

Fireproof

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of total commitment to God, prioritizing spiritual life, and developing strong principles to overcome the cares of this life and serve God fully.

Duration: 37:52

Scripture: Psalm 42, Isaiah 43:2, Daniel 3:16-18, Matthew 6:25-34, Philippians 1:20-21

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Complete Surrender"

Description

This sermon focuses on the importance of complete commitment to God, using the examples of Daniel and the three Hebrew children who refused to bow down to idols. It emphasizes the need for unwavering faith, establishing strong principles, and surrendering fully to God's will, even in the face of challenges and threats. The message encourages believers to prioritize their relationship with Jesus above all else, to trust in God's ability to deliver, and to find peace in complete surrender.

Transcript

For our Bible reading today, let's turn in our Bibles to Psalm 42. I'll read the first and the odd-numbered verses, and we ask you to join together in the reading of the even-numbered verses through the 42nd Psalm. Let's stand as we read the Word of God.

As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? What I remember is not my soul and me, but the voice of joy in my heart. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

O my God, my soul is cast down from thee. Deep calleth unto deep, that the noise of thy water spouts. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

I will say unto God, my rock, why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. Father, we thank you that this day we have this opportunity of gathering to study your Word. And Lord, we find that as the heart panteth after the water brooks, so our souls pant after thee, O God, for the living God.

We thank you for this opportunity of gathering this morning and to just spend some time waiting on you, opening our hearts to the work of your Spirit, listening, Lord, for your voice, through your Word, speaking to us and challenging us. And so, Lord, we commit now this time to you. Open our hearts, speak to us, we pray, in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. Well, we begin that exciting Book of Daniel this week, and so we encourage you to start reading through the Book of Daniel.

You're going to find it very helpful and just chock full of wonderful, wonderful truths. And so, looking forward to this study in the Book of Daniel. This morning, we'd like to draw your attention to the third chapter, and we're looking at verses, well, beginning with verse 16.

We read that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, we're not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thee or your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up.

And so, the three Hebrew children, speaking of their total commitment to follow after the Lord, not to worship the pagan gods. The story actually begins a little earlier. Nebuchadnezzar, who was the king of Babylon, had a very puzzling dream, and when he awoke, he desired to understand the meaning of the dream, because somehow he felt that it had some kind of significance.

And so, he called for his wise men, his counselors, the astrologers, soothsayers, and he said unto them, I've had this weird dream. I just need to know what it means. I think that there's some kind of significance to it, and I want you to tell me, what does my dream mean? They said, well, what was your dream? He said, I can't remember.

They said, well, then how in the world do you expect us to tell you what it meant? And he said, look, you guys have been on the payroll for a long time to be smart, and if you can't tell me the dream and its meaning, then you're going to be cut off of the payroll, because I'm going to have your heads cut off. And they said, never, never has any king ever made such an outrageous demand upon his counselors. He said, I can't care less about whether their kings have made as far as decrees or so forth.

I'm just telling you, this is the way it is. Either tell me the dream and the interpretation, or it's your heads. And so they said, only the gods could do that.

And so he ordered that the wise men and the counselors all be killed. Well, they came to Daniel, who was being trained to be one of the counselors for the king, and they let him know of the king's displeasure with the wise men and the counselors, and his order to have them all put to death. And so Daniel said, why is the king so hasty? Go tell the king that I can come, I can tell him the dream, and I can tell him what it meant.

And so he went off to tell the king that of the captives of Judah, there is a young man who says that he can tell you your dream and give you the interpretation. Daniel, in turn, went to his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and said, fellows, we need to have a prayer meeting. We need to find out from God real fast what the king dreamed and what it meant.

And while they were praying, the Lord gave to Daniel the dream and the interpretation of the dream. And so Daniel was brought into Nebuchadnezzar, and he said, I understand that you can give me the dream

that I had and give me the interpretation of it. And Daniel said, you know, I can't really do anything, but there is a God in heaven who knows all things.

He's the one who knows what you dreamed, and he has given to me the interpretation of that dream. Daniel is not willing to take credit for what God has done, but is now turning the credit on over to God. And so Daniel said, the other night, as you were going to sleep, in your mind you were thinking, what's going to happen to my kingdom? When I die, what's going to take place? You know, and you were wondering about your kingdom and the future of your kingdom and the future of the world.

And he said, the God who dwells in heaven has given to you a dream in which he has revealed to you the future of the world and the future of your kingdom. And he said, in your dream you saw this huge idol image. It had a head of gold.

It had a chest of silver. It had a stomach of brass. It had legs of iron and feet with ten toes of iron and clay mixture.

