OUR GOD CAN DELIVER US — BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT

*Below is a sermon/teaching designed for **public speaking**, with a strong biblical narrative, theological depth, practical application, and a clear progression from **faith in God's power** to the deeper faith that remains steadfast when God does not answer according to our expectations.*

Faith That Worships God Beyond the Outcome

Primary Text: Daniel 3:16–18

"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

INTRODUCTION: THE FAITH THAT DOES NOT NEED A GUARANTEE

There is a kind of faith that says:

"I believe God because I know He will give me what I am asking for."

But there is another, deeper kind of faith:

"I believe God because He is God—even if He does not give me what I am asking for."

That distinction can change our entire relationship with God.

Anybody can celebrate God when the miracle happens.

Anybody can praise God when the diagnosis changes, the job comes through, the debt disappears, the relationship is restored, the door opens, the enemy is defeated, and the prayer is answered exactly as requested.

But what happens when you pray and the answer is **no**?

What happens when you pray and the situation gets worse?

What happens when you believe God can deliver you—but He chooses to take you through the fire instead?

That is where Daniel 3 gives us one of the most powerful declarations of faith in the entire Bible:

“Our God can deliver us. But even if He does not, we will not worship your gods.”

That is not weak faith.

That is **mature faith**.

That is faith that has moved beyond God's gifts and learned to treasure **God Himself**.

1. THE STORY: THREE MEN, ONE COMMAND, ONE FURNACE

The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar builds an enormous golden image.

Then he gives a command.

When the music plays, everyone must fall down and worship the image.

There is no ambiguity.

There is no middle ground.

The command is essentially:

Bow—or burn.

Everyone bows.

But three Jewish men refuse:

Shadrach.
Meshach.
Abednego.

They are living in Babylon.

They are surrounded by a culture that does not worship their God.

They have pressure from the government.

They have pressure from society.

They have pressure from their peers.

And yet they refuse to bow.

Why?

Because their faith had already settled the most important question:

Who is worthy of worship?

Their answer was:

Yahweh alone.

2. THEIR FAITH WAS TESTED BEFORE THEY EVER ENTERED THE FIRE

We often focus on the furnace.

But notice what happened before the furnace.

There was a decision.

The real battle was not initially about fire.

It was about **worship**.

Nebuchadnezzar was demanding something that belonged exclusively to God.

The three men had to decide:

“Will we obey God when obedience costs us something?”

This is where many believers discover that faith is more than believing that God exists.

Faith eventually becomes a question of:

Who has the final authority over my life?

God?

Or culture?

God?

Or money?

God?

Or fear?

God?

Or reputation?

God?

Or political power?

God?

Or relationships?

God?

Or my own desires?

The golden statue is ancient.

But golden statues still exist.

They simply look different.

3. THE MODERN GOLDEN IMAGE

Our culture may not ask us to bow before a physical statue.

But we can still be tempted to worship:

money,

success,

status,

approval,

career,

pleasure,

power,

relationships,

comfort,

security,

political ideology,

self-image,

or even **control**.

Anything that receives the ultimate allegiance that belongs to God can become an idol.

An idol is not merely something we love.

An idol is something we allow to become **ultimate**.

There is nothing inherently wrong with money.

Nothing inherently wrong with career.

Nothing inherently wrong with marriage.

Nothing inherently wrong with success.

Nothing inherently wrong with security.

But when we say:

“I cannot live without this,”

we may have discovered where the idol is.

4. NEBUCHADNEZZAR GIVES THEM ONE MORE CHANCE

The king is furious.

He gives them another opportunity.

Essentially:

“Maybe you misunderstood me. When the music plays, bow down.”

But they refuse.

Then comes one of the greatest declarations of faith in Scripture.

Daniel 3:17–18:

“If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it… But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods.”

Look carefully at their theology.

They believe **two things simultaneously**:

God is able.

And:

God is sovereign.

They do not doubt God's power.

But they also refuse to dictate to God how His power must be used.

That distinction is critical.

5. “OUR GOD CAN DELIVER US”

Their first declaration is:

“Our God is able.”

That is faith in God's power.

