

## MESSAGE NOTES

### Daniel - Staying Connected to Jesus Friendship

#### Daniel 3:19-30 (NIV)

<sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual <sup>20</sup> and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. <sup>21</sup> So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. <sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

<sup>24</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

<sup>25</sup> He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

<sup>26</sup> Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, <sup>27</sup> and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

<sup>28</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in 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. <sup>29</sup> 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."

<sup>30</sup> Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

## Friends

Digital Babylon offers a counterfeit community, connection without presence, belonging without commitment, and relationships without depth.

"Friendships at midlife are a little like smoke detectors. You need them in theory but they can be a nuisance to keep up, especially if you are juggling children, aging parents, and a career. So you let them run out of juice. You don't really miss them until the house begins to burn and you wish you had a few firemen nearby." -Barbara Bradley Hagerty

*"You did not choose me, but I chose you."* - John 15:16

## Friends in the Fire

*"But if not"* -Daniel 3:18

You see there is what you may call an 'if' faith, and there is a 'though' faith. And the permanent faith, the lasting, the powerful faith is the 'though' faith. - Martin Luther King Jr.

*"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*  
-Matthew 18:20

Who is standing in the fire with you?

## Refiners Fire

*In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. -1 Peter 1:6-9*

## NOTES:

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

March 15, 2026

Daniel 3:19-30

*As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at [solanabeach.church](http://solanabeach.church) for sermon video, message notes, readings and resources, and small group question print out.*

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Before beginning your time in the passage this week, consider sharing your thoughts on the following prompt: *Can you share a story of when a friend or a group helped you face a challenge? What made that support meaningful?*

**CONNECT WITH GOD** (Choose from the below practices or select a practice from another week.)

- **Use the “Daniel” Card for Reflection on Reclaiming Presence this Lent**  
*Alone:* Using SBPC’s Lenten card, spend time in quiet prayer, reflection, and journaling. What has “reclaiming presence” looked like for you so far this Lent? How are you learning what it looks like to “dwell in the present moment with God”? How will you continue to commit to “reclaiming presence” this Lent?
- **Centering Prayer**  
A simple practice that helps you become more attentive to God’s activity in your life. We quiet our minds, cease striving and make room for God’s deep work in us.
  - Take a moment to breathe, slow down and be attentive.
  - Choose a sacred focus for your prayer time: a name for God or simply “Lord, I am Yours.” Or imagine Jesus’ loving look or Jesus calming the sea. Or focus on your breath.
  - Using your sacred focus, quiet your mind. When your mind wanders, return to your sacred focus, trusting that the Holy Spirit is at work in you.
  - After the allotted time, thank the Holy Spirit for working in you.

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Alone:** Read Daniel 3:19-30 again. Slow down and reflect on the below prompts for a few minutes.
  - What is a word or phrase that stands out to you from the passage?
  - What is capturing your attention or imagination?
- **Together:** Read Daniel 3:19-30 again.
- **Together** as a larger group: Share your reflections from the prompt.

### CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the sermon outline.
- What are you still reflecting on from the message this week?
- What are you noticing God is highlighting in this series so far?
- How does Daniel 3:19-30 connect to the season of Lent?
- What do we already know about the context and background of Daniel 3:19-30? What do we want to know more about?
- Who were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and what was their situation as exiles in Babylon?
- What do you think about the fourth figure in the fire with the three friends?
- What parallels—if any—do you see between then and now (our lives today)?
- How does this passage help you to reflect on the role of Christian community in living faithfully in the world today?
- What lessons can we draw from Daniel 3 for our modern communities?
- What do you notice about the role of friendship/community in this story?

### ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore the quote from Walter Brueggemann, an Old Testament scholar, reflecting on the intersection of empire and faith, and how the quote might connect to Daniel 3 and our lives today.

*“The prophetic task of the church is to tell the truth in a society that lives in illusion, grieve in a society that practices denial, and express hope in a society which expresses despair.” -Walter Brueggemann*

### PRAYER

Together: This is the final winter session. Small groups will officially resume for Spring the week of April 19th through the week of May 31st. Close your time together in prayer for one another and for the broader community and the world.