

April 17, 2016

Heroes of Faith, Part Two

*A series on Heroes of the Old and New Testament
"The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors,
set them above the crowd," Hebrews 11:3 The Message*

"Daniel: (Pastor Ken)

A Godly Response to an Ungodly Request"

"But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods." Daniel 1:8

A. Daniel was an unwilling immigrant...

1. Judah was conquered and Daniel was one of four who were taken prisoner at the age of 16.
2. The Babylonians captured the top of the ruling class, the military, and craftsmen as prisoners.
3. The brightest and best were taken and taught Babylonian values, tasks, norms, and theology.
4. They were given new names with the Babylonians gods in their names.

"Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. 'Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon.'" Daniel 1:4

B. Daniel's choices made his life...

"But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods." Daniel 1:8

1. Daniel had made up his mind as to his choices.
"*...Daniel was determined...*"
2. Daniel had made up his mind that he would not compromise with the culture.
"*...Daniel was determined not to defile himself...*"
3. Daniel faced ungodly requests but chose to handle it with a godly response.
"*...he asked...for permission...*"

4. Daniel was willing to risk his very life to make godly choices.

"But he responded, 'I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded.'" Daniel 1:10

5. Daniel was willing to put his faith to the test.
"Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. 'At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's food. Then make your decision in light of what you see.'" Daniel 1:12-13

6. God continued to sustain them as they continued to make choices to honor Him.

"God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams." Daniel 1:17

C. Daniel's life choices continued to be tested...

1. Daniel was tested as he was willing to worship God only!
2. Daniel was tested and he was not willing to compromise. His courage and integrity were unwavering.
3. Daniel was persistent in his choices.
4. Daniel never lost respect for leadership and always handled his choices with honor.
5. Daniel was obedient in spite of consequences.
6. Daniel was not willing to forsake the power of prayer, realizing it was the source of strength that brought him to the place where he was.
7. Daniel was not willing to keep silent when the Lord gave him the words to share.

D. What will be your choices and how will they shape your future?

As followers of Christ, we are constantly given choices that we have to honor...

1. What are the moral choices that you are making?

(To remain sexually pure, to say no to pornography, to guard your heart in movies, books, media, etc.?)

2. What are the choices you are making to stand for your faith? (To be willing to identify as a Christian in spite of opposition, to share your faith when the door is opened, to be willing to risk rejection...)
3. Where is your integrity being brought into question and how are you choosing to remain unwavering? (To be honest in all dealings, to speak the truth, to value your integrity above all else, to be faithful to your word...)
4. What are the difficult decisions that you are willing to make because you are willing to put God first in your life? (To choose God as the first love, to follow Him even if it costs you relationships, to say "Yes" to difficult options, to keep God as the highest priority...)
5. What if your life were put on the line...would you still be able to stand for Christ? (To be willing to leave all to follow Christ...)

"Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, 'If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.'" Mark 8:34

"But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15

Next week...
April 24, 2016

"Paul – (Pastor Dan)

Blinded by the Light Brings a Turnaround"

"As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?' 'Who are you, lord?' Saul asked. And the voice replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting!'" Acts 9:3-5