able to stand because they were determined to obey Him even if He didn't. Ephesians 6:10-13 says: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Now.... Let's make this practical. Here we go...

IF YOU CHOOSE TO STAND, TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTS

FACT: If you choose to not bow – you will go through the fire.

There will be a price to pay for taking a STAND for what you believe in.

FACT: If you choose to not bow – you will be set apart in the eyes of others.

You will be labeled; you will be looked down upon; you will be considered "different". Hey the Bible says we are peculiar people anyway right!

FACT: If you choose to not bow – you will probably be in the minority.

It's the remnant that stands up in the face of the world, with the remnant being the minority. It takes at least one person to stand up and say, "No more, I will not bow." You may also find yourself in the minority of your family, society, etc.

FACT: If you choose to not bow – you will be labeled.

"The Holy One", "The Spiritual One", "Holy than thou", "Too good for us", etc. etc. We've got to be willing to be labeled for the Kingdom of God.

So, what have we learned?

When the Pressure is On.... In order not to bow....

#1: It takes Confidence

This cannot be confidence in yourself, but confidence in God. Like the O.T. says, “Oh God, we’ve not been this way before, but our eyes are going to be on You!” Confidence in the God who got you to where you are now, with the knowledge that He will be with you as you stand in the fire.

#2: It takes Attitude

You’ve got to have a little attitude. You’ve got to ACT like you’re going to stand victoriously. You can’t be a wimp. You’ve got to stand with attitude; not pride, but attitude against the enemy to make sure he knows you mean business.

#3: It takes Determination

You’ve got to be willing to stick it out. You may get burned, but you can’t bow. You’ve got to have the determination of the Hebrew children when they said, we may not make it out of the fire, but we will not bow. You’ve got to be determined in your spirit. This basically means that nothing is going to change your mind.

#4: It takes Submission

You’ve got to be submitted to God. You’ve got to be submitted to His Word. You’ve got to be submitted to accountability in your life. You’ve got to have a life of submission to the Truth. You’ve got to have submission.

#5: It takes GUTS

You’ve got to be able to “stomach” it. On the inside, you’re guts might be turning over with nervousness, you might feel like you’re gonna get sick, etc. But it takes guts to stand up for Christ being willing to pay the price.

Are you willing to take a STAND... Do you have the heart to say, “I WILL NOT BOW”?!