

But if Not
Daniel 3:1-30

Faith is **not** revealed *in spite* of trials but *because* of trials. God's plan for His people includes persecution and other painful experiences. "Pain and trouble are not a disruption or an interruption to God's plan for your life. They are His plan."

How can trials help us? What good purpose does God have for our pain?

- Trials test our faith. *A comfortable life* often leads to a *lazy faith*.

You don't have to exercise a lot of faith when life is going your way. You don't have to trust God very much when life is easy.

- Trials push us to examine our faith. *Untested faith* is *unexamined faith*.

Hard times lead us to probe our own souls and ask ourselves if our faith is real and valuable to us. Hard times drive us to ask hard questions. Every trial takes us back to the question, "Who is God, and can I trust Him?"

- Trials give us stories to tell. *Untested faith* is *untold faith*.

Going through trials by faith gives us stories to tell—stories that highlight God's delivering grace in our lives. And such stories are powerful.

When we respond in faith to our trials, we end up having stories to tell. Just ask Job, Joni Eareckson Tada, or countless other believers who trusted in God in painful trials.

In Daniel 3, three young men refused to compromise when under pressure. They disobeyed orders from a powerful pagan king because they trusted in their God. They chose to risk the death penalty rather than turn their backs on their God by bowing down to the image the king had set up. Everyone else was bowing and worshipping the image, but they wouldn't.

"Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?" -Daniel 3:15 (NKJV)

Why were these three young men who were so far from home so ready to face this test of their faith? How is it that they were so confident in their God? How can we be ready and confident?

- These young men knew God in depth. They knew the right answer to the question, “Who is God, and can I trust Him?”
- In their hearts, these young men had answered the king’s question long before it was asked.

Why is the response we choose to our trials so important?

- Some of the people around you are asking the same basic question: “Who is the god who will deliver you?” The world is asking that question. The answer is your life. That is, your Savior is seen (or not seen) in your life as people watch you respond to the trials you face.

Faith takes our theology and our life and puts the two together.

What else can we do to be ready for trials when they arrive?

- Remember that God and often others face our trials with us. God and other believers walk through the painful experience with us.
- Remember that deliverance from the trial is **not** the highest goal. The highest goal is that God is glorified. Ultimately, every true believer will be delivered from every trial, but it is the glory of God that we value and seek above all else.