The Bible repeatedly teaches that God is capable of doing what human beings cannot do.

Jeremiah 32:17 says:

“Nothing is too hard for you.”

Jesus says in Matthew 19:26:

“With God all things are possible.”

Paul declares in Ephesians 3:20 that God is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.

So Christians should never be ashamed to believe in God's ability to perform miracles.

We can pray for healing.

We can pray for restoration.

We can pray for provision.

We can pray for deliverance.

We can pray for breakthrough.

We can pray for protection.

God can.

But there is another sentence we must learn.

6. “BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT…”

This is where faith becomes deeper.

“But even if He does not…”

What does that mean?

It means:

“If God heals me, He is still God.”

“If God does not heal me, He is still God.”

“If God gives me the job, He is still God.”

“If I don't get the job, He is still God.”

“If the relationship is restored, He is still God.”

“If the relationship ends, He is still God.”

“If the door opens, He is God.”

“If the door remains closed, He is God.”

This is **outcome-independent faith**.

It does not mean outcomes are irrelevant.

It means **the outcome does not determine the worthiness of God.**

7. FAITH THAT DOES NOT MANIPULATE GOD

There is a subtle danger in our understanding of faith.

We can unconsciously turn faith into a transaction:

“God, I believe strongly enough, so You must give me what I want.”

But that is not biblical faith.

That is an attempt to control God.

True faith does not say:

“Because I believe, God must obey me.”

True faith says:

“Because I trust God, I will obey Him even when I do not understand Him.”

Jesus Himself demonstrates this in Gethsemane.

He prays:

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”
— Luke 22:42

Jesus asks.

Jesus expresses His desire.

Jesus brings His anguish honestly before the Father.

But then comes:

“Not my will, but yours be done.”

That is surrender.

8. FAITH DOES NOT MEAN WE NEVER ASK GOD FOR DELIVERANCE

This is important.

The three Hebrews did not say:

“We don't care whether God delivers us.”

They said:

“Our God can deliver us.”

They expected God's power.

They hoped for deliverance.

They believed in the possibility of a miracle.

Therefore, biblical surrender does not mean passive resignation.

You can pray:

“Lord, heal me.”

“Lord, rescue my family.”

“Lord, provide employment.”

“Lord, restore this relationship.”

“Lord, protect my children.”

“Lord, deliver me from this situation.”

Pray boldly.

Ask specifically.

Believe God is able.

But add the deeper prayer:

“Nevertheless, Your will be done.”

9. JESUS: THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF “EVEN IF NOT”

Go to Gethsemane.

Jesus knows the cross is approaching.

His soul is overwhelmed.

He falls to the ground.

He prays.

He asks whether the cup can be taken away.

But the Father does not remove the cup.

Jesus goes to the cross.

From a human perspective, it looks like God's failure to answer.

But Easter reveals something extraordinary.

The unanswered prayer became part of God's redemptive purpose.

The cross looked like defeat.

The resurrection revealed victory.

This gives us a crucial theological principle:

We cannot always interpret God's faithfulness by looking at Friday. Sometimes we have to wait for Sunday.

We often judge God from the middle of the story.

But God sees the whole story.

10. JOB: “EVEN IF I DON'T UNDERSTAND”

Job is another powerful example.

Job loses his possessions.

He loses his children.

His health collapses.

His friends accuse him.

Job asks difficult questions.

He wants an explanation.

And yet Job continues wrestling with God.

Eventually Job encounters God Himself.

The book does not give Job a simplistic explanation for every detail of his suffering.

Instead, Job encounters the greatness of God.

This teaches us:

Faith does not require complete explanation.

Sometimes the most mature prayer is:

“God, I don't understand what You are doing, but I refuse to conclude that You are no longer God.”

That is Job's journey.

11. PAUL: WHEN GOD SAYS “NO”

Paul gives another remarkable example.

Paul describes a “thorn” in his flesh in 2 Corinthians 12.

He repeatedly asks God to remove it.

Three times he pleads with the Lord.

And God does not remove it.

Instead, God says:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Notice what happened.

Paul prayed.

God answered.

But the answer was not:

“Yes, I will remove the problem.”