You were watching with fascination this great image until there came a rock out of the mountains, not cut with hands, and it smote the great image in its feet, and the image just sort of crumbled, disintegrated, and from the image there grew up, from the rock there grew up this mountain that covered the whole earth. King Nebuchadnezzar said, far out, that's it, I remember it now. What does it mean? And Daniel said, the Lord has shown to you the kingdoms that are going to rule over this earth.

You, Nebuchadnezzar, are the head of gold, but your kingdom is going to be replaced by the Medo-Persian kingdom, which in turn will be replaced by the Grecian kingdom, which in turn will be replaced by another kingdom, and we know the other kingdom to be the Roman Empire, and that the final world-governing kingdom will be related to the Roman Empire, but far inferior to it, in that you saw the iron mixed with clay, and they don't really mix together, but it's a kingdom that will be partially weak and partially strong. As you were watching, you saw this rock not cut with hands, smote the image in his feet, grew into a mountain that covered the earth, and so the God of heaven will establish a kingdom that will never end. That kingdom will come during the time of the reign of the ten kings, the feet of iron and clay.

And so the Lord revealed to Nebuchadnezzar the dream that he had. Nebuchadnezzar accepted the fact that Daniel was able to give him all of this information, but then he immediately rebelled against the information that he received, for he ordered that they build a huge image in the plain of Dura, all of gold, 90 feet high, a golden image, and he ordered that all of the people in the kingdom come to this golden image, and when the music was playing, they were to bow down and to worship this golden image there in the plain of Dura. Basically, it was a defiance against the word of God.

It was saying the Babylonian kingdom is going to last forever. The fact that he made the whole image of gold did not have the polymetals indicating inferior kingdoms moving down the line, and so it was his defiance of what God had said, your kingdom is going to be replaced by the Medo-Persian empire. And so he had this image made, and he ordered the people there, and they gathered together before this great image, and he ordered the music to start, and all of the people bowed down to worship this image of gold that he had made there in the plains of Dura, with the acceptance of Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

They refused to bow before this image, and so it was reported to Nebuchadnezzar that these three fellows, these Jews, refused to bow down before your great image when the music sounded. So he called

them in, and he said, I understand that when the music sounded, you fellows didn't bow down. I'm going to give you one more chance.

I'm going to let the music sound again, and you'll have an opportunity to bow down, and if you fail to do so, then you will be cast into the burning fiery furnace. And so they said to him, King, we're not even careful on how we answer you concerning this matter. We will not bow down to the image that you have made, and that, you know, we just won't do it.

And so the king was angry, and he ordered them to be cast into the burning fiery furnace, and they said, you know, the God that we serve is able to deliver us out of your burning fiery furnace, and even if he doesn't deliver us, we're still not going to bow. That's the kind of commitment that you just can't stop. Our God is able, we know he is able, but even if he doesn't, we're still not going to bow.

How do you stop that kind of a commitment? You know, that's the kind of commitment that we need today, the kind that is unstoppable, the kind of a commitment that won't bow to threats that might be made against it. And so there was that commitment that they had made to God, and they believed the commandments of God. The first commandment was thou shalt have no other gods before me, and then the second, thou shalt not make any graven image or likeness of anything that is in heaven above, in earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, and you are not to bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I am the Lord, your Lord, a jealous God.

Someone said that God gave not 10 suggestions, but 10 commandments. He's not suggesting, he's saying thou shalt, and thou shalt not. I fear that in the day in which we live, people are not really committed to obeying the word of God.

People have a tendency to serve God out of their leisure, or out of their convenience. Jesus gave a parable of a sower, and he said the seed fell on various kinds of soil, and some of the seed fell among thorns, and as it grew up, the thorns grew up with it, and the thorns choked out the plant, so they became unfruitful, did not bear fruit. And he said that these are those that receive the word of God, but the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things, choke it out, that it doesn't really bear fruit.

I think that as you look at the church today, you would have to say that this is where the majority of the seed has fallen, fallen among the thorns. It does grow up, but it never produces the fruit that God is seeking, and I do believe that this is so true of the church today, that so many are faithful in church, but yet the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things, choke it out, that their lives are not really bearing fruit for the Lord. Jesus has a place in their lives, but it isn't the top place in their lives.

It ranks somewhere down the line of priorities, and to be brutally honest, I want you to make an evaluation of your life today. Where would you say your relationship with Jesus stands? Your commitment to the Lord, is it 100 percent, or is it say 50 percent, maybe 30, maybe 20? He has a place, but it isn't the top place in your life. Jesus said, the greatest commandment is thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, all thy soul, all thy mind, and all thy strength.

