

Sermon: Courage

Text: Daniel 3

Discussion Questions:

The word “compromise” can have many very positive uses and connotations. Technically (by definition), the word **compromise** means: *“An agreement or a settlement of a dispute that is reached by each side making concessions. To settle a dispute by mutual concession.”* There is no question that this can be a good thing—especially when two opposing viewpoints or sides are at a stalemate.

- Discuss ways in which compromising can be a good thing.
- Talk about various scenarios when you have compromised your particular stance or position in order to come to an agreement that works best for you and the others involved.
- What are some synonyms for “compromise” that can also be good and helpful when working through conflict.

A second definition for “**compromise**” is: *“Accepting standards that are lower than what is desirable or acceptable.”*

- Is this a good thing? Is this EVER a good thing?
- What causes us to accept standards that are less than good?
- What are some possible outcomes of compromising our standards? What damage might occur? How can others get hurt when we compromise our standards?

Many years ago, back in 1978, a contemporary Christian music artist by the name of Keith Green recorded an album called “No Compromise.” The opening verse of the song “Make My Life A Prayer To You” says:

***“Make my life a prayer to you. I wanna do what you want me to.
No empty words, and no white lies. No token prayers, no compromise.”***

- When Keith Green talks of “no compromise” in this song—what do you think he’s talking about?
- How easy can it be to compromise our standards in the culture that we find ourselves living in?
- What do you say to the person who might look at these lyrics as “intolerant” or even “offensive”? Where do the virtues of grace and love fit within an uncompromising worldview?

We turn our attention today to the account of three men who took a completely uncompromising position in the face of a law that was enacted by the King of Babylon. They were commanded to get on their knees and bow down to an enormous golden statue. In other words—they were being required to worship a god other than the One True God.

- Before digging into the details of the narrative, can you think of situations in our world today when people are being called upon to worship other gods?

Examination:

Read **Daniel 3:1-7**

- Before examining the events of this chapter—it is interesting to go back and look at the way things ended at the close of chapter 2. In Daniel 2:46, we find

King Neb literally bowing down at Daniel's feet—acknowledging that Daniel's God is the "God of gods and the Lord of kings." Some scholars believe that chapter 3 takes place 18 years after Daniel 2. What do you think happened in those 18 years that caused Neb to go from a place of humility—to a place of complete pride and self-worship?

- Do you think Neb's dream of an enormous statue in chapter 2 influenced his decision to literally construct a 90-foot-tall golden statue in chapter 3?
- According to verse 4—how widespread was this law? Who did it effect?
- According to verse 7—who responded? How did they respond?
- Comparing this situation to our current world—do you think it's true that God's people will be confronted with the idols of this world?
- Read **Daniel 3:8-15**
 - So what happened? Summarize what happens after the law is issued?
 - Verse 12 mentions the fact that these three men (I refuse to refer to them by their Babylonian names!) are in positions of leadership—"set over the affairs of the province of Babylon." How does this jive with what we read in Daniel 2:49?
 - From the sounds of it, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people (if not millions and millions) bowed down when they heard the music play. How in the world did Neb become aware that THREE people remained standing? Do you think it mattered that these weren't just men "in the crowd"—but they were leaders that Neb had appointed?
 - Do you believe it's true that God's people will be criticized by the people of this world when they refuse to bow down?
- Read **Daniel 3:16-30**
 - In verse 17, the three men made a couple of very bold statements. They first proclaim that God "is able" to deliver them from the furnace. The second statement is that God "will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand." What is the difference between believing that God CAN deliver us—and that He WILL deliver us? What role does faith play in all of this? (see Hebrews 11:1)
 - What do you make of what the men say in verse 20, "But even if He does not...". Does this represent doubt on their part? Does this verse help us—when God doesn't answer all of our prayers exactly the way we want Him to?
 - What happens next is truly one of the most astounding and dramatic events in the entire Bible. Not only are the three men alive in the flames—they are joined by a fourth person! Who do you believe this fourth person was?
 - Why do you think we are told that not only were these men unharmed by the flames—"there was no smell of fire on them." Why do you think this detail was included?

Application:

There are so many ways to apply this narrative to our lives. The most important thing to remember is that Jesus is with you. Always. Whatever you're going through—Jesus is with you!