

NAD Health Sabbath

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Sermon Notes

# Facing Your Fiery Furnace



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# Adventist HealthyYOU: Restored

RESTORED is the North American Division's comprehensive look at mental health and wellness. Through this collaborative effort, we are encouraging all church and Adventist organizations to engage in compassionate and comprehensive ministry to individuals who are struggling with mental illness, or those who wish to maintain or improve good mental functioning.

Mental health is very broad, and so must be our approach. Visit our website, [NADhealth.org/restored](https://NADhealth.org/restored), for currently available and soon-to-come resources to share hope and wholeness in your community, through the healing power of Christ.



# Facing Your Fiery Furnace

*This sermon series is sponsored by the North American Division Health Ministries Department, and prepared by Dr. Ricardo Whyte, Founder of Master Mind Institute. Visit [NADhealth.org/sabbaths](https://NADhealth.org/sabbaths) for more sermons and other resources.*

## Suggested Scripture Verses

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.. Romans 12:1, 2*

## Sermon

Hi, I'm Dr. Whyte and I'm coming to you in the capacity of the chair of the mental health task force of the North American Division and I am pleased to greet you on behalf of Dr. Alexander Bryant, the President of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, and also I greet you on behalf of Dr. Angeline Brauer, director of health ministries of the North American Division

The topic that I will be talking to you about is: **Facing Your Fiery Furnace– What to do About the Burn.** We have certainly in this world been experiencing some burns and we in this sermon wanna talk about five things that you can do about burn. But before I do, just a little bit of housekeeping. I want to share with you about the **Not**

**Consumed** initiative, in which it is the goal of the North American Division of Health Ministries, in our mental health division. One of our first installments is what we are calling Killing Burnout, An Introductory Guide. If you contact the Health Ministry office, you can find out how you can access one of these introductory guides. I think there are a few more left, but you'll have to hurry up and contact Dr Brauer. But the bottom line is stay tuned to learning about the **Not Consumed** 12 step based resilience group that we are looking forward to introduce and launch in the upcoming year of 2023.

And with that, let's have a word of prayer.

Our Father and our God. We thank You so much for Your love, Your care and Your watch care over us. And we pray in special way that You would be with us as we go over this Word. We pray that one day when You return to this earth, we will find a place in Thy Kingdom. Please clear our mind, help us to focus. In Your name we pray, Amen.

I had the privilege of earning my undergrad degree at Atlantic Union College as a biochemistry major, so that was my home in Atlantic College – the Science complex and up in those second story windows I can remember having didactics in the morning but then having lab in the afternoon. And it's interesting how it kind of patterns life where in the early part of life, that's where you learn. But then in the latter part, that's where you actually have that lab, where you're gonna implement what you learn. And it's also why I can remember my mom saying “One day you'll understand.” It's almost like, you know, later on there'll be the laboratory that will help you understand.

We would have experiments where we would need various tools in order to carry out the experiments. One of the tools was a Crucible. So what was the function of the Crucible, you may ask? Well, from time to time you would have maybe two compounds that you would need to bring together to cause a reaction of some sort. Well, one compound at times might have impurities. And so it was your task to actually put that compound in the Crucible and expose it to some burning, expose it to some heat, and that heat was not just random, it served a purpose. It would cook off the impurities. We're going somewhere with this – the burn would have a purpose.

You can see that outside of that window, it might be like a Tuesday afternoon, and it might be a beautiful New England day and you might see people with blankets spread out and enjoying one another's company. Maybe someone tossing a football around, and you would look out and long to go out and enjoy some portion of the day. And that longing might inspire you to rush your experiment, to rush the compounds, rush the time in the Crucible – and my goodness, that would be a mistake. Why would that be a mistake? Because if you did not give that compound sufficient time in the Crucible, the result would be that when you took that compound out and brought it to react with the other compound. There would be no reaction. It had insufficiently been exposed to the heat, and it still had the impurities, and now there was no reaction. So guess what you had to do. You had to start the experiment all over again. And if it had been your goal to save time, you had done the opposite. You had just wasted a tremendous amount of time, and it's virtually guaranteed. You were not gonna be able to enjoy any aspect of that afternoon.