These three Hebrew children have made a commitment to give their lives fully to the will of God. If God wants, he can deliver us from your fiery furnace. I wonder if they were thinking of the prophecy of Isaiah there in chapter 40, when the Lord said, when you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

Through the rivers, they will not overflow. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, and neither shall the flame kindle upon you. If he wants you to be consumed in the fiery furnace, then his will be done.

At least, he will have delivered you, or he would have delivered us, the Hebrew children said, out of your hand, but at any case, we're not going to bow. That total abandonment of their lives to the will of God is the only place where you can find real freedom and freed from worry and anxiety, when you can say, not what I wish to be, nor where I wish to go, for who am I that I should choose my way? The Lord shall choose for me, to his better far I know, so let him bid me go or stay. It's amazing how weighted, how weighted down we can become with the cares of this life.

You know, we have today so many conveniences that are designed to make life easier for us, to give us more leisure time, more time to pursue our own pleasures, our own leisure. When I was a kid growing up, I used to love lemon meringue pies, and so I would talk my mother into baking a lemon meringue pie and promise that I would help her, and so I got the job of whipping the egg whites for the meringue, but we had these little egg beaters. You know, you just have to, and it's a slow process, whipping egg whites into the soft peaks and so forth for the meringue, using these little egg beaters that we used to use.

I don't know, if you don't remember them, don't worry, you just haven't lived long enough. Vacuum cleaners. No, we had the Bissell, and you know, you push the old Bissell across the floor.

Automatic washing machines? No, no, no. It was the old ringer washing machine, and you'd have to run the clothes through the ringer, and then you didn't have a dryer, but you hung them out on the line and had to wait for them to dry. I mean, all of these conveniences that we have today that are designed to make life easier, to give you more free time, but isn't it interesting with all of the life saver, saving, the instruments that we have to make life easier and to save us time, how that we seem to have less time than our parents did in pursuing the important things of life.

You know, today kids are watching TV, and they're in the little league, they're into baseball, football, soccer, and they're into the afternoon TV shows, and have you ever thought of how spiritual you might be if you took the time that you spend watching TV and devoted that time to reading the Word of God and to prayer? If we did, I guarantee our nation wouldn't be in the mess that is in today if the people of God would spend more time in prayer and waiting upon God rather than in the pursuit of, as Jesus said, the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things. It seems so hard to commit the issues of our life fully to the Lord. Jesus said, I say unto you, don't worry about your life, what you're going to eat, what you're going to drink, or what you're going to wear.

Is not your life more than food, your body more than clothes? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store up their food in barns. Still your heavenly Father feeds them.

Are you not worth much more than they? Which of you, who by worrying about being so short, can add 18 inches to your height? Why are you worried about your clothes? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, nor do they make cloth for their clothes. Yet Solomon, in all of his glory, wasn't dressed as beautifully as they are.

Now, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is growing today, but tomorrow is dried and burned, how much more will he clothe you, oh ye of little faith? Therefore, don't worry saying, what shall we eat? What shall we wear? For the heathen worry about these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you

need these things, but if you will just seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all of these things will be added to you. Paul wrote, don't worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus.

David asked, in the psalm that we read this morning, why are you cast down, oh my soul? Why are you so upset? Put your hope in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. David did admit, oh my God, my soul is cast down within me. I believe that David was a man who was given over to depression, and he had to be reminded that God did rule, and God was in control, and that God's ways are best.

Paul the apostle had a commitment much like these three Hebrew children. When he was on his way to Jerusalem, he was constantly being warned of the dangers that he would face when he got there. He said, and now I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing just what things are waiting for me there.

All I know is that the Holy Spirit is letting me know in every city, telling me that bonds and afflictions are waiting for me, but none of these things move me, for I do not count my life dear to myself. All I want is to finish my life with joy, and to accomplish the ministry which was given to me by our Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And this was the heart and soul of Paul, and he had declared, for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

That's total commitment. That's the kind of a commitment that we need to make this day, for me to live is Christ. To die, that's gain.

When Paul had come to Caesarea, again he was told by the prophet, imprisonment and bonds await you in Jerusalem. And his friends began to say, oh Paul, don't go to Jerusalem, take off, don't go. And Paul said, what do you mean by that? Are you trying to break my heart? He said, I'm ready to not only be bound, but to die there in Jerusalem for my Lord Jesus.

And when they saw the commitment that Paul had, ready to die, I'm not worried about death, you know, they saw that courage that he had, they stopped trying to dissuade him, and they just started saying, well the Lord's will be done. What does it take to have that kind of courage and boldness? It takes the purpose of heart. They had purposed in their hearts that they would not defile themselves by bowing down to the king's image that he had made.

