

Living for Jesus in a Modern Babylon - 2

by Freddy Bafuka

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living for Jesus in a world that is full of idols and superficial Christianity.

Duration: 57:32

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Judges 14:5-6, Daniel 3:30, Matthew 6:24, 1 Corinthians 6:18, Revelation 22:21

Topics: "Babylon"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Daniel and his three friends who resolved not to defile themselves in Babylon. Despite facing tests and temptations, they remained faithful to God and were promoted by the king. The sermon then shifts to the story of King Nebuchadnezzar erecting a golden idol and commanding everyone to worship it. The preacher highlights that we live in a modern Babylon with societal idols, such as money, success, and popularity, that we are constantly asked to bow down to. The sermon emphasizes the importance of choosing to worship God alone and not succumbing to the pressures of the world.

Transcript

We want you to know Christ and we want you to grow in Him. And it's our goal. I've told those of you who have been here for a while, I've said this before and I'll say it again, it's if, if I had a stadium full of people and that was my church, but then I look at the people and they weren't walking with God, I would have gotten myself into the worst thing of my life.

There is in my heart, I've become weary and tired of the Christianity that's about going to meetings and doing things. I've become tired and weary of the Christianity that consists in believers getting together and having quote-unquote a good time. For a long time I led a prayer meeting here.

It's debatable whether it was useful or not. Some of you disagree with me, but in some ways it was also just Christians getting together and having a good time. In my opinion, many times it turned into that and that's not what I'm, it was kind of Christians coming and saying the good old rhetorics over and over and revival coming and things like that.

But this knowing Jesus that I'm talking about is something that goes beyond rhetorics at meetings. It's something that affects your life every day. How you deal with people, what your heart is really set on.

My goal is that after people come to these meetings and go away, they go away hungry for God. Their hearts are set on Jesus. Their hearts are set on following Christ.

So, I don't really, I don't make it really my goal to make you feel happy. I make it my goal to stir a hunger in your heart that drives you to Jesus. That causes you to go and seek more of Him and live for Him Monday through Sunday.

Not just at the meeting times, not just the good old rhetorics, but actually yearning for Christ and going after Him. Alright, we are going to continue with what we talked about last week. Just to put it quickly, last week we talked about Daniel.

Living for Jesus in the midst of a modern Babylon is what we talked about. Daniel was in Babylon. Babylon is that city that stands in contrast to Jerusalem in the Bible.

It stands for this city where people sin, where men worship their inventions, where people are proud of what their hands have done, and where there is a lot of sin, and where God isn't given the first place. And we live in a modern Babylon today. And more than ever there needs to be people like Daniel who stand straight, walk with God.

And we said that it's not where you're among Christians, that is when you're in Jerusalem, that you're known. Daniel was not known in Jerusalem. There's no record of him there.

The name was never heard in Jerusalem. It's in Babylon that Daniel becomes known because he decides to be different. He decides not to buy into the lifestyle of the place.

And I say that it's when you're away from church, away from the religious crowd, away from the people who make you want to behave right. When you're away from parents, away from home, away from the Christian crowd, that's where the real you really comes out. That's where God finds out.

That's where your Christianity is known and tested. It's at your workplace. It's in the midst of unbelievers, not in the midst of the religious crowds.

And do people notice you? Do people... Have you decided... We said that Daniel made a... In chapter 1, verse 8, it says that Daniel resolved in his heart. This is Daniel chapter 1 from verse 8, that Daniel resolved in his heart that he will not defile himself. And we saw that when he made that decision alone, other three guys saw his example and decided to do the same.

And we talked about how Daniel maintained that fire for God. He maintained it by staying together with the right kind of people. These three guys were his inner circle of friends.

I had talked about that. I'm not going to repeat the message. It's online.

Listen to it. He prayed and he stayed with the right crowd. So, that's what we talked about last week.

Today we're going to go to chapter 3. And we'll read it from verse 1. King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold 90 feet high and 90 feet wide. And set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set.