So the burn of the Crucible has a purpose. I need to say that again. The burn in the Crucible, it has a purpose. And so I want to talk to you today about five things. Five things that "burn" might be doing. So what are those five things?

1. **The first** is the burn might just be preparing you.
2. **Second**, the burn might be positioning you.
3. **Third**, the burn might be freeing you.
4. **Number four**, we're gonna take a look at how the burn might be transforming you.
5. And then **number five**, we'll take a look at how the burn might actually be calling you.

**So let's get into it by talking about how the burn may very well be preparing you.**

We're going to talk today about a story that we find in Daniel Chapter 3, where we're going to encounter a scenario involving a furnace. But before we do that, let's step back and let's ask ourselves a question. Who was Daniel? Who exactly was he? It's very helpful to pause and consider the author who has written the content, because very often you'll find that their life bleeds into their content and provides a very helpful context. So that I think is very true for Daniel.

So who exactly was Daniel? Daniel's claim to fame is that he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with, of all things, the portion of the kings meat. You can find it in Daniel chapter one, so let's go there and start at verse five:

And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego. (Dan 1:5-7)

This is pretty straightforward. The king says, I'm going to give you guys a seat at my table and give you this food. But in verse eight it says,

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. (Dan 1:8, 9)

It's interesting to pick the story up there, because it facilitates us asking the question "What is the condition of Daniel's mind when he comes to this place?" This place where he says, I will not defile myself? What is his mindset? What has he been through? There's nothing that can kill Scripture more effectively than when it's read out of context when you don't drench it with the context so that you can then understand it – so that it can be brought to life. What is the condition of Daniel's mind when he decides he will not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat? Now I use that word, "mind", but a mind does not occur in a vacuum. It occurs in a context. So let's talk about Daniel.

We know that Daniel is about 17 around this time, he's a teenager. We know that he is part of Israel's nobility class. We also know that King Nebuchadnezzar chose the best of the best. So even though he conquered the Israelites, he doesn't just destroy them all. He says no: we're going to take the best of the best and to leverage that human capital into building my Kingdom. What an astute king. And so then we know that Daniel is intelligent and he's handsome. He is an eligible bachelor, if you will. So what is exactly his mindset?

Here's another important point to understand when we're talking about the mind: if the bulb is the brain, then the light that emanates from the bulb would be the mind. The thoughts, the brilliance of those thoughts is the light that emanates from that bulb. And so that's what we talk about being the mind. And another interesting thing that we need to understand, is that the building block unit of the brain is the neuron. And one neuron connects with with other neurons. So one neuron can synapse (connect) with up to 10,000 to 250,000 neurons. But those synapses (connections) are not permanent. What effects those connections is how your brain will network itself includes the experiences that you have. In those experiences you interact with physically, but also the very thoughts you have will affect how your brain networks itself. So let's take a look at the immersive experience that Daniel had that would have affected the synapses of his brain.

First of all we know that Daniel goes through a siege. A siege means another nation comes and surrounds that territory and surrounds it for a long period of time. So no resources can come into that region and it just has to subsist on whatever it had at the starting point of the siege. And Israel is brought to its knees. They experience a level of desperation so bad that women are eating their babies. It's a terrible, terrible experience. They experience hunger that is unimaginable and it leads them to do



things that are beyond the scope of our understanding. The siege gets that severe and eventually the Babylonians come in and they conquer Israel.

So what are the things affecting Daniel's mind?

He's gone through siege, right? He's seen his people suffer acutely. Also we find out that he is taken from Israel back to Babylon. Think deeply about these experiences. I want you to see the bonds that are broken between mother and child. And I want you to think about Daniel perhaps seeing some of his loved ones die or having those bonds ruptured where he never sees them alive again. These are some of the very real experiences Daniel may very well have had. And some of you see how crippling it can be to lose one loved one? Much less what it is that this young man goes through. How much loss had he witnessed?

But it's not just being taken out of Israel and having those relationships destroyed. Now you're brought into this new setting. If you're an immigrant, you know how disruptive and how challenging it can be for you to have to forge a new life in a new setting. All the missteps that can happen, and this young man is being plucked into that kind of an experience as a 17 year old.

