

October 15, 2023 - Thriving in Babylon: The Furnace

Feel free to pick and choose some of the questions below to engage with as a group. Before you leave, be sure to spend some time going over the **Top 3** things your group members need to know.

Connect:

What's the hottest place you've ever been and what was it like?

Engage:

Read Daniel 3: 1-18 out loud together. (Options: split up the passage between 2-3 readers or go around the circle reading one verse per person.)

- Based on these verses, what do you think about King Nebuchadnezzar and the astrologers in his kingdom? (vs 8-12)
- What stands out to you in the response of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? (vs. 16-18)
- What modern day situations can you think of that put pressure on the followers of Jesus to "bow down" to something or someone other than God?
- Robert said, "Today our idols are our ideologies." What do you think this means? How do you see this being true?

Read Daniel 3:19-30

- If you were in the shoes of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego what would you be thinking as the furnace was being prepared for you?
- How does the appearance of the fourth man in the fire encourage you personally or challenge what you think about God?

Discuss the four big points of perspective in this message:

- The furnace is inevitable. (John 16:33)
- The furnace reveals who I am. (Proverbs 21:10)
- The furnace refines who I'm becoming. (1 Peter 1:6-7)
- When you are in the furnace, you're never alone. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

What is different about the two types of prayers?

(God, get me out vs. God, would you join me in...?)

Apply: Your excellence gives you influence. In what ways this week can you be "excellent" in obedience so that others may see your faith and God's faithfulness revealed in your life?

Prayer:

Lord, we understand that obedience can be costly. We know that in this world we will face fiery trials, but we also know that you have promised to never leave or forsake us. (Heb. 13:5). You know about our sufferings and trials and you enter into them WITH us. You are ever present in times of trouble. You are our refuge and strength. (Psalm 46:1). God, we know that you can do the impossible (Matt. 19:26), that You are the great deliverer (Isaiah 41:13) but "even if you don't" deliver us... YOU are our comfort and strength, and our prayer is that you use our struggles and trials to demonstrate and showcase YOUR glory.

Top 3:

Fall Fest | October 25 from 5-8pm | Fondren Park

Fall Fest is an annual event where Fondren Church families join with families in our neighborhood for a seasonal celebration. We're asking groups to supply the candy for this event. While out shopping, grab a bunch of bags of candy and you can drop them off at the Welcome Desk in the Commons. If your group would be interested in sponsoring a booth, games, or food, contact Moriah Carver at moriah.carver@fondrenchurch.com.

This year, we're praying to make even more meaningful connections to point people towards participating in the life of our church. We'll be canvassing the neighborhoods near Fondren Church with printed materials and invites to the Fall Fest. If you're interested in strategically making new friends and assisting in canvassing, reach out to Van Hardin at van.hardin@fondrenchurch.com

Day at the Museum | November 4 at 10am | Mississippi Civil Rights Museum

As we continue in the pursuit of racial reconciliation, join us for a day at the Civil Rights Museum. November 4 at 10:00am, be a part of a FREE guided tour (scavenger hunt provided for children). We are looking forward to this opportunity because understanding our history plays a vital role in us expressing our faith in love.

Thanks to the Lilly Endowment Inc., the Two Museums is able to host church members for museum tours. We want to take advantage of this great opportunity. Come with us as we grow in knowledge of Civil Rights, Mississippi, and our own history.

We will meet at the Two Museums at 10:00am. From there, you will be encouraged to experience the Civil Rights Museum at your own pace.

Matamoros Children's Home Mission Trip | November 18-21

Join us on mission as we serve our partner, Matamoros Children's Home. This is a great opportunity for us to roll up our sleeves and serve MCH. We are calling on men who are willing to spend a few days laboring to put a new roof on a building that will house 8-10 children and their house parents. The roof is our top priority, but we will pick up other manual labor tasks depending on our capacity and the needs of the children's home. No prior skill is required; there will be roles for every skill level and the more technical jobs will be led by MCH employees with our assistance.

You can get more information and register at fondrenchurch.com/events.