So, the satrap, prefects, governors, advisors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all others, provincial officers assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before it. Then the herald loudly proclaimed, This is what you are commended to do, O people, nations, and men of every language.

As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, the flute, the zither, the lyre, the harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into the blazing furnace. Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, and harp, and all kinds of music, all the people and nations and men of every language fell down and worshipped the image of gold that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

At this time, some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to the king, O king, live forever. You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into the blazing furnace.

But there are some Jews whom you have said over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up. Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now, when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image, very good. But if you do not worship, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the god we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and his attitude towards them changed.

He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual, and commanded some of the strongest soldiers of his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and throw them into the blazing furnace. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans, and others, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent, and the furnace so hot, that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked the advisor, Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire? They replied, Certainly, O king. He said, Look, I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound, unarmed, and the fourth one looks like a son of the gods. Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servant of the most high god, come out, come here.

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire, and the Setra prefect, governor, and royal advisors crowded around. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was there a hair of their heads. Their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, Praise be to God, to the god of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servant. They trusted him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own god. Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the god of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to the province of Babylon. Father, we pray that you make your word real to us and speak to us once again. Create the hunger in our hearts.

Drive us, O Lord, to give our lives to Christ, to surrender to him and truly become his disciples, even as we look at the example of these three young men. In Jesus' name, Amen. Now, I also believe in always proving what I say from the word of God.

That's why I read the whole passage to you. If you just read a tiny little thing in the Bible, you read one verse here and another verse here, you might come to wrong conclusion. It's good to always take the scriptures in context.

People say a lot of things that they can't prove. They take one verse out here and another verse out here, and they build a theology on it. But if you were to read the whole message of the word of God, you'll see that they're totally wrong, and that they took that one verse out of context.

That's one thing to always watch out for. That's why I encourage everybody to read your Bible through from Genesis to Revelation. It takes only 15 minutes a day.

Most people who claim to be Christians have never read their Bibles through. They have not read most of it. And so, they really don't know what the Bible says.

They mostly believe what they've been told is what Christians are supposed to believe. So, when you talk to them and ask them what they actually believe, they tell you what they were told they're supposed to believe, as opposed to what they actually read in the Bible. So, I can give you my personal testimonies.

When I was a Christian for a while, I read the Bible for the first time about five years after I became a Christian. And I read it through from Genesis to Revelation in a year, and it left an impact on my life that is still there today. And I can say that, for the most part, you really don't know who God is until you have read His word from beginning to end.

You don't know who this God of Israel is, who becomes Jesus' man in the flesh. You don't know who He is until you've read His word. And you have lots of misconceptions about Him until you read His whole word.

And one thing that we mentioned about Daniel was that he was a man who knew his Bible. He knew that God said not to eat pork and not to defy yourself. And this was certainly true of these three men.

And so, let me get into this. You have three young men. Historically, they're teenagers.

At least they were teenagers when they got there. And they decided not to defile themselves. And because they were so faithful, they were selected, as we read last week, and given high-ranking positions in the kingdom.

And the king said that they were smart guys, that there was a wisdom about them that the other guys did not have. And because of that, he promoted them. But soon after that came a test.

Soon after that came another test. There's the test that was the first, which was, were they going to trust God to take care of them? Were they going to trust God that not eating the food of the king and just feeding themselves on vegetables would make them strong enough, presentable enough to win the contest? And they trusted God for that. They trusted God to promote them.

They trusted God to care for them. I said it last week, no man is a loser for obeying God. And they understood that.

Now, they were facing another test. The test of actually bowing down to the idol. So, the first one was just whether they were going to compromise or not.

Whether they were going to follow God or not. This other one was actually the world bringing them an idol and asking them to worship it. It was a more aggressive form of temptation.

And so this king erects this huge idol, 90 feet high, so everybody can see it. And he asks, the Bible says, all people, nation, men of every language were commanded to bow down and worship the image of gold that king Nebuchadnezzar had set up. I said that we live in a modern Babylon today.