*Makes you think about what were the experiences that shaped the mind that is saying "I will not defile myself."*

What else has he been through? Nebuchadnezzar was very frustrated with King Zedekiah, or Jehoiakim. He had expected that Zedekiah would function basically as a magistrate. He was to run Jerusalem but collect taxes on behalf of Babylon. That was the agreement. In fact, prophet Jeremiah had told Zedekiah "honor your

commitment. Just honor the commitment and it will be well with us. This is God ordained." But there were also other prophets saying to Zedekiah. No, no. God is gonna break the chain. And so a deceiving spirit had taken control of the tongues of the false prophets. And so Zedekiah listen to them and they rebelled against Babylon. And this is why Babylon came against Israel and ended up destroying their temple and also taking a number of the captives over to Babylon.

But the fury of Nebuchadnezzar against King Zedekiah is demonstrated by what he does to Zedekiah. But as you're listening to this, this is not just done to Zedekiah, this is done to all the Israelites.

So Nebuchadnezzar takes, he says, oh, those are your ten sons. He kills the ten sons right before the king. I need you to understand the pain and the magnitude of the pain that you experience watching your ten sons get killed. The Babylonians don't stop there. They say, by the way, that will be the last thing you see and they gouge out the king's out.

Now the significance of of doing this to the king is it doesn't just punish the king, it punishes all of the Israelites, it touches them all. There's a reason that our attention as a nation is so acute in protecting our president. Because we know whatever happens to the President is done to all of us, and that is the reason for the elaborate nature of the Secret Service. That is the reason that there's literally a fighting force protecting the president because we know that whatever is done to him is done to all of us, he is a symbol of power. And this is the ultimate symbol of domination. This kind of an insult done to the king does this to all of the Israelites. This is mentally damaging.

What is the condition of Daniel's mind as he purposes in his heart to not defile himself?

And besides the psychological warfare, the warfare is brought even closer to Daniel in terms of Isaiah Chapter 39:7. Isaiah is warning Hezekiah the king that after he allowed those Babylonians to tour all of their wares and treasures, the Babylonians will carry those treasures off back to Babylon. They will also take your sons and turn them into eunuchs. This is what Isaiah 39:7 tells us. So just think about that. Not only has Daniel gone through all that stuff, but he has also been castrated.

But this story doesn't stop there. Daniel, that name means Judge of God. Babylonians renamed Daniel to "Prince of Baal." It's almost like saying "Prince of Satan." We know the Israelites talk about false gods, they know that Baal is a false god. So it's like when he hears his Babylonian name, it's almost like saying Prince of Satan. That is how insulting it is to Daniel.

So I want you to see the warfare on national, psychological, and physical levels that is waged against him. That is waged against his mindset. But in that context, he purposes in his heart that he will not defile himself.

I came to encourage somebody who has been in the midst of a war. Your finances being ravaged, your mindset being tested and assaulted. Your very well-being being called into question. I came to remind you, to commit yourself to not defile yourself. To not defile yourself. To be encouraged, to understand that there's God above who sees you, who's collecting your tears, who is tracking them. And who has a plan for you.

And so Daniel purposes. He then goes and challenges the Prince of the eunuchs. He says "I'm not going to defile myself by eating of the kings meat and drinking his wine." And so he challenges Ashphenaz that he would be tested for 10 days.

And so Daniel goes to Ashphenaz and he says, look, just test us for 10 days. Don't have us eat those things, we're just gonna eat vegetables. Then test us after 10 days and see how we're doing. And so that's the proposal. What a bold proposal, only giving yourself 10 days to show a phenotypic change in your physical demeanor just based on what you're eating. What a profound message to us.

But after the 10 days Daniel and his friends were found to appear healthier. This was pretty impressive. So their portion of the king's meat was taken away and they were allowed to continue on those three years.

We're getting somewhere. I want to remind you that one of the things that burn can be doing is it can be positioning. Depending on how you respond, your burn can be positioning you. This burn has positioned Daniel for what this challenge has positioned him for. They appear 10 times wiser than their counterparts. They appeared healthier just after 10 days. But also at the end of the three years when Nebuchadnezzar is conducting an oral exam, all of these people, Daniel and his friends, they appear 10 times better than their counterparts that have gone through these three years of training. Don't miss that. Your burn can be preparing you. depending on whether you go through it with faith or not. So please do not miss that.

