

## When The Fiery Furnace Cannot Be Avoided

### Introduction and Review

- ❑ Two months ago we began addressing the Christian's response to the various trials of life from James chapter 1.
- ❑ We learned that the Christian can have the joy of the Lord in any circumstance of life; joy comes from the Spirit of the Lord!
- ❑ We learned from 1 Peter that even in fiery trials our joy can be inexpressible and filled with glory.
- ❑ And for the past three weeks we learned to face the hardships of life as a soldier, athlete & farmer for Jesus from 1Tim. 2:1-7.

### I. The Believer Before The Fiery Furnace

#### A. Idolatry in the world (v. 1-7)

*Unbelievers in this world plan their idolatry. They refuse to worship the only True God even when they know better (Dan. 2:47). Therefore they make gods for themselves & of themselves (Rom. 1:21-23). Idolatry comes in many forms: materialism (Mt. 6:24), covetousness – more money, sex, power, etc. (Col. 3:5), satisfaction of the human body (Phil. 3:19), worshipping angels (Col. 2:18), etc.*

#### B. Idolatry demands worship (v. 8-12)

*People involved in idolatry are extremely jealous of loyalty to any other religion & not tolerant of other religions. They seek ways to turn up the heat on believers who love & serve the God of the bible – Jehovah, Yahweh, Elohim thru His Son Jesus Christ. The plotting & scheming against you may come from a co-worker, a fellow parent, neighbor, class-mate, someone in church, etc. **without your knowledge.***

### II. The Believer In The Fiery Furnace

#### A. Idolatry must threaten believers (v. 13-15)

*People enslaved to this world's system seek to intimidate believers with their worldly power & influence. Threats to take something from us, prevent progress in life or even harm us is the only influence they have over us. This threatening pressure may be overt or very subtle!*

#### B. Believers must resist idolatry (v. 16-23)

*Resisting the devil & his people will certainly lead to intense retaliation. Other people may be seriously hurt. But the word of God & Spirit of God in us strengthens us stand firm for Jesus regardless of the consequences (Rom. 12:1-2; 2Tim. 1:7; Eph. 6:13-14a).*

### III. The Believer Out Of The Fiery Furnace

#### A. The testimony (v. 24-27)

*God takes care of us in our trials; we are never alone (2Co. 4:9; Is. 43:1-2). God works miraculously so that people will know that God alone brought us through. God humbles the proud & arrogant enemy while He protects His children; He protects us from the sharp wounds of the tongue, delivers us from accusations & plots to harm us!*

#### B. God's glory (v. 28-29)

*One of the major purposes of a believer's fiery trial is for God to be glorified by our life in the trial (Mt. 5:16). We prove that we love Jesus more than even our own lives. The unbeliever (even our enemy) will see the way we persevered & know that our God enabled us to do so.*

#### C. God's blessing (v. 30)

*God obviously does not have to reward & bless us in this life, but He does out of the goodness of His own heart. He blesses us in the presence of our enemies & often uses our enemies to bless us (Ps. 23:5).*

**ILL:** My sons in elementary – high school: pressure as PKs, socio-economic status, intellect, clothing, etc. Other children plotting, bullying, threatening... attempting to make them change & conform. By the grace of God, they persevered, finished HS, went on to college & serve as a testimony for God to others today.

**APPL:** The same is true with us spiritually. In our daily lives, interacting with neighbors, co-workers, associates & friends, we will be the object of persecution that cannot be avoided. But Jesus never allows us to go thru the fiery trials alone. He is with us guiding, protecting, encouraging, healing, delivering...

## CONCLUSION

So then my beloved brother or sister since you know that you are living for Christ & you will never deny Him; you know that you love Jesus more than your job, house, car, vacations, family, health & even life itself. Since you know that these things are true, you also know that you cannot avoid conflict with this world that does not love Jesus; this world that loves jobs, cars, houses, vacations, power & wealth. Therefore I am asking you today before you get into the fiery furnace to make up your mind just like your brothers Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego that you will live for Christ who died for you. Make up your mind that you will even die for Christ who died for you. Make up your mind that you will live holy in your family, on your job, in school, in the gym, shopping... & if that leads to people persecuting you, stand still & wait for God's deliverance!

If you are not a Christian, there's a different fiery furnace that should concern you. It involves eternal pain & separation from God. But Jesus offers you an alternative today; He offers you the only alternative to eternal punishment; that is eternal life. But you must believe...

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