And there are idols all around us. There are idols that society has set up. And that the society, well, let me call it from biblical term, that the world has set up.

And that the world wants you to bow down to and worship. We live in a time when there are idols that have been set up and that you and I are constantly asked to bow down and worship. And every day you make the choice.

You have a choice of whether you bow down to those or not. And I'm going to talk about four of those idols. The first one is the idol of money.

Is the idol of money and wealth. People are going out and are seeking. There is a huge pressure.

There is a huge pressure. You've got to make money. You've got to be rich.

Then to go to MIT. You need to get a respectable job. You need to live in a nice house.

You need to have a nice car. And that might not be a temptation for you now. But in a few years it might become.

There is that temptation. I must just work a little bit more. Put in just some extra time.

So I can get promoted on my job. Why don't I just. How can I make money? How can I become rich? There is that constant pull in our generation.

Paul said that the man who is greedy is an idolater. Is an idol worshipper. There is that idol of money.

We say in our money that in God we trust. But we really. Most people trust in the dollar.

When they don't have the money. They feel that their lives will end. They don't know how to live.

In dependence. Depending on God. Let me say this.

And this is something that you should always remember. When God made man. In the garden.

Man was supposed to care for the garden. And God was supposed to care for the needs of man. When God made man in the garden.

Man was not to provide for himself. Man was to take care of God's work. And God was supposed to take care of him.

But then man sinned. And one of the curses that happened with sin. Is that now God told man.

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread. That is now you are on your own. You will provide for yourself.

And many Christians still live under that curse. They believe what the world tells them. You got to provide for yourself.

You got to care for yourself. You got to make money. But then Jesus came.

To take that curse away. I was talking to somebody. And he claimed that Jesus only took away the curse of the law.

It's nonsense. It's theological nonsense. Jesus did not come to take away the curse of the law.

He came to take away the curse of sin. The curses of the fall. The law didn't come until after.

Jesus healed the separation from God. The separation from God did not start with the law. The separation from God started in the garden of Eden.

Jesus came to give us a new heart. The old heart did not start with the law. The old heart started with the fall in sin.

When Adam and Eve fell. In any case. Even diseases started then.

They didn't start with the law. And we know that he was crushed for our iniquities. And pierced.

But his wounds were healed. He came to take our diseases away. It wasn't about the law of Moses.

The law just came in to put the offenses into writings. In any case. Go back to what I was saying.

One of the curses was that you take care of yourself. But then Jesus came. And overturned that.

And said, seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness. And all these things will be added unto you from above. Before you were to gather men.

Go work. Gather for yourself. Now Jesus said, give away.

Don't hoard riches. And Jesus made it very clear. Something that was never said.

At least not in so many words anywhere in the Old Testament. No man can serve two masters. Jesus said there were two masters.

Two gods in the world. Those two gods were God and money. He said you cannot serve God.

A man cannot serve two masters. He will hate one. Love the other.

He will be devoted to one. And despise the other. You cannot serve God and serve money at the same time.

Our society worships money. People are valued in terms of how much money they have. Even ministers now are valued by how much money they have.

I guess if Jesus came today. Poor as he was. A carpenter from a village.

A lot of Christians will say. God hasn't blessed him enough. I can't go listen to him.

He doesn't have enough prosperity going on in his life. And that's why people worship. It's all about this prosperity gospel.

That lots of people, Christians have bought into. It's a Babylonian gospel. It's a Babylonian theology.

It is this idol that have been set. And Christians have also bought into it. And brought it into the church.

Stay away from it. I say this. And whenever you are trying to decide who is the man of God.

Look at his life. See if he is becoming a minister of the gospel has made him rich. See if he is becoming a minister of the gospel.

Has acquired him gold and a Hollywoodish lifestyle. You know the man has trade. It's a Babylonian gospel.