**Step 2. Your burn is positioning you. What do we mean by your burn is positioning you?**

You'll recall in the story in Daniel Chapter 2 that king Nebuchadnezzar is given a dream. He was thinking about things to come, and in response to that, he's given a dream. But God is so amazing, and God is so powerful because Nebuchadnezzar is given the dream, but he's not allowed to remember it. God will literally create a scenario that He's got a plan to plug you into, if you would just stick with it. If you would just stick with Him. He gives Nebuchadnezzar the dream, but He doesn't allow him to remember it. Because God has prepared a dream interpreter.

You remember the story – King Nebuchadnezzar is very frustrated that he can't remember the dream. And so he goes to his wise men, astrologers, and magicians and he says to them, I'm a little embarrassed, I'll admit, but I've had a dream. But I can't remember the dream. But I'm pretty clear it's got some significance. So here's what I need from you– I need you to tell me what the dream was, and I need you to interpret it. I don't need that nonsense that you guys do where you pull this from this and you pulled out from there. No, the very evidence that your interpretation is accurate is that you'll be able to tell me what the dream was. So I need you to tell me what the dream was, then I need you to interpret it. And I get the feeling this is important. So if you don't do this, then I don't have a need for you. We don't keep things around here in Babylon just for the fun of it. So I will destroy all of you, and turn those beautiful houses that we have you put up in into rubble. So let's get clear. I need an interpretation to the dream and I also of course you need to remind me what that dream is. That'll be the ultimate evidence to me that you have the ability to interpret the dream.

“King, have you lost your mind?” I doubt they said that...“The only ones that would be able to do that are the gods, and their dwelling is not with men.” I love how in stressful situations people will be allowed to tell on themselves. They say that the

dwelling is not with men, but what they really needed to say was their dwelling is not with us. The gods' dwelling is not with us. Because actually God does dwell within a man, and his name is Daniel.

The king is thrown into a rage. He orders all the wise men to be destroyed, and to do it quickly. When Daniel catches wind of what is going on, he asks what is the urgency? Daniel then appeals to the king for some time and he is granted 24 hours. Daniel goes back to his friends, explains the situation, and says "We need a prayer session." Have you ever gotten serious with your prayers? I'm not talking about where you can even sit down and kneel by your bed. I'm talking getting down on the knees, getting down on fours and pleading with God for deliverance. Daniel unites with his three friends in urgent, earnest supplication.

So now we come to an interested point. The Bible says that God brings the interpretation to Daniel in a dream. Now a dream would imply that Daniel is sleeping. So imagine that your life depends on what transpires next, and he has the faith to go to sleep. And it's in that faith and it's in that going to sleep that God reveals to him the dream. So it's interesting because when he's gone to bed. He doesn't have the answer at that point. He goes to bed and God gives him the answer in the dream. Sometimes you've got to go to sleep. Of course, I'm joking when I say that. But I'm serious that you need to trust God. You need to have faith.

And so then Daniel goes back to Nebuchadnezzar and explains the vision. And we learn something else that is very interesting. When people are near the crown, when people are near power, very often they are power mongering. They're very hungry for power. You see this in the person of the captain of the King's guard that brings Daniel to the King. Arioch the captain says that "he found a man" (Daniel 2:25). He implies

that he had really been searching for him. And he wants some credit. He's responsible for this solution. He's power hungry. So consider Daniel's mindset in this context.

And it is in that context that the king says the following to Daniel:

Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; (Daniel 2:26, 27)

Now think about the power-hungry nature that most people would have as they are so close to power. This is a floater. This is one where Daniel has the opportunity to really shine and draw attention and glory to himself. And you can see why very often God can't trust us with power because we would draw the attention to ourselves rather than pointing it to Whom it really should be pointing.

So watch how Daniel then answers:

But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; (Daniel 2:28)

He then goes forward and explains the dream, but he puts the glory where it belongs. When God blesses you. Will you direct the glory where it belongs? Can God trust you with fame? Can God trust you with power? Will you direct the glory to God? What an amazing example we see set forth by Daniel.

Another interesting point is that, when God is working with these prophets, their life is vulnerable. Because it's one thing to tell the king, "You are the head of gold....but next after thee..." The king is not pleased to hear that after his there will be other kingdoms. Whether it's the Medo-Persians or the belly and thighs of brass which represent Greece or the the legs of iron, which represents Rome, or the mixed iron and clay, which represents the end-time kingdoms.

