

YOU'VE GOTTA SERVE SOMEBODY by Faber McMullen, Pastor of Union Grove Baptist Church ©

"You may serve the devil or you may serve the Lord, but you gotta serve somebody."

-Bob Dylan



TheProdigalFather.org

There's an old Bob Dylan song which was written about the time Dylan made a profession of faith in Christ. The name of the song is "You gotta serve somebody." He says, "Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord But you're gonna have to serve somebody".

The French theologian and philosopher Blaise Pascal said that man has a hole in himself that only God can fill. He didn't use

those exact words, but he said in essence that in man there is a "craving and a helplessness" that reveal a deep need for true happiness. Man tries to fill that craving with things that do not satisfy. That emptiness can only be filled by God Himself. ¹

This morning we will look at how dysfunctional and horrific things become when we serve anyone or anything other than the God of Abraham Isaac, and Jacob.

Stand as we read God's Word together,

Daniel Chapter 3 The King's Golden Image

- 1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which *was* sixty cubits *and* its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.
- 2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent *word* to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.
- 4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and *men of every* language,
- 5 that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.
- 6 "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire."

Last Sunday when we met we looked on in wonder as the gentile King, Nebuchadnezzar, rejoiced when Daniel told him the dream that he had dreamed and then told him the meaning of that dream. Remember he declared that there is "no God like the God of

¹ page 75 of Blaise Pascal's *Pensees* (New York; Penguin Books, 1966).]

Daniel".

Well, fifteen to sixteen years have now passed. Daniel is not found in this chapter. He was probably serving the king somewhere in the kingdom. We only see his three faithful companions, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael. In the time that has passed, Nebuchadnezzar has gone from almost... becoming a believer to being consumed by himself. It seems Nebuchadnezzar has gone from thinking he was just the golden head on the statue to believing he was made of pure gold.

We pick up the text this morning with Nebuchadnezzar taking the gift that God had given him: a vision of all the kingdoms and all the epochs of the time of the gentiles, and **Nebuchadnezzar takes God's gift and does perverse things with it.** He sets up a statue (probably of himself) and he demands that all worship it. Church so often people take what is a gift of God and they use it in perverse ways. What am I talking about?



Well, people use their God given time, talents, and treasure and end up so often using them for their own pleasure and own glory. Nebuchadnezzar took God's gift to him and he perverted it. An immediate thought that comes to my mind is how we see people take sex which is a beautiful gift of God to be enjoyed within a marriage and they pervert that gift into sordid pornography which relishes in abuse and domination. They worship the sex act instead of cherishing the relationship in which God meant for the act of love to be expressed. People also take bread and wine which the Bible says are a blessing from the Lord and they abuse them leading to gluttony and drunkenness. As Nebuchadnezzar perverted what God had given him so each of us can also pervert God's wonderful gifts.

The text tells us that the statue was weird and grotesque. Verse one tells us that it was 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. That is just plain ugly. It was horrifically skinny. That is a 1 to 10 ratio. Did you know that the body of a human is approximately a one to five ratio, Think of the beautiful statue of "David" which was designed and carved by Michael Angelo. It represents man as God made him; not to be worshipped but to be admired as having been made in God's own image. This caused me to think about weird statues that are being made even today that represent an odd form of a man. It seems that the further you get from the designs that God made for humans the more often we see amoral and hedonistic conduct that surrounds those images. Think of the weird images we see coming every summer out of Blackrock, Arizona. Has anyone in here heard of the "Burning Man Festival."?



Many of you don't even realize that tens of thousands of people meet every summer in the desert of Arizona. They build huge statues of men and/or women and they try to set

up their own utopia where they have anonymous sex with one another and they revel in and worship their humanness. At the end of celebrating themselves they catch the statue on fire as they pay homage to themselves and their own sensuality.



You see church, as King Solomon told us, "**There is nothing new under the sun.**" This stuff goes on and on and on. St. Paul tells us "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen." (Rom 1:25) These very things keep happening over and over and over again, and now they are happening now in our own country.

