

The Hot Seat of Fidelity - Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95

The moral principle I want to reflect on today is **Fidelity to God above all else**. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego provide us with a powerful witness to this principle. Even under the threat of death, they refuse to worship the golden statue Nebuchadnezzar had erected. Their answer is bold and unapologetic:

“If our God, whom we serve, can save us from the furnace of blazing fire and from your hand, 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 have set up.” (Daniel 3:17-18)

Their fidelity was not conditional upon deliverance or a happy ending. It was unconditional and unwavering, based on their absolute trust in God. As **St. Gregory the Great** commented, *“They despised earthly power because they kept the fear of God in their hearts.”*

A Real-Life Event of Fidelity

Let me tell you a true story about **Blessed Franz Jägerstätter**, an Austrian farmer and devout Catholic who lived during the time of Nazi Germany. Franz was a man of humble background, a husband, and a father. When Hitler’s regime demanded that he swear allegiance and serve in the Nazi military, he refused.

Everyone pressured him: his friends, his priest, even his own wife who pleaded with him to reconsider for the sake of their family. He knew the cost of fidelity would be high—perhaps the fiery furnace of martyrdom. And it was. In 1943, he was executed by guillotine for his refusal to comply. His last recorded words were: **“I am convinced it is best that I speak the truth, even if it costs me my life.”**

Just as the three young men were thrown into the furnace, Franz was thrown into a fiery trial. And like the fourth man in the fire, **God was with him**, giving him the courage to endure. Today, he is beatified by the Church, a testament to the power of fidelity.

Applying the Principle to Us

We may not face literal furnaces or tyrannical kings, but fidelity to God is still demanded of us every day.

- **When we face mockery for holding fast to Church teaching...**
- **When we feel the pressure to compromise our values for convenience, popularity, or gain...**
- **When standing for truth costs us friendships or even employment...**

In those moments, **will we choose fidelity like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Like Franz Jägerstätter?** As **St. Augustine** noted: *“Trials come to prove us and improve us.”* When we are faithful to God, He does not always remove the fire, but He does walk with us through it. And through our fidelity, others may come to recognize God’s greatness, just as Nebuchadnezzar did.

May our Lenten journey help us purify our fidelity, making it steadfast, joyful, and courageous. And may we always remember: ***It’s better to walk with God in the fire than to stand apart from Him in safety.***