

- WELCOME TO -  
**MAURICE REFORMED CHURCH**

*...following God, loving others...*

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ONE CHAPTER  
EACH WEEK



**ACTS**

THE EARLY CHURCH &  
THE HOLY SPIRIT

SPRING & EARLY SUMMER  
2024 AT MRC

**Daily Devotionals**  
WEEK OF: APRIL 21-27



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**Sermon Doodles + Illustrations**

# Monday, April 22

## [HABAKKUK 3:17-19](#) | EVEN IF THINGS DON'T HAPPEN AS I EXPECT

The book of Habakkuk is a conversation between the prophet and God. Habakkuk has many things he wished were different and God says that He will take the people of Israel away into exile as a punishment for their current behavior. This thought also unsettles Habakkuk, that a foreign, ungodly nation, would be used by God to punish His own nation. The final chapter that we find ourselves in here is a prayer or a song written by Habakkuk after the conversation with God.

Habakkuk closes the song with some dim pictures. The fig tree will not bud, the vines will not have grapes on them, the olive crop will fail, the fields will not produce food, & the sheep and cow pens will be empty. Each year farmers would hope and even expect the ground to produce a crop and the animals to produce babies. The picture we get from Habakkuk is a picture of complete crises for a group of people. Without food and even things to sacrifice to God, they would be left destitute. As a people this is what was about to happen to Israel. They were facing punishment from God for disobedience. They did not expect this to happen, but it was about to come their way.

The next verse is the key to anyone facing the punishment of God. In the midst of the chaos, we must turn to God. We may deserve what we are going through, but throughout scripture we see the way through punishment is to keep our eyes focused on Him and He will relent because of our repentance and turn back to Him. So even if you are going through punishment or a situation that you didn't expect, keep your eyes on God and rejoice in Him.



# Tuesday, April 23

## DANIEL 3:1-12 | EVEN IF I'M TOLD TO DO SOMETHING UNGODLY

In chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar was told that his kingdom was the head of gold in the dream he had. Here in chapter 3, he builds a 90-foot-tall gold statue. I guess he took that dream seriously. After the statue's construction, he made a decree that people were to bow down and worship it. He called all the leaders and governors and people to come and be a part of this glorious time of worship to a 9-story golden thing.

Of course, in this audience were 3 young Jewish boys who knew that they were to only worship God. What Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were being told to do was a sin and not something that honored God. They had a choice to make, would they just follow through and bow physically but not bow in their heart, or would they stay standing and firm in their faith of God. Oh, did I mention that if you didn't worship the golden statue, you would immediately be thrown into the fiery furnace? So, this is an ungodly demand with a big consequence. We will look at that more tomorrow.

What would you do? Many of us are probably not going to be faced with a life and death situation, but those with smaller consequences seem more dangerous to me. In all things, we need to respond in a way that says, even if I am told to do something ungodly, I will follow God. How often do our friends, co-workers, or classmates invite us to do something that God says not to? The negative consequence we face is possibly them making fun of us for not doing it, but more often we are presented with the "positive" outcomes if we do it. It's fun, it doesn't hurt anyone, it feels good, and the list goes on. This week may we be like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and stand firm in our faith no matter how bad the consequences are or how good the outcome may seem. What matters in every situation is honoring God alone!



# Wednesday, April 24

## [DANIEL 3:13-30](#) | EVEN IF MY LIFE IS THREATENED

Welcome to part two of our story of the fiery furnace. As a quick review, our three heroes in the story are told to bow down to an idol of gold and worship it. That went against their faith in God and so they decided to stay standing amongst a whole army of people bowing to the ground on their faces. The king decreed a punishment for all those who would dare do such a thing. They would immediately be thrown into the blazing hot furnace.

We catch up with our heroes before a king whose veins in his neck and forehead are popping out because he is that furious. He cannot believe someone would dare disobey him. He is god and no one is more powerful than him. He believes this so much that he declares that there is no god that could rescue the three men from his hand. The three men stand strong in their faith and declare that the God they serve would be able to save them from the fiery furnace, but even if God chose not to rescue them, they would still worship God and not Nebuchadnezzar.

This response only fueled the fire of the king's anger and he called for the furnace to be heated 7 times hotter than before. It was so hot that the men that were tasked with throwing the three young men in the furnace died. So, our three heroes are thrown, bound with rope, into the fire. Their earthly life was certainly over, but wait. Nebuchadnezzar could not believe his eyes, for as he looked into the furnace, he saw 4 men walking in the mist of the fire. How in the world could the fire produce an extra person? He was in so much shock that he called for the people to come out of the fire. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came on out and the fourth person disappeared. It was clear that the one true God was in the fire rescuing these three young men, and they came out not even smelling like smoke.



I want us all to understand something. If God wants to save us he will save us. I've heard too many times people saying that they would lie to stay safe or that they would deny certain things so that they could live. We need to stop playing god and just trust the one true God. Denying God will never end up well for you and guess what? This life is not all there is. If we die because of our faith here, we will be alive in heaven. It's time for you and I to start seeing things the way God desires and to follow Him completely.