The point being, Nebuchadnezzar, your Kingdom has a shelf life. That is a dagger right through the heart of the King. This is not a pleasant sound to a king. They want to hear, "Oh King live forever." That's not just a cute saying. That's how they want their programming. They want to constantly be thinking of legacy and dynasty and forever. Instead, he hears that his kingdom has a shelf life. This is not pleasant to hear. But he is pleased is to know what the vision is. And this is proof that Daniel's interpretation is very likely to be true when he can do something as mysterious as to be able to recall the dream.

Let's think for a moment now about how Nebuchadnezzar responded. Isn't it interesting how we can respond by building our own image – by building and erecting our own idol. After hearing that he represents the head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar then erects a statue that is all gold. His intent is to give the message that his kingdom is everlasting.

But there's some added reasons why Nebuchadnezzar's behavior is understandable. Whenever we read Scripture, it's really important to get into the skin of the characters and understand, why would you erect an image of gold? Kings of course like dynasties. But why would you demand that everyone bow to this idol? What is going



on in Babylon that would make you engage in this strange activity? Direct and demand that your leaders, not just the population of Babylon, but especially the leaders, are to bow to this image. Let's think about that for a second.

Historians mention that Babylon had sustained a rebellion so severe that Nebuchadnezzar's very existence was in question. It's to the point where Nebuchadnezzar himself had to engage in hand to hand combat to quell and put down this rebellion. That's how severe the rebellion was. And so he thinks to himself, How can I unify my administration around a common vision, a vision of our Kingdom being everlasting? How can I put down this rebellion and show that the rebellion has truly been put down? Well, what could be better than having all my administrators bow to my view, to my vision, to my image of our future. And anyone who doesn't bow down to that, that would be a clear sign of disrespect. Now, deep down, the king knows, even if there was a traitor, he wouldn't dare be an opposition at this point. He knows this. So really, this is just an act of a unified front. This is a proverbial floater that he's throwing to them, saying that his kingdom is unified, and he wants them to be clear on what they're unified around. And that is the everlasting nature of Babylon.

So you can imagine the chest pain Nebuchadnezzar feels when he learns that Shadrack, Meshach and Abendigo are refusing to bow down. You see, I don't believe Nebuchadnezzar is thinking that their loyalties in question. In fact, he's very impressed with them. He's set Daniel up as his second in command, and Daniel brought his friends into position. So Nebuchadnezzar isn't targeting them. This is to make sure that others don't want to be traitors.

But he cannot tolerate any defiance. He just put down a rebellion. In fact, those fiery furnaces that are around weren't there as an execution tool. This is a construction site,

so it's very likely Babylon was in the process of repairing some of the damages that had taken place during the rebellion. So it is an afterthought when he says to the 3 Hebrews, if you do not bow down, I will throw you in one of those furnaces. This is an afterthought. What traitor would be stupid enough to oppose me now?

But then he learns that these three Hebrew boys have chosen not to bow. And even though he knew that they don't worship other gods – that they would not bow – but he didn't have a choice. After that last rebellion, he couldn't allow for another. So he gives them one more chance.

Listen to their response:

O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. (Daniel 3:16)

Hold on here. This is a high stake moment. You can feel the tension. You can see all the leaders looking at what's about to happen next. You can see those politicians that are envious of the position of those three Hebrew boys saying, oh boy, oh Goodie, what's about to happen now. You can see them salivating.

And they respond:

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not... (Daniel 3:17, 18)

“But if not.” Look, we are confident that our God can deliver us from this fiery furnace and out of your hand. But if not – in case He doesn't –

...be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. (Daniel 3:18)

Now in this context, where Nebuchadnezzar needs a unified front, we have this situation. And there's another thing that's happening. Maybe Nebuchadnezzar is rebuking God. He's saying to God, Your Kingdom will not be forever. My Kingdom will be forever. This is this is an ultimate sign of rebellion. And God needs some folk to stand up because He wants to rebuke that image. And God gets three to stand up and say no, we're not bound to that image. We're not bowing to that.

