



Sermon Notes from 30 December

"If Not..." (Daniel 3:8-18)

by Rev Guna Raman

Dan 1 Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were taken into Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar in 600 BC. Though trained in Babylonian literature, culture, and language, they refused to compromise with the corrupt, heathen Babylonian system and culture.

Dan 2 Daniel miraculously gave an accurate interpretation of the king's dream, and together with his friends got promoted to positions of power.

Dan 3 The 3 friends refused to bow before the 30-meters tall and 3-meter wide statue – even at the risk of being thrown into the fiery furnace.

Dan 3:16-18; Isa 43:2 The first "if" statement was based on God's capability and power(v17) but the 2nd was based on God's sovereignty and mysterious will (v18).

Heb 11:35b-38 Faith is not the assurance that everything is going to be okay but that God is in control! God did not come through for the people in spite of their great faith! Faith is an understanding that God is going to accomplish his purposes in my life.

'If not' faith is tied to two things:

1. An understanding that the purposes of God are true and good.

Read the Bible to know the purposes of God. Scripture is not about us! We often look for verses that encourage us and sometimes lift them out of their context to comfort and encourage us. Look for God and His ways – His redemptive purposes!

2. Maintaining the right posture before Him.

There are three ways by which God delivers us:

1. He delivers us from ...
2. He delivers us through ...
3. He delivers us later.

How are we going to posture ourselves when the purposes of God don't meet our expectations?

1. Saturate Your Life With Prayer

Dan 2 Engage in prayer! We cannot wait until we get into a bad situation before we pray. Prayer is the only powerful covering shield against the wiles of the wicked one (Eph 6).

2. No matter what the outcome of life, worship God.

Worship is a response to who God is – his character and person; an attitude of heart that adores, honours and respects God even in your crises!

3. Be strongly rooted in scripture and in good theology

The safest place to be is not in the centre of God's will! Faith is about doing God's glory! And your good works does not merit God's rewards - it is not about your righteousness but God's! Like the 3 friends, know right doctrine; know God as revealed in His word – a sovereign, miracle-working and mysterious God who works all things for our good!

4. Be well connected to the church community

The church is the body of Christ. We need to stand together in a strong bond of love - a community of faith that faces the "If not..." times of our lives.