The answer was:

“My grace will sustain you in the problem.”

This is one of the hardest lessons in prayer.

Sometimes God changes the circumstance.

Sometimes God changes us within the circumstance.

Sometimes God removes the mountain.

Sometimes God gives us strength to climb it.

And sometimes, through ways we cannot presently understand, God uses the mountain itself to form something in us.

12. THE THREE DIFFERENT ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Biblically, we can experience:

1. God says YES.

The Red Sea opens.

Peter is released from prison.

The sick are healed.

The impossible happens.

2. God says WAIT.

Abraham waits.

Joseph waits.

David waits.

Israel waits.

3. God says NO—not in the way you requested.

Paul's thorn remains.

Jesus drinks the cup.

Moses sees the Promised Land but does not enter it.

And in each case, God remains God.

Therefore:

A “no” from God is not necessarily a rejection of you.

Sometimes it is protection.

Sometimes redirection.

Sometimes preparation.

Sometimes discipline.

Sometimes mystery.

And sometimes we simply do not know.

Faith does not require us to invent an explanation God has not given.

13. “EVEN IF” FAITH DESTROYS THE IDOL OF CONTROL

This may be the deepest philosophical lesson.

Human beings want certainty.

We want to know:

“What will happen?”

“When will it happen?”

“How will it happen?”

“Will everything work out?”

But faith says:

“I don't need to know everything because I trust the One who does.”

This is not irrational.

It is humility.

I am a creature.

God is Creator.

I see partially.

God sees completely.

I know today.

God knows eternity.

I see the event.

God sees the story.

Therefore:

“Lord, I surrender my demand to know the future.”

That is freedom.

14. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH AND PRESUMPTION

There is a dangerous counterfeit of faith.

It says:

“God must do what I expect because I have faith.”

But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego never said:

“God will definitely save us from the furnace.”

They said:

“God is able to save us.”

Then:

“But even if He does not…”

That is the difference between **faith** and **presumption**.

Faith says:

“God can.”

Presumption says:

“God must.”

Faith says:

“I trust God's wisdom.”

Presumption says:

“God must follow my plan.”

Faith leaves room for God's sovereignty.

15. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE FIRE ACTUALLY COMES?

Nebuchadnezzar becomes enraged.

The furnace is heated extraordinarily hot.

The three men are thrown into it.

But then something astonishing happens.

Nebuchadnezzar looks into the furnace and says that he sees **four men walking around in the fire**, unharmed.

Daniel 3:25 describes the fourth figure as appearing like:

“a son of the gods.”

The king calls the men out.

And when they emerge:

their clothes are not burned.

Their hair is not singed.

They do not smell like smoke.

Think about that.

God did not prevent them from entering the fire.

God met them in the fire.

That is one of the greatest images of God's presence in Scripture.

Sometimes our prayer is:

“Lord, don't let me enter the fire.”

But God's answer may be:

“I will be with you in the fire.”

Isaiah 43:2 expresses this beautifully:

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned.”

Notice the language.

It does not say:

“You will never pass through fire.”

It says:

“When you walk through the fire…”

The promise is not always absence from difficulty.

The promise is **presence in difficulty**.

16. GOD MAY NOT KEEP YOU OUT OF THE FIRE—BUT HE CAN KEEP THE FIRE OUT OF YOU

This is a powerful distinction.

The furnace was around them.

But the furnace did not become their identity.

The fire was around them.

But it did not consume them.

Likewise, circumstances may surround you without defining you.

You may experience:

rejection without becoming rejected.

failure without becoming a failure.

grief without becoming hopeless.

temptation without becoming enslaved.

financial difficulty without losing your identity.

suffering without losing your faith.

Your environment does not have to become your master.

17. WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO REFUSE TO WORSHIP?

The question of Daniel 3 is ultimately not:

“Will God rescue me?”

The deeper question is:

“What am I willing to worship if He doesn't?”

This question reaches into everyday life.

If God does not give you the relationship you want, will you worship God—or bitterness?

If God does not give you the career you wanted, will you worship God—or success?

If God does not answer your prayer on your timetable, will you worship God—or control?

