

WALKING THROUGH STRUGGLES

Pastor Jeff Alexander + *Never Alone* + September 16, 2018

ISAIAH 43:1-3a

¹But now, this is what the Lord says—He who created you, Jacob, He who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. ³For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

FIRE is an ancient metaphor for struggle and suffering.

Struggle is INEVITABLE—it’s part of living in a world that’s BROKEN because of our rebellion.

The question is not *IF* we will struggle in life; the question is *WHEN* we struggle in life, how will we respond?

The story found in the Old Testament Book of Daniel chapter 3 about the ungodly King Nebuchadnezzar and the faithful Israelite men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—speak to GOD’S PRESENCE in the struggles of His people.

DANIEL 3:17

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.

As they trust in the Lord, these men know God will either save them FROM their suffering or He will save them THROUGH it.

DANIEL 3:21-25

So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace.

DANIEL 3:24-25

²⁴Then 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.” ²⁵He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

DANIEL 3:27

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.

PSALM 34:6-7

This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; He saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them.

The angel of the Lord, who walks with God’s people in the fire, is none other than JESUS.