It wasn't so in the days of Paul. Paul said, I work with my hands. To show you that there was more blessing in giving than in receiving.

He did not try to. In the world. The top leaders got the best house.

You become the president. You live in the white house. It's really nice.

The vice president. I don't know what his house looks like. Nobody shows it.

But he has a house I think somewhere in Arlington, Virginia. And I'm assuming that it's less nice. And then I guess the speaker of the house probably has another house.

Which I would assume probably looks less nice than the vice president one. But as you move up the ladder. I guess you get the finer treatment.

I guess the president you get the air force one. And the marine one. And stuff like that.

In the spiritual world. In the body of Christ. It is the other way.

Jesus said, he who wants to be great will be the least. He who wants to be first will be the slave. It means that you're supposed to be the one who sacrifices the most.

Who gives the most away. As you move up the ladder. And your responsibilities increase spiritually.

So does your giving away increase. And you're giving away spiritually. You're giving away emotionally.

You're giving away financially. Some people have. Some people call a man super holy.

And the man lives in a place with extravagant luxury. Which is all funded by poor people. Donating their money to it.

Now I'm not naming them. I'm not naming anybody. But I am telling you.

It's Babylonian Christianity. Stay away from it. Look at the people.

If there's anybody. This is not the only thing. But I know for myself.

For those of you who know me. I'm always hungry to find out about men and women of God. I'm always trying to find out who is there following Jesus.

That I can learn from them. That their lives may challenge something in me. And stir a hunger to follow God more in my life.

And in all of those men that I respect. All of them. Except none.

None of them have become wealthy because they were preaching the gospel. Or because they wrote books. And sold them.

And made a lot of money. And kept a lot of it. And became millionaires.

From the royalties and the stuff. Jesus said. Freely you receive.

Freely you give. Imagine Paul selling his letters. And come to the Corinthians and say.

And making money out of it for himself. It would be unbelievable. Anyway.

The other idol that we have today. That the world is constantly pushing you to bow down to. Is sex.

We live in a time when. Everything from. Toothpaste.

To I don't know. Cars are sold by sexual advertisements. What in the world does the toothpaste have to do with sex? But we are constantly bombarded with it.

And you have to make. It begins with a decision. You have to make a decision.

Like Job. Job made. I will not set my eyes on a virgin.

I will not lust with my eyes. It starts with a decision in your heart. I will not bow down to this.

And this is also another idol that has come into the body of Christ. In many ways. And is accepted.

Paul says in Ephesians. Let not even a hint of sexual immorality. Not even a hint.

Be found among you. Not even a hint. The world tells you.

You got to have a girlfriend. Now by the way. Let me tell you my own personal opinion on this.

Particular matter. The Bible doesn't talk about. Explicitly about whether having a girlfriend or a boyfriend is a bad thing.

But I can tell you this. I see in the word of God. People that were.

Not married. And just had. Brother and sister.

In Christ relationship. And there were people that were engaged. And it was clear to them and to everybody else.

That they have decided they are getting married. This fuzzy thing that we have created. Where people are getting together.

Touching each other. And stirring up their feelings. And using each other.

With no commitment. To stick together. Is not of God.

I do not see it in the Bible. There is nothing that is even close to it. And those that have sinned.

Who have engaged in this kind of relationship. It has been more destructive to them than helpful. I can name you example after example.

Most people that I. I have been at MIT for a few years. Most people that I know who were here. And I got here.

They had a girlfriend. They have broken up with them. In the world and outside.

In the church and outside. Most people. I would say 99 out of 10 people I knew.

Who when I came here. Whether they were Christian or non-Christian. And they were in that kind of relationship.

Broke up. Now. All the touching.

All the. The emotions that you stirred up. All the.

Unrestrained. Binding of your two beings. What happens to it? It leaves wounds.

It leaves hurts. It leaves. People lose God.

And that's something many people don't want to realize. They lose Christ. And well.

And I can say this. You get into a relationship with somebody. Before the time.