If someone rejects you, will you worship God—or human approval?

If your plans collapse, will you worship God—or despair?

If suffering comes, will you worship God—or resentment?

The furnace exposes the object of worship.

18. A SCENARIO: THE PERSON WHO PRAYED FOR HEALING

Imagine a Christian named David.

David receives a serious medical diagnosis.

He prays.

His church prays.

His family prays.

He believes God can heal him.

He says:

“Lord, I believe You can heal me.”

That is faith.

But then he adds:

“And if You choose not to heal me in the way I am asking, I will still belong to You.”

That is deeper faith.

He continues receiving appropriate care.

He continues praying.

He continues hoping.

But he refuses to make healing the condition of his worship.

His prayer becomes:

“Lord, I want healing. I believe You can heal. But my faith does not depend upon receiving the answer I want.”

That is Daniel 3 faith.

19. ANOTHER SCENARIO: THE CLOSED DOOR

Imagine someone has prayed for a particular job.

They prepare.

They interview.

They believe.

They say:

“God is going to open this door.”

The company chooses someone else.

The person is devastated.

There are two possible responses.

Response one:

“God failed me.”

Response two:

“Lord, I don't understand. I wanted this. I believed You could give it to me. But I refuse to let disappointment become an idol. Show me what faithfulness looks like now.”

The second response does not deny disappointment.

It sanctifies disappointment by bringing it into God's presence.

20. EVEN-IF FAITH DOES NOT MEAN WE STOP CARING

This is important.

Some people misunderstand surrender and become emotionally detached.

They say:

“Whatever happens, happens.”

That is not necessarily biblical faith.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego cared whether they lived.

Paul cared about his suffering.

Jesus cared about the cross.

Job cared deeply about his losses.

Faith does not eliminate desire.

Faith teaches desire to bow before God.

You can say:

“Lord, I deeply want this.”

and simultaneously:

“But I want You more.”

That is surrender.

21. THE GREATEST QUESTION: DO YOU WANT GOD OR ONLY WHAT GOD CAN GIVE YOU?

This may be the most penetrating question in the entire teaching.

Imagine God gives you:

- wealth,
- health,
- success,
- marriage,
- children,
- recognition,
- security,
- answered prayers,
- a comfortable life.

But imagine, hypothetically, that none of these things were present.

Would God still be worthy of worship?

That is the challenge of Daniel 3.

Do we worship God because He is God, or because of what we hope God will give us?

Job's story asks essentially the same question.

Satan's accusation was that Job's devotion was based upon God's blessings.

The story challenges that assumption.

Authentic faith eventually says:

“Even if the blessing disappears, God remains worthy.”

22. THE CROSS ANSWERS THE QUESTION

The Christian does not merely preach this principle.

Christianity is built around it.

At the cross, Jesus appears defeated.

But He remains faithful.

He does not abandon the Father.

He does not abandon His mission.

He does not abandon His identity.

He obeys unto death.

And then comes resurrection.

Therefore Christianity teaches:

Faithfulness to God is more important than immediate success.

The world says:

“If it works, it is true.”

The gospel says:

“Be faithful, even when you cannot yet see the outcome.”

Hebrews 11 repeatedly celebrates people who lived by faith without necessarily receiving everything promised to them during their earthly lives.

23. WHAT “EVEN IF” FAITH LOOKS LIKE IN DAILY LIFE

Even-if faith says:

“I will forgive even if they never apologize.”

“I will remain honest even if dishonesty would benefit me.”

“I will obey God even if obedience costs me popularity.”

“I will remain sexually pure even if temptation is intense.”

“I will remain generous even when I cannot see immediate reward.”

“I will pray even when I don't feel anything.”

“I will worship even when I am disappointed.”

“I will trust even when I don't understand.”

“I will remain faithful even when God has not yet answered.”

That is not emotional weakness.

That is spiritual strength.

24. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “IF GOD DOES THIS” AND “EVEN IF GOD DOES NOT”

There are two possible foundations.

Conditional faith:

“God, I will trust You if You do what I expect.”

Covenant faith:

“God, I trust You because You are God, even when I don't understand what You are doing.”

