**Real Faith (Daniel 3:16-18)**

 Real faith in God is a solid trust in Him like an immovable stone.

 Greetings dearly beloved, as we examine one of the most conspicuous examples of faith in the Bible, namely the account of the three young men. Every person has ideas about what faith is. Some say that faith is something that doesn’t change. Others say that faith is a conviction. Still others say that you either have faith or you don’t – it’s based on chance or luck. However, through this story, we’re going to see that faith is not an ordinary conviction. (No,) Real faith in God is a solid trust in Him like an immovable stone. (Let’s talk, then, about the nature of faith, as well as its connection to our personal lives as believers.)

 When you truly believe in God, you remain unmoved throughout all manner of ups and downs. The story of the three youths is familiar if you’ve read the book of Daniel at all. The Israelites had been exiled to Babylon already, and they had settled down as a community during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar. The king had become drunk over the years on his successes and military victories. He had decided to build a 90-foot statue to cause all the nations which he had defeated to forcibly subjugate their cultural lives under his rule. The three youths expressed their faith by ignoring the first general command given by the King to bow down to the statue. Then, when they were called before the king, they were so resolute in their faith that it was as if the king’s punishment was nothing for them. They were not even affected when his face changed and he became enraged. Finally, without so much as a peep, they were thrown into the fiery furnace. Of course, we know that a fourth figure appeared with them and that they later came out completely unscathed from the pit. It is important to see that immovable, established stance that they had arising from their faith – even in the presence of the most violent and fierce king of the known world at the time.

 Some years ago, an ocean liner was wrecked on a dangerous reef on the New England coast. The coast guard is well officered there. They went to the rescue under the captaincy of an old seaman, but with a few inexperienced young men on the crew. One of the youngsters turned a white face to the captain, saying, "Sir, the wind is offshore; and the tide is running out. We can go out, but we can never come back." All the captain said was, "Launch the boat. We have to go out. We don't have to come back!"

 What about us, then? Here you have the examples of the three young men and the captain in front of you: The three youths were not escaping the reality of their predicament. Rather, they were trusting in God, who could save them even from the grip of death. They knew that their lives were in God’s hands. It was not absolutely certain that God would save them from death; but no matter what happened, they were ready to hold onto God and not to bow down to foreign gods and false idols. They feared God and not man. Similarly, the captain was ready to serve in his role no matter the price, and not even the possibility of death was an obstacle for him.

 In one word: our faith is called to be a fearless and immovable faith. If God truly occupies first place in our life, then our trust in him is to be absolute. Today, my dear brother and sister, I ask you: do you trust God even if doing so would cost you everything? If you risk losing or endangering your comfort, your reputation, wealth, or convenient lifestyle – will you continue to trust God? How important is it for you to walk with God rather than to compromise and become a slave of worldly and godless ideas? Satan desires to make you into a fearful person and to make you subject to himself and people with their worldly and anti-theistic ideas and lifestyles. Jesus, on the other hand, invites you to be fearless like the three youths and to defend or stand up for your faith courageously in all situations, even when dangers appear in your path.

 Today is the time to make a decision, dearly beloved. Are you with God, or the world? When you truly believe in God, you remain unmoved throughout all manner of ups and downs. Real faith in God is a solid trust in Him like an immovable stone.