You will lose God for sure. Your relationship with God is going to suffer. Go and see God.

Ask Him who. Paul says that any man. In Thessalonians.

Let any man learn to take a wife for himself. In the proper way. There is a proper way.

And there is a worldly way. The worldly way is. Okay.

Fine. That's what I personally believe. The worldly way is.

Okay. See that girl over there. Okay.

She looks like. You like her. Oh yeah.

I look like I like her. Okay. Why don't you start dating her.

Okay. You go to the girl. And you say.

Okay. Let's go out here. And you start stirring up her feelings.

And going out with her. And making her feel like you have made up your heart on her. And then you go on and on.

And you guys have this fuzzy thingy. Called boyfriend and girlfriend. And you have doing this fuzzy thing called dating.

And then somewhere down the line. You find out that this person. You don't like the person.

And either one of you decide to break up. And at least one of you ends up broken and hurt. And then you go and you find the next person.

That's the worldly way of doing things. In the word of God. People sought God's will.

People sought God's will. They went and looked. And asked God.

Lord who do I need to marry. And God brought the two people together. He brought Eve to Adam.

Adam didn't go dating people around. And dating various kind of animals. And then finally he saw Eve and said.

Ah that looks like the right one. Eve didn't go either looking around. God brought her to Adam.

That's why you need to read the book. And join the choice of your marriage partner. It might help you.

In any case. Stay away from sexual immorality. Flee from it.

Paul said to Timothy. Don't try to resist it or to fight it. Flee from it.

Get away from it. Just run. There are only two sins.

So far as I know of. In the whole Bible. That the Bible says flee.

Only two. So far as I can remember from all my reading of the Bible. From beginning to end.

There are only two sins that God says flee from. Other sins the Bible says resist. Other sins the Bible says just don't do it.

This one the Bible says don't even fight it. Run away from it. It's idolatry and sexual immorality.

And it is one of our major idols today. We read in the Bible of many young people. And one of these days we'll talk about them.

I said that we're starting. We're going to be talking about young people in the Bible. Another young man in the Bible was Samson.

He could tear lions apart. He could take gates off their walls. And do all sorts of things.

Defeat the whole army by himself. But when the Philistine girl came around. And the guy just lost it completely.

He should have fled. Stayed away. Ran.

It was safer for him to run from the girl than to run from the lion. From his own experience. And we know that the devil is like a roaring lion.

Searching around for someone to devour. And that lion can take the form of sexual immorality. To devour you.

Stay away from it. The third idol. Kind of related to the first.

It's this whole thing of celebrity. Somehow make yourself known. It's about you.

I want people to know me. I want people to... I somehow want to get known. And we're taught from the time we were little.

Do something that makes you famous. Try to do something that makes you famous. And we look at these Hollywood people.

And many have been convinced that that's the example to follow. Try to be on the spotlight. Try to be on the cameras.

Then you've really made it. That's another idol to stay away from. As believers.

As a Christian. You seek the glory of only one person. It's Jesus Christ.

Not our own. We don't seek to advertise ourselves. We do not seek to grab the attention.

And that leads me to the fourth one which is related to this. The real idol that is dangerous. Your worst enemy is your own self.

I hear this word a lot. It's an expression that's called high self-esteem. It was one of the new things that I heard when I got here.

People are talking about high self-esteem. I mean in the Christian context. I mean I heard preachers talking about high self-esteem.

And I ask myself wait. Where in the Bible does the Bible encourage people to have high self-esteem? Jesus teaches he who wants to be the first should make himself the least. He who wants to be the greatest should make himself the slave.

There's no high self-esteem in there. The person who has high self-esteem doesn't say hey I want to become the slave. Now if you really want to say it in clear terms.

Paul says in Philippians. Consider everybody else better than yourself. Or consider everybody else more important than yourself.

The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches a complete annihilation of the sense of self-importance. Jesus said that whoever wants to come after him and follow him must do what? Must do what? Take up his cross. What do you take up the cross for? What were crosses used for? To kill people.

