

News & Notes

Sunday, November 1, 2009

Remember in Prayer: Mary Baily; Kenneth Campbell; Don Childers; Sue Daniels; Avery Frazer; James Grogan; Twyla Hanisco; Dot Ketchum; Dallas King; John and Deliah Mann; George McLeroy; Carl Perkins; Ann Ray; Curtis Ray; Shirley Rhodes; Katherine Shaw; Johnny Stacks; Becky Strickland; Ruby Tapp; Calvin Ursery; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Ione Bruce.

Pantry item for the month of November is deodorant.

Be sure and check the **bulletin boards** in the foyer for additional information.

Ashland Events: Today: Periodic singing at Briarcrest Extended Care at 4:00 PM.

Area Events: December 4: Lectureship at the Charleston congregation;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Heaven
PM: Psalm 23

For the Record (October 25, 2009):

Attendance: 75 Contribution: \$1211.00 Budget: \$1459.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King
Jeff Roberson
Carrol Street

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

"Note Those Who So Walk"

Philippians 3:17

2Thessalonians 3:14

Shadrack, Meshack, and Abed-Nego – God No Matter What

Jeremy Northrop

There are, no doubt, times in each of our lives that we look back on, and live with regret. While this is normal for anyone, it is not pleasurable. We all have times when, looking back, we not only should have stood for what is right but wish we had stood for what is right. In contrast to such times, and by way of a means of encouragement, let's think about what happens when we do stand for what is right. No doubt, God is pleased with our actions. In the case we are going to examine here, God showed His appreciation by blessing those who stood for what was right. God responded to their stand with blessings. In Daniel 3, Daniel and his friends stood for God no matter what. There are several things to be learned from this account and additionally several applications for those of us striving to live for God today.

The Story (Account)

Calling a Bible account a 'story' may not be the best choice of words as it can imply falsehood or a fairy tale. However, in keeping with the alliteration of this article, we will begin by giving a brief overview of the events recorded in Daniel three.

It is a dark time for Israel. The nation of God is in captivity to the Babylonians. The king of the time is Nebuchadnezzar who has built an idol. The idol stands nine feet wide and 90 feet tall. Nebuchadnezzar commanded the people (Israelites included) to worship this idol. Now, we all know that God does not approve of

the worship of idols. He did not in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:3). He does not tolerate such under the New Testament (1John 5:21). Thus, anyone who was dedicated to the will of God would not fall down and worship the idol Nebuchadnezzar built. Unfortunately, many who professed to be followers of God did not obey God at this time.

There were three Jews who obeyed God on this particular occasion. Their names were Shadrack, Meshack, and Abed-Nego. They were friends of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar was indignant against them. However they made an interesting response. It was a response which showed they were going to stand for what is right:

“If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” (Daniel 3:17-18).

Notice the statement of faith these men had: They were willing, no matter what, to stand for God. They were going to stand for God even if it cost them their lives. Today, we are able, indeed commanded, to have such faith. Romans 8:28 promises us God will take care of us no matter what. Revelation 2:10 exhorts us to be faithful even if it will cost us our lives.

The Stand

The decree was made by Nebuchadnezzar to bow before the idol when they heard the music. Shadrack, Meshack, and Abed-Nego would not bow. Later in the chapter they were encouraged and exhorted to bow. Perhaps, it might be fair to say they were threatened if they would not bow. They still did not bow. They simply would not obey. Today, we are exhorted to not obey man if man's commands prevent us from obeying God's commands (Acts 5:29). These three men made such a stand for God.

In the verses quoted above, they expressed their own preparation if their lives were taken from them. Perhaps it is the

case that many today are not able to stand for what is right because they themselves are not right! It is extremely difficult to stand for what is right — even give your life for what is right — when you know you will not be saved in eternity. There is a telling lesson here about the necessity of assurance.

The Surprise

Verses 22-29 chronicle the great surprise that Nebuchadnezzar and his followers experienced. They tried to punish Shadrack, Meshack, and Abed-Nego by throwing them into a fiery furnace. The fire was so hot that the men throwing them into it died from the intense heat (verse 22). When Nebuchadnezzar and others looked into the fire, they saw four men, not just Shadrack, Meshack, and Abed-Nego (verse 25). Verse 26 says the fire itself had no power. Yet, what I think I find the most interesting is that there was no evidence the men were in the fire. They were not burned. They had no ashes on them. They did not even smell like smoke. The very fire which was so hot the men throwing them in died did not even leave a scent on Shadrack, Meshack and Abed-Nego.

Verse 29 is also interesting: Nebuchadnezzar makes a decree:

“Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.”

In the end, God is defended. Three men made a difference in the lives of an entire nation because they decided to take the road less traveled and stand for God no matter what.

Today, Christians need to stand for God no matter what. If these three men could make a difference, how much of a difference could all the Christians in the world make if they would simply stand for God? How will God protect His people today? How many would be convinced of God's power? Let us stand!