

COUNTERFEIT OR GENUINE FAITH

Daniel 3



SYNOPSIS

This past Sunday, we continued our series in Daniel as Pastor Peter preached on the three friends of Daniel that went through the fiery furnace for refusing to bow to the statue of King Nebuchadnezzar.

The three questions that were presented were the following:

1. Are we building towards self glory or God's glory?
2. Are we faithful to God who is able to deliver us?
3. Are we willing to endure through the testing with God's mercy?

Much of these questions reveal the status of our heart - which can be complex and contradictory at times. As we ask God to search our hearts, he brings us to a place where we can assess our faith - so that it can be found to be genuine rather than counterfeit.

In the Scriptures, fire is often associated with refining and testing - particularly the testing of our faith or the testing of our ministry. And one of the ways that testing comes is through the furnace of suffering. How do we respond during a crisis? As our faith is tested, God reveals to us the status of our hearts and invites us to discern the real from the counterfeit - and from there, we bring it to the feet of Jesus, encouraged that we can draw near to Him no matter what.



OUTLINE

1 SELF GLORY VS GOD'S GLORY

The statue represents an image of King Nebuchadnezzar that was meant to impress others. It was meant to be an object of worship and a picture of an almighty king (Nebuchadnezzar) - even though we know that it is the "God of Heaven" who sets up kingdoms and kings. We may not be as boastful as King Nebuchadnezzar, but we find ways to bring ourselves glory rather than give God the glory He deserves.

2 A GOD WHO CAN DELIVER

When King Nebuchadnezzar asks the three young men: "Who is the God who will deliver you from my hands?" They can only speak of the faith that they have inherited from generations past - stories and words told from their forefathers. They have not personally experienced this deliverance... but they will. Similarly, in our youth, we hold onto the character of God that is told to us with faith, but as we get older, we experience the character of God - his goodness (particularly in moments where we walk through fire).

3 TIMES OF TESTING

The tested genuineness of our faith is more precious than gold. (1 Peter 1:7). God doesn't need to test us just to test us, but he brings us through testing for our sake - so that we may see and recognize where our faith is. As He brings us through the fire, may all the counterfeit gods be melted away like dross.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Icebreaker: Have you ever owned a knock-off brand of something? In what ways did it look different than the real thing?

2

What's one thing we depend on our own resources and authority to get things done?

3

How much do we feel like our faith is built up by generational blessing (spiritual inheritance) vs ways we have experienced God ourselves?

4

Have you ever had a 'fiery furnace' moment where you could not deliver yourself but had to place your faith in God?

5

Share a time when you felt like your faith was tested - what did you feel like God was revealing to you in that moment or season?

6

How do we make sense of the pain of suffering that is part of the human experience?



BIG IDEA

In moments where we go through the fire (through seasons of pain/suffering or trials and testing), we ask that God would reveal to us the status of our heart - and over the seasons, may those moments give us a greater confidence of the character of God - that He is a good God who cares for us and hold us in the palm of his hands. And through the seasons we walk through the 'fiery furnace', may the counterfeit gods in our lives be washed away so that the tested genuineness of our faith may prove to be more precious than gold.