



Daily Reflections

March 21, 2018

Scripture

Daniel 3: 14-20, 91-92, 95

King Nebuchadnezzar said:

"Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,
that you will not serve my god,
or worship the golden statue that I set up?

Be ready now to fall down and worship the statue I had made,
whenever you hear the sound of the trumpet,
flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe,
and all the other musical instruments;

otherwise, you shall be instantly cast into the white-hot furnace;
and who is the God who can deliver you out of my hands?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered King Nebuchadnezzar,
"There is no need for us to defend ourselves before you
in this matter.

If our God, whom we serve,
can save us from the white-hot furnace
and from your hands, O king, may he save us!

But even if he will not, know, O king,
that we will not serve your god
or worship the golden statue that you set up."

King Nebuchadnezzar's face became livid with utter rage
against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times more than usual
and had some of the strongest men in his army

bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
and cast them into the white-hot furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar rose in haste and asked his nobles,

"Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?"

"Assuredly, O king," they answered.

"But," he replied, "I see four men unfettered and unhurt,
walking in the fire, and the fourth looks like a son of God."

Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed,

"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,
who sent his angel to deliver the servants who trusted in him;
they disobeyed the royal command and yielded their bodies
rather than serve or worship any god
except their own God."

Our Scripture Reflection

Have you heard much of recent about the virtue known as "loyalty"? With the focus on "self" over the past fifty or so years, it seems that talk and writing about loyalty has declined significantly. To be loyal means to place something or someone above self. The story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is a wonderful illustration of how three young Israelite men put their love of and loyalty to God above their own lives. Because of their loyalty to God in the face of torture and death, they are vindicated by God. Ironically, their loyalty even inspires the pagan King Nebuchadnezzar to convert and believe in the God of Israel!

Food for your Journey

Faithfulness, honesty, loyalty and integrity. Are these disappearing values? Christine Pelton, of Piper, Kansas, thinks so.

The high school teacher discovered in December, 2001, that almost 20% of her students had plagiarized their student projects by borrowing from the Internet. She promptly failed them. The principal and superintendent agreed that it was plagiarism. The district had backed her before in a similar case. End of story?

Not quite. Parents protested that Pelton was being too harsh. The school board ordered her to soften the penalty. She refused and resigned in protest.

Some leading educators say that this is only the latest in a series of events that signal a weakening of America's moral resolve.

Pelton is concerned that now students will think there is no penalty for cheating, and that, instead, honesty if not the best policy, certainly is the most costly policy.

-For more, see Clayton Bellamy,

"Honesty not the school board policy,"

The Denver Post, January 7, 2002, 1A+.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You said that if I am to be Your disciple I must pick up my cross and follow You daily. Lord, there are days when my cross is heavy. Please give me the Grace I need to remain strong and loyal to You and the work You have given me to do. Amen