Nebuchadnezzar is sent into a fit of rage. He tells seven of his strongest military guards to throw them into that furnace. But only after the furnace is heated up seven times hotter. And to document the authenticity of the heat, it kills the very people who threw them into the furnace.

Then Nebuchadnezzar can't believe his eyes. And he begins to question those around him:

Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. (Daniel 3:24, 25)

One of them looks like the son of God.

Your burn is positioning you. Your brain is positioning, it's arranging a situation where God can make a statement. Don't miss that. The very thing that you're tempted to despise and fear, if you work in partnership with God, amazing things can happen.

The child that is trying you, the job that is testing you, the medical condition that is threatening you... If you work in partnership with God, an amazing story can be born from that.

And so Nebuchadnezzar calls them out. And basically blesses the name of the God of Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednigo, because no God saves like this. No God saves in this manner. That is the true God.

Your burn is positioning you.

**Number three. What's the third thing that the burn is doing? The burn is freeing you.**

It's interesting how the very fire that destroyed the enemies, those that put themselves in opposition to the children of God, the very burn that destroyed those men, it also destroyed the bonds that had confined Shadrack, Meshach and Abednigo. What if the very thing you're being tempted to give up, that you're being tempted to call a sacrifice is something that's binding you? You know, so often we talk about, hey, I'm sacrificing that for God. When if we held onto it, it was dragging us to hell.

Think about that for a minute? What if that burn is actually freeing you. As in the case that we saw with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo, where the heat didn't destroy them, but it destroyed their bonds?

Five things that the burn is doing for you: It's preparing you. It's positioning you. And it's freeing you. I want you to think about that for a moment.

**But that now brings us to number 4. The fourth thing, the burn is doing for you is it's transforming you.**

That word transformation should make you think of a text and we find that text in Romans chapter 12, verse one and two. You of course will recall that Romans is written by Paul. And you know that Paul is the apostle famous for killing God's heroes. Can you imagine his mindset and how his experience is connected to his words. Imagine the guilt that you would have realizing that you were killing God's heroes. Recall Paul is complicit in the stoning of Stephen. An incident so heroic in nature that when Stephen looks up and he sees Jesus standing on the right hand of God. It's as if Jesus was so impressed by Steven that He was giving him a standing ovation.

You didn't hear what I said. Paul is guilty of being complicit to the killing of God's heroes. What was his mindset?

And so Paul writes to the Christians in Rome. Can you imagine what Christians were going through back then? The persecution and their bodies being thrown to these lions and and these arenas? What kind of an encouraging word would they need as they're going through their experience? So it is in that context that we read Paul's admonition:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1)

This is the least you can do.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2)

Do not be conformed to the trials. Don't be conformed to the trials. That's right, those trials very often are designed to affect your brain, that neuroplasticity of your brain. And those trials are designed to have you changed, and maybe leave you in a state of confusion. So I'm saying don't just take it in – don't be conformed – but I want you to transform. I want you to regenerate. I want you to remember that you've been designed to be like God. You've been designed to create. Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you can figure out what is that perfect will of God.

So the burn is transforming you. Remember when I talked about that Crucible where you needed sufficient heat in order to cook off those impurities so when the time came it would react, it would be prepared. God is preparing you. He is transforming you.

I love the story of the butterfly, where it starts off as this caterpillar annoying, scary caterpillar. But then it goes into that cocoon and undergoes the process of metamorphosis. Where it then transforms into a butterfly, a butterfly that can now transcend the circumstances that a caterpillar was in. Now it can transcend. Now it can fly.

That burn can be transforming you. So that's number 4. The burn is transforming you.

## **But then it brings us to #5 that burn is calling you and calling you to what?**

### **Calling you to God-likeness.**

One of the things that the burn can be calling you to is to an experience in which you walk with Jesus. One of the things that Jesus does is He models for us what it means to go through God-likeness. Jesus models for us God-likeness. God-likeness in a moment like no other. No human will be called to model this kind of God-likeness. You see, Gethsemane alerts us to what Jesus is about to go through. It's a stress so severe that we're told He sweat drops of blood.

Father, help me to to to convey this with the power that it deserves.