Jesus said you want to follow after me you must die. It's self-death. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of self-death.

It's putting your own self on a cross and dying to it now. Self-denial. This is another point I want to make sure I make clear.

It's another great misunderstanding. Self-denial is not giving up something. Some people say you know.

Religion is one of the most dangerous things that has ever come on earth. Say that again. Religion is one of the most dangerous things that has ever come on earth.

You know why? It leads people to do very silly things that Jesus would never have done. Some people wanted to be really self-denying. They really wanted to deny self.

And what they did. They said okay to deny self and be really spiritual. We're going to live out on a mountain in a monastery.

That will be self-denial. To be really holy people. We're going to separate ourselves.

We're going to live out here. And we're going to pray from morning to evening. Some people say to be really religious we're going to wear these robes.

We won't be walking around in normal clothes like everybody else that's worldly. We're going to have these nice religious robes. And we're not going to get married.

That's really denying ourselves. If that's your idea. Self-denial is I'm going to give up a few clothes.

And I'm going to give up a few. I'm going to give up an apartment. And I'm going to give up.

I'm going to go live out on a mountain. And I'm going to give up. You'll become a good religious person.

And you'll qualify as a good Buddhist monk. You will not have denied self. Self-denial is not something or some things that you give up.

It is someone that you give up. It is a person that you give up. And that's yourself.

It is denying my right to have things go my way. It is denying myself the right to have my mother do what I want her to do. It is denying myself the right to see everybody in the church do things like I want them to do them.

It is denying myself the right. It is my saying that things will go Jesus way. Yes, and if that means that Jesus says, Freddy, give up your suit and give it to that person.

I give it to him. And it means that if Jesus says, Okay, become a plumber. Okay, I say, Okay, Jesus, it's my right.

I can say, No, I'm going to not be a plumber. But I give up my right. I will go ahead and do it.

It is my giving up my right. Now, let me tell you, For most people who are here and who have listened to this message, God will never send you out to China, ask you to give up everything and go to China and become a missionary and stuff like that. That most likely will not be your form of denying yourself.

Your form of denying yourself will be the way you deal with people day to day. The desire to be respected. You go somewhere, someone yells at you.

And you feel you have the right to go after them and make them know that you deserve to be treated better than that. It's your giving up this thing in you that says, And look, we might as well be honest about it. We have a lot of it here in this particular country.

I talked to some foreigner in some language from some country in Europe. He said, I really don't like Americans. Now, there are other reasons, I'm sure, why he doesn't.

But he said, whenever they come and they're traveling, and they come to the airport, they feel that somehow they deserve better treatment because they're American. And you can see, and we're born with it from the time we're little. We're taught to be proud of yourself.

Be proud that you're an American. Be proud that you have this. The Bible says, Pride only in what the Lord has done.

So, denying self is denying my right to be a God that other people worship. It is denying myself the right. You see people, when you walk around, you can almost hear a cry.

Please look at me. People dress so you can look at them. Like, please look at me.

And there is this whole, and our society caters very well to that urge. Jesus calls us to deny that. You go somewhere, somebody insults you, say thank you.

Go your way. Somebody says something about you that's false, gives you a false rebuke. So, you tell them, okay, that's all right.

And so, that's true and real self-denial. Now, I want to end by saying that there is only one king. I want to end by saying that if, two things, if you're willing not to bow down and worship these idols, when you make up your mind, people say, oh, let's go watch this movie.

And you know it's an immoral movie with people killing and kissing each other, the whole thing through. And you say, no, my eyes belong to Christ. I will not go there.

There will be an angry response from the world. The Bible says, when they talked to this king and told him, we will not bow down, the Bible said, he was enraged. Verse 19, Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and threw them into the furnace.

In other words, you will be persecuted. That's why if you haven't made up your mind to be persecuted for the sake of Christ, you won't go very far. Because sooner or later, people say, no, it has come to Jesus, and it shall be well with you, and all shall be well with you.

