

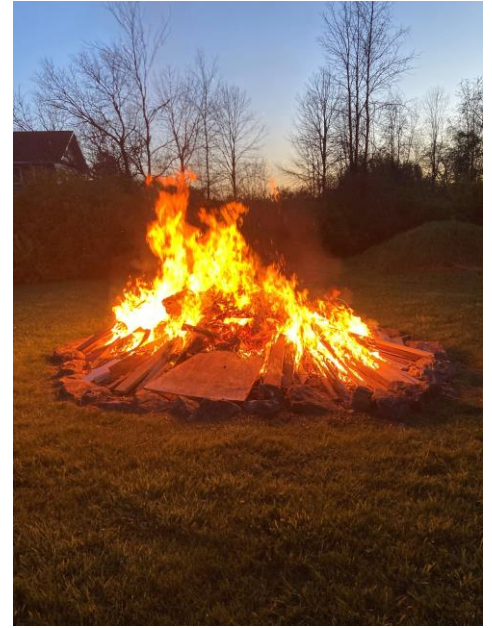
PEARCE CHURCH

PASTOR'S POST | May 13, 2022

Dear Pearce Family,

Have you ever been to a bonfire? I don't mean a small campfire with marshmallow sticks. I mean a BONFIRE. I have been at some, where standing within thirty feet will singe your eyebrows. Standing too close can make you feel like a roasted marshmallow.

If you've ever gotten burned, you know it is extremely painful. And the threat of death by burning to the three Israelites in Daniel 3 must have been terrifying. Yet they refused to obey King Nebuchadnezzar's edict to bow to a giant golden statue. They considered that a serious violation of the Lord's commands, "You shall have no other gods before me," and "You shall not bow down to any image or worship them" (Exodus 20:4-6). Rather than compromise their worship of God, they trusted in God to provide for them through their obedience to Him, even it meant they would die. "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Daniel 3:17-18).



I love their faith! I'm encouraged by their remarkable poise and confidence in the face of severe consequences. I could only hope to be so bold if faced with a life or death situation in which to obey God rather than human rulers. Like Peter and John in Acts 4:20 who told the authorities, "As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard," they would not compromise to save themselves. And they were willing to follow God's protocol regardless of whether they received His protection.

How about us? Unfortunately, Christians are often willing to compromise on their obedience to God's commands out of convenience ("it's easier to go with the flow"), selfishness ("my way is less costly or better for me"), or even a sense of entitlement ("this feels right so it must be right"). They take God's forgiveness for granted, so they do what they want, even if they know it is not God's will for their lives. The three Israelites are a shining example, not just of what to do when facing persecution, but how to make godly choices in how we live every day of our lives. If we are unwilling to be faithful to God in every day choices, it's doubtful we will be faithful when faced with life or death choices. God invites us to trust Him daily, and show that by obeying Him daily. As the prophet Samuel told King Saul, no matter the earthly consequences, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

With Faith,

Pastor Todd

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