He sweats drops of blood. The stress is so severe. But what was the acute stressor? What was the thing in Gethsemane? What was the cup that He hoped would be passed from Him? You see, the real challenge of Calvary, the real challenge of the cross was not that Jesus had to go through it. That was not the problem. You see, even hell is heaven if God is with you. Heaven is where God is. And Jesus understood that that as long as We're together, I can go through it. But there's one cup I would love to pass from me. And what is that cup?

Jesus is so pure that the only thing the devil could tempt him with was purity. It was good. And the thing that Jesus was being tempted with was not separating from His Father. That's the one thing He feared. That's the one thing He shrank from. Is there a way We don't have to be separated? Because if it is possible. Let the cup of separation from You pass from Me. But nevertheless...

You understand that our hope is hinged and founded on that word: nevertheless. Nevertheless. Not my will, but Thy will be done. Thy will be done, Father. There's no other way. If there's no other way to save Ricardo, there's no other way to save you, Listener.

Thy will be done. The stage is set for us to now see what God will look like going through condemnation.

So Jesus is on that cross. And after experiencing ridicule, after experiencing the mockery of these two thieves. Them making jokes that expense—there's nothing like the pain of a joke when you're at your worst. Just as He's experienced that, one of them turns around and says: we deserve what we got, but He is innocent. Lord, when You come in Your glory, would You remember Mmme? A "hail Mary," if you will.

And his question pierces the eardrum of Jesus and Jesus says, I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise. In other words, when I come in My glory—but that's not today. I'm not in glory today. And when He writes from the tomb, He said don't touch me, Mary, I have not yet ascended. So He can't possibly be saying that we'll be in Paradise today. No, He said, when I say to you today, pause, you will be with me in Paradise one day.

He looks at John and says to him, behold your mouth. And mother, behold your son.

Compassion. In the midst of His suffering. What does God look like going through condemnation?



There's someone on the scene who is experiencing acute suffering. Easy to forget that He's experiencing it. But He does not go out of the vision and scope of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

It's one thing to observe the object of your affection suffer when you have no power. It's another thing for you to watch your loved ones suffer, and you have all power. Can you imagine the restraint? And to be comforted by those words, Father, We're good. Forgive them, they know not what they do.

And Father and Son have to prepare themselves for the moment of pain that cannot be imagined. And we hear Jesus shriek the moment that it happens: Father, Father, why hast thou forsaken me?

And my voice betrays my ability to convey to you that sound, that blood curdling sound of our Savior experiencing the rip from His father. Why has thou forsaken me? And can you imagine God saying to Himself, I pray He does not need Me to answer this question right now. I pray that He does not need a response. Because I cannot rejoin Him now. We've agreed to this. I pray He does not need a response.

And they are separated. They are officially separated. Except for one thin strand. That's the power of faith. The only thing linking them is faith. There is separation, but they each have to trust they're both going to play their part of the plan. And God hears Jesus say "Into Thy hands, I commend my spirit. Into Thy hands.

It's a special thing that took place that 2000 years ago. Your burn is calling you to God-likeness. And my prayer for you today is that you will walk it with a spiritual swag. You will walk it with a confidence that inspires Jesus to come down and walk with you

in the midst of your furnace. To walk with you and your enemies have to say, I thought it was one person that I divorced, that I left for naught, I thought it was one family that I abandoned. I thought it was one person that I had fired. I thought it was one person that I was afflicting. But I see two people walking in that place. One of them looks like the son of God.

I pray that is your experience. That you will answer God's call to God-likeness. Until your enemies have to say, I see you walking with Jesus.

Shall we bow our heads and pray.

Father. Lord, we are in earth's crucible. But God, we are so thankful that this burn is not random and it's not pointless. But if we work in partnership with You, it will prepare us. It will position us. It will transform us. It will call us to God-likeness. It will free us. If we work in partnership with You. So I pray, Oh God, that You won't give up on us. And that You will inspire us to walk with a spiritual confidence, that would have the Son of God even walk with us. So that our enemies would have to see that we're walking with someone who bears the presence of God. Thank you for the opportunity that You've arranged for us. Bless us and keep us. And Lord, what we don't have the wisdom to ask for, please fail not to grant those things unto us. We pray in Your holy name.

God bless you. And it's my hope that if we don't meet on this side of glory, we will meet in heaven. So all the best and Happy Sabbath to you.