You see, you don't wait until Nebuchadnezzar sounds the music and then you decide, well, shall I bow or not? It's a purpose that you already have long before you face the problem. There are just certain things I'm not going to do. There are certain places I'm not going to go.

There are certain issues that I won't be involved in. And that's just my heart set on that, and thus it isn't making up my mind when I'm facing it, well, shall I or shall I not? It's something that's been solved long before that. It's solved in the purposes that I have in my life.

I'm purposed not to defile my body with the king's meat. I'm purposed not to bow before the king's image or idol that he makes. And if you wait until the issue arises, the peer pressure will probably get to you, and you'll find yourself bowing.

It takes strong established principles to stand in the day of testing. The man who has strong principles doesn't need rules or laws. The rules and laws are for unprincipled people.

It takes complete confidence in the ability of God. Nebuchadnezzar asked him the question, what God can deliver you out of my hand? And they responded, the God that we serve is able to deliver us. And even if he doesn't, we're still not going to bow.

Abraham was fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able to perform. It takes a complete commitment of your life to the will of God. Our God can, but maybe he won't.

But still, we won't bow. We know that one way or the other, he's going to deliver us out of your hand, Nebuchadnezzar. Jesus said, don't fear them, which can kill your body, but cannot kill your soul.

But fear him who is able to destroy both your body and your soul in hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear ye him. Paul desired that Christ might be magnified in his body, he said, either by life or by death.

As Paul was sitting in the prison in Rome, awaiting to appear before Nero, knowing that his life was on the line, this wicked despot Nero could order him put to death, and that would be it. He was writing to the church in Philippi of his mixed emotions, concerning the possibility of being put to death. He said, you know, my real desire is to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

Nevertheless, I feel that you still need me, and thus I feel sort of a tug to be around for a while, but yet, you know, for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. He figured that if God left him here on earth for a little while longer, that God had a purpose in leaving him here, and so he wasn't worried about his future. It takes great faith to say the God that I serve is able to deliver me, but it takes even greater faith to say if he doesn't deliver me, I'm still not going to bow.

They were cast into the fire. God did not deliver them from the fire, but as we will find out tonight, he delivered them in the fire. So often, God doesn't deliver us from the situation, but delivers us through or in the situation even a greater victory than being delivered from.

So, great life. You see, it doesn't really matter what happens. God's in control, and so I just commit myself to that, and you know, don't worry about it.

You don't fret. You don't, you know, go into some kind of a panic mode because things are looking so bad. You just say, well, all the Lord's plans, whatever he wants is best, and I want his best for me.

Thank you, Father, for the privilege that we have of serving you, following you, and being instruments, Lord, through which you might receive glory, and so, Lord, we do pray that you'll help us now, as many are facing issues on their jobs, in their workplace, in their neighborhood, even in their families, where the issue comes between whom am I serving, and am I going to bow before the pressures that are put upon me, or am I going to yield myself to your will and to your purpose for my life, and Lord, as the three Hebrew children, we ask that you would help us, that we might make that commitment, establishing those purposes in our minds, so that it doesn't matter what happens. Lord, we're going to just stay true to you and do the things that will please you, and so, guide us, help us, in Jesus' name we pray, amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to pray for you today.

The Lord is calling us to a complete commitment, such as with Daniel and such as with the three Hebrew children, that kind of a commitment that, you know, it's going to be the Lord's way, no two ways about it, it's his way, and I'm going to follow him, and no matter what the cost, no matter what it might mean, I'm going to remain true to him, and so, I would encourage you today, if you are battling on this issue, if it is an issue of full surrender or a partial surrender, let me just say that that partial surrender is not a place of

peace. It'll leave you in constant turmoil. You're going to be constantly having to make decisions at every issue, whether or not I shall yield or whether or not I shall stand firm against it, and you need to set something deeper than just, well, I think I, well, I hope I, but I know I'm purposed in my heart not to do these things that would displease my Lord.

I'm going to follow him, and maybe you're having a battle in that area, and the Lord wants to help you today, and I would encourage you today to establish the proper purposes for life, and, you know, your principles, and just know that you don't change these. These stand. This goes, and this remains my commitment to the Lord and to his will for my life.

That's what's going to prevail, and so may the Lord guide you in this. They're here to pray for you and to help you to gain the strength that you need today to withstand the attacks of the enemy, the temptations that are laid before you, and to come forth victorious in and through the power of God's Holy Spirit. So, the Lord bless you, and keep you, and cause his face to shine upon you, and give you peace through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. God bless.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9122.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/0WLLiyUG5aA.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/fireproof/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net