Well, Nebuchadnazzar made one of these weird statues, and he ordered everyone in the kingdom who was anybody to show up and worship it. And verse 7 tells us what they did. 7. Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* fell down *and* worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

The word I feel led to give this morning is that I have some observations about human-based worship. Church, you've gotta serve somebody. This is particularly important as we approach the election. No political party or political figure is going to save you. Keep your eyes focused on God. Every totalitarian dictator in world history has ended up setting themselves up to be worshipped. And not only that, their followers desired to worship them and did so. Remember our quote from Blaise Pascal just a moment ago, "**this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself**"



Let's just think for a moment about a few of these. Just look at Mao Tse Dong. He started out as sort of a folk hero, liberating the Chinese people from millennia of Emperor rule and worship. He was the people's person. But no sooner was he in power he began to first allow and then encourage that he be worshipped. This experiment in "self" resulted in the death by extermination of 78 million of his own people. You see human worship is the ultimate end of modernism and post-modernism. Modernism is a philosophy that says I will seek truth in rationality and I will be ruled by that." Post-Modernism says, "There is no truth other than what each person says is truth." This has been called moral relativism. It was first seen in the garden of Eden when **the serpent whispered into the human ear, "You can be like God."** "Guys we are in a society that is post-modern. It started in America 100 years ago and now it is the prevailing world view. It has come to full fruition.



Secondly, we are all familiar with images of Adolf Hitler. He too was the people's person. A certain rationale set in and Germans who had drifted from God's word began to say "to support Germany is to support God, and Hitler supports Germany; therefore if

you support Hitler, you are supporting God."

Now, we see the **ideas of post-modernism taking full fruition in the United States and they are being worshipped.** Just think about a few modern images we see. One is the irrational veneration of infanticide in the form of abortion, and the other is the worship of homosexual relationships. I bring these up because I want you to understand that mankind WILL worship something. These are not political issues. These are spiritual issues. Man either worships the God who is and obeys His Word, or mankind worships himself/herself and obeys his/her own self-created rules.



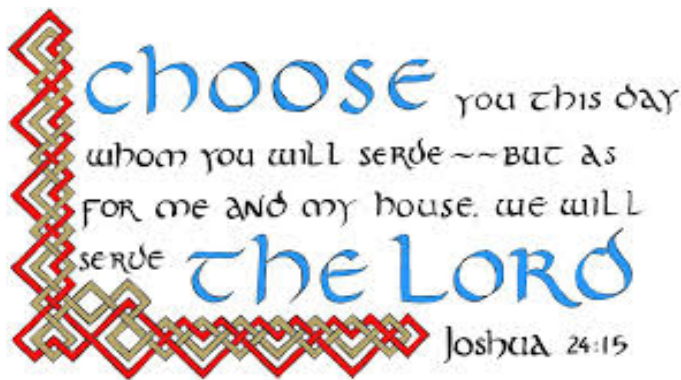
NOW: Why would the Lord want me to point these ideas out of the first part of Daniel Chapter 3?

I want you to notice how those who refuse to bow their knees to these false gods often end up being seen as the problem. Look back again at verse 6 "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire."

Wikileaks has revealed that major political participants now view Roman Catholics and evangelicals as a problem to be overcome. If their candidate and platform prevail in 10 days, the **lives of Roman Catholics and Evangelicals in the United States will become more difficult. We will be seen as "the problem"**. I will talk about this next week at length. But what I want to leave you with today is this. Regardless of the outcome of this election, we can claim the promises of God along with St. Paul in saying "I can do/bear/endure all things through Christ who strengthens us". (Philippians 4:13) and we can declare with the Psalmist, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my

stronghold. (Psalm 18:2) God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, Psalm 46:1-2 Church, I want to give you hope this morning as I cite the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "**Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isaiah 41:10)**

Young man or young lady in this congregation, who are you going to serve? You've gotta serve somebody. Mom, dad, married man, married woman, single man, single woman, who are you going to serve"? You've gotta serve somebody. You might ask me back, Faber, who are you going to serve? Well, I'll give you my answer by quoting Joshua the son of Nun. Congregation, "**Choose this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house. We will serve the Lord.**"



SALVATION

Invitation: It is in the heart of every man and woman to serve somebody. Today you've seen two choices: You can either serve yourself and your own rules, or you can serve the Holy One of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You can reach out today and

accept His salvation for you. Choose this day whom you will serve. If you've never made a profession of faith in Jesus and His finished work on the cross, I invite you today to do so.

JOIN UNION GROVE OR BE REBAPTIZED

Is it time for you to answer a call from God to be in harness with us here at Union Grove and to be committed to His work here in southern Grimes County? Perhaps you've sat on the sidelines for some time. Are you ready to say, "Preacher, God is calling me to be a part of what is being done here." I invite you to get off of the sidelines and get onto the home team.

REDEDICATE YOUR LIFE TO HIM

Perhaps you've wandered away from Him and He's calling you back today. Don't ignore his Spirit. Come back home today. If God is calling you in any of these directions and you would like to make that decision known today, then I'm going to ask you to come out of that pew and come up here and let's bow on our knees together and put these things in God's hands.

Come now as we sing. - I will trust, I will obey

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