Conditional faith collapses when circumstances change.

Covenant faith learns to stand.

The first asks:

“What will God do for me?”

The second asks:

“Who is God, and how should I respond to Him?”

25. THREE QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL EXAMINATION

Ask yourself:

1. What is my furnace?

What situation currently feels impossible?

Fear?

Finances?

Family?

Health?

Loneliness?

Career?

Temptation?

Uncertainty?

Waiting?

Grief?

2. What is my golden image?

What am I tempted to worship instead of God?

Control?

Money?

Approval?

Comfort?

A relationship?

Success?

Security?

My own plans?

3. What is my “even if”?

Can I say:

“Lord, You can change this—but even if You don't change it immediately, I will not abandon You.”

That is where faith becomes real.

26. A FOUR-PART MODEL OF MATURE FAITH

We can summarize the teaching in four movements:

BELIEVE

God is able.

SURRENDER

God is sovereign.

OBEY

I will not bow.

TRUST

Even if God does not answer as I expect, I will remain faithful.

So:

God can.

God may.

God knows.

God is sovereign.

And I will worship Him regardless.

27. THE PROMISE IS NOT “NO FIRE”

The promise of Christianity is not:

“You will never experience fire.”

Jesus says:

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
— John 16:33

Notice both realities:

Trouble is real.

Christ's victory is greater.

Christian faith does not deny the existence of suffering.

It declares that suffering does not have the final word.

Death does not have the final word.

Failure does not have the final word.

Sin does not have the final word.

The furnace does not have the final word.

Christ does.

28. THE FINAL PICTURE: WALKING THROUGH THE FIRE

Imagine the three men standing before the furnace.

The king says:

“Bow.”

They refuse.

The furnace burns.

They are thrown inside.

Then Nebuchadnezzar looks again.

He sees something he did not expect.

They are not lying helplessly on the ground.

They are **walking.**

That image deserves to remain in our hearts.

They are walking **in the fire**.

Not running away.

Not bowing.

Not consumed.

Walking.

And there is another figure walking with them.

That is the picture of mature faith:

You may not always choose the fire.
You may not understand the fire.
You may pray for God to remove the fire.
But if the fire comes, you do not have to walk through it alone.

CONCLUSION: “EVEN IF”

Perhaps the greatest declaration of faith is not:

“God will do exactly what I want.”

It is:

“God can.”

followed by:

“But even if He does not…”

That is the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

That is the faith of Jesus in Gethsemane.

That is the faith of Job in suffering.

That is the faith of Paul with his thorn.

That is the faith of Abraham while waiting.

That is the faith of countless believers who have prayed prayers that were answered differently than they expected.

And it can become our faith.

So when the doctor says something you didn't want to hear:

Our God can. But even if He does not, we will trust Him.

When the door closes:

Our God can open doors. But even if He does not, we will trust Him.

When the relationship ends:

Our God can restore. But even if He does not, we will trust Him.

When the prayer seems unanswered:

Our God can answer. But even if He does not answer in the way we expect, we will still worship Him.

When the furnace is burning:

Our God can deliver us. But even if He does not deliver us from the fire, we know He can meet us in the fire.

And when everything else has been stripped away, there remains the most important truth:

God is still God.

FINAL DECLARATION

I believe God can.

I believe God is able.

I will ask Him boldly.

I will pray faithfully.

I will obey courageously.

I will surrender my will to His.

I will not make my circumstances my god.

I will not worship the golden image simply because I am afraid of the furnace.

And even if God does not answer my prayer in the way I expect, I will not abandon Him.

Even if the door remains closed, I will worship.

Even if the healing does not come when I expect, I will worship.

Even if the answer is "no," I will worship.

Even if I must walk through the fire, I will worship.

Because my faith is not ultimately in the outcome.

My faith is in God.

And therefore:

OUR GOD CAN DELIVER US.

BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT,

WE WILL NOT BOW.

WE WILL NOT WORSHIP OTHER GODS.

WE WILL NOT ABANDON OUR FAITH.

WE WILL STILL WORSHIP HIM.

Because He is worthy—not merely because of what He does, but because of who He is.

Amen.