It's a lie. We know it's not true. That's why, again, it's good to read your Bible.

Paul said to the people in the churches where they had planted, it is through much suffering and persecution that we must make it to heaven. Today, people say, come to Jesus, and everything will go rosy for you. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Look, I had no troubles before I was a Christian. Everything was going my way. Everyone was happy with me.

Oh my, when I started following Jesus, the way that I made a few people disturbed. You begin to trouble the consciences of people, and that will be the most common way. People who know your life, your life will become a rebuke to them.

When they see you, they feel very uncomfortable, because your life is a rebuke to them. Now, you should not be going around seeking. I don't go around seeking to make anybody feel bad about anything, but I have seen... So, someone who I used to live with, I lived a first year there.

One of the guys who were there, I mean, told me, whenever I'm around you, I feel like I'm going to hell. I never told this guy that he was going to hell. And I was like, hey, dude, I didn't do anything.

He was like, OK, Freddie, do you really believe I'm going to hell? And I tried to answer him that, you go to hell if you don't believe in Jesus Christ and are not saved by his blood. And he kept on saying, do you believe I'm going to hell? And another one told me, whenever I talk to you, I start feeling quickly uncomfortable. He said, it's as if I'm having a conversation with Christianity embodied, and after a few minutes, I start feeling very uncomfortable.

Those were in my early days there. I never talked to most of those people about anything. I mean, not just following Jesus the way, my normal way.

But if you made up your mind that you're going to follow Jesus, you will be persecuted. You'll make a few people furious. You'll make a few people uncomfortable.

It might even be that you will make people inside the church more uncomfortable than people outside. With all that I've said about these people, my friend, I must say that I think I've had an easier time with them than with people who consider themselves followers of Jesus. They seem to get troubled the most.

And it has always been like that. It was like that with Jesus. The prostitutes and the others had no problems with him.

At least those of them that wanted to repent, it was the religious people. His life troubled their hypocrisy. And it was harder for them to repent.

You'll be thrown in a furnace if need be. But listen. Listen.

In that furnace, in that fire, it's where God meets people. There was a fourth man in the furnace with these three guys. And by Nebuchadnezzar's own word, he was like a son of the gods.

I believe that was Jesus Christ himself. That's where God will meet you. When you decide, I am going to follow Jesus no matter the consequences, no matter who follows me, no matter who doesn't follow, no matter who calls me crazy, no matter who says I am weird, no matter who says I am abnormal, I will follow Jesus.

When you make that decision and you decide to endure the rejection of the world, you are being thrown in the furnace. You are being in trouble because of obedience. That's where God will meet you and that's where your spiritual life will start becoming rich.

It's amazing how the Bible is consistent. While Paul and Silas were in that jail, in the prison at night, because they had preached the gospel and they prayed. That's when God came down and shook the place.

God met them in their furnace. Many people are trying to be moderate in the middle. They are trying to please everybody.

That's why God hasn't met them yet. They are trying to agree with this one. They are trying to fit in the world and fit here and fit over here and fit over there.

There is something missing in their Christian life. In any case, let me quickly conclude saying this. There is one king who is to be worshipped and that's Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. He is actually the king that if you don't worship, you will get thrown in the furnace. And that's hell.

See, Nebuchadnezzar was trying to be Jesus and he could not. His kingdom was doomed to end. But Jesus' kingdom is forever.

The Bible says that every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. But some people will be thrown in the furnace. In the fiery furnace where there is whipping and gnashing of teeth.

I want to ask you, is Jesus Lord of your life? Have you made up your mind to follow him no matter what? Have you surrendered your right to be your own God? Have you surrendered your desire to have your way? We'll end here. I guess our time is up. We have to leave this room.

Go ahead and meditate on these things and look at your own life. It might be that you've been religious, but have never really surrendered to Christ. It might be that you've been in the middle trying to fit everywhere and compromising.

Let that change today.

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