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**Song:**

“[Another in the Fire \(Acoustic\)](#)” by Hillsong UNITED

**Kid's Question:**

What would you have done if you were put into the position that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were put in? Would you lie to stay alive? Would you trust God to save you?

**Adult/Youth Question:**

Would you lie about your faith to stay alive? Why or why not?

**Prayer:**

Lord, we know there is more than this world. Help us to keep our eyes focused on the kingdom of God!

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# Thursday, April 25

## JOB 1:13-17 | EVEN IF ALL I OWN IS TAKEN

Many of us know the story of Job. We are going to just focus on the first parts of the story as we finish this week. Job lost everything and yet he praised God. Before we check out what he lost, let's look at what he had. In the beginning section of this chapter, it says that Job was blameless, upright, and feared God. He had 7 sons and 3 daughters and owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 oxen, 500 donkeys, and many servants. He was considered the greatest man among all the people. So, Job was blessed by God and a faithful man that desired to honor God with all He did.

In our passage today, he loses all his donkeys and oxen. 1,500 head of animals were stolen by the Sabeans and not only that, they killed the servants that were there with the animals and only one was able to escape and tell him. Next up, fire from heaven came and consumed 7,000 sheep and the servants that were out there watching them and only one servant was left to come share the news. Finally, another group of people from the Chaldean area came and took the 3,000 camels and again slaughtered the servants and only left one to share the news. In the blink of an eye, all his possessions were taken from him. What made Job rich in the eyes of the world was gone and he was left with 3 servants.

Some of us have faced destruction, probably not on this level. Some of us have faced a house fire, the farm crisis of the 80's, or some other destructive force. We have found ourselves without much of what we once had. What do we do? How do we respond when we lose what is viewed as valuable and important? Come back to the devotions tomorrow and see how Job responded and how we should respond as well. For today, just think about how you would respond if all of your possessions were taken from you in the blink of an eye.



# Friday, April 26

## [JOB 1:18-22](#) | EVEN IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO THOSE I LOVE

The story of Job's bad day did not stop with his possessions. Yesterday we heard about the animals and servants he lost, but today we dive into something closer to his heart. Again, he has 1 servant come to tell him that the house where all his children were was hit by a tornado and they all died. All 10 of his kids were killed in a moment and now what do you do?

Many of us have experienced traumatic times in our lives with the people we love. Some of us have walked beside loved ones who are struggling with health issues and others have lost loved ones. How do we respond when the people who are closest to us get sick or die? Job gives us a picture of how we can respond in a way that honors God above all.

In verse 20 we see that Job mourns. He tears his robe and shaves his head. These are actions of mourning, but Job doesn't stop these actions. He continues right into a time of worship. In his worship, he declares that everything he had was from the Lord and now the Lord has taken it back. May His name be praised. He didn't blame God for the actions, and He didn't get angry that his possessions and family members were gone. He grieved, mourned, and in all of it, praised God for everything. He could hold loosely to the things of this world because he knew whose they were. They were possessions of God and not his own, and so when they were taken away, he could turn quickly to God in praise. May we know that our spouse, our parents, our grandparents, our kids, and our grandkids are all a gift from God. They are the creation of God, and if they believe they are children of God and when God chooses to give and take, we can praise God for His faithfulness. The same goes for every possession we have. It is all a blessing from the Lord and for that we can give praise to God for whatever time we are blessed to have it.



# Saturday, April 27

## [JOB 2:7-10](#) | EVEN IF MY PHYSICAL HEALTH IS TAKEN

The enemy imagines that Job has a self-centered heart. He thinks that Job is only concerned about himself, so if something happened to the physical body of Job, then he would break. Satan couldn't be farther from the truth, for Job was blameless and righteous and loved his family and took care of his servants. Job acted the way he did because he was so in love with God and not himself or things. Satan can't understand that, but Job is showing what a blameless and righteous response is to the chaos around us.

In this passage Job loses his health. All we know is that Job had painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. He couldn't stand, sit, or lay down without there being pain. Job is sitting among a place of ashes, which would be another sign of his grieving process. Yes, Job grieves outwardly. Yes, Job is struggling through health issues, yet in all of this, He praises God. Not only is he experiencing physical pain and emotional pain, but then his wife turns on him and tells him to just curse God and die. She puts a layer of mental weight on him as the person who he committed his life to is attacking him as well and telling him to just give up.

Job again says that we should accept whatever God brings our way. Some of the things in life will be good and easy. We will feel blessed and have an abundance. Other times we will be faced with little and we may struggle to make it through in this world. Regardless of our circumstance, Job teaches us that our faith and declaration of God must be the same. We are to never blame God, but to trust Him in every situation. Give God praise when things are going well and give God praise when things are not going well. Our response is not situationally driven, but faithfully driven for the glory of God.

