BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT

Daniel 3:18a

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But even if He does not (NASU), ***Daniel 3:18a***

Central message: Faith rests in who God is, not only in whether He grants our requests. We can trust His power and remain faithful even when the outcome is not what we hoped for.

Purpose: To encourage steadfast trust in God amid trials and unanswered prayer.

1. **Introduction: Is God Still God?**
It is easy to acknowledge God's goodness when prayers are answered as we desire or when He delivers us from calamity. The searching question is whether we still trust Him when He does not give the answer we seek.
The presentation uses the image of mountains and valleys, good times and bad times, day and night, to emphasize that God remains God through changing circumstances.

Opening question: Is our commitment to God dependent on receiving the outcome we want?

2. **Background: Faith Before the Furnace**
Scripture focus: ***Daniel 3:13–18***.

- Nebuchadnezzar erected an image and commanded everyone to bow down and worship it. Refusal carried the threat of a fiery furnace.
- The decree conflicted with obedience to God and became a severe test of faith for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
- The king challenged the possibility of divine rescue and expected the threat of death to secure their compliance.
- The three men refused to worship the image. They affirmed God's ability to deliver them while declaring that they would not compromise even if He did not.

Teaching emphasis: Their obedience was not conditional on a promise of escape. The words "but even if He does not" express steadfast faith under pressure.

3. **Main Point**: Trust Beyond the Outcome
God is able. The three men did not deny His power to rescue them from the furnace.

Faith does not dictate God's response. Their confidence in His ability did not become a demand that He act according to their expectations.

Obedience remains our response. They resolved not to serve the king's gods or worship the image, whatever happened.

4. **Biblical Examples**: **When the Answer Is Not What We Ask**

A. **David: Prayer and Acceptance**
Scripture: ***2 Samuel 12:16, 22–23***.
The request: David pleaded with God for his child, fasting and lying on the ground through the night.

The response: After the child died, David explained that he had fasted and wept while there was still hope that God might graciously allow the child to live. He acknowledged that continued fasting could not bring the child back.

Teaching emphasis: Earnest prayer can be followed by a painful outcome. David's response illustrates accepting what he could not reverse rather than denying the loss.

Reflection: How can we bring our deepest desires honestly to God while acknowledging what is beyond our control?

B. **Jesus Christ: Submission and Strength**
Scripture: ***Mark 14:36; Luke 22:43***.
The request: Jesus affirmed that everything was possible for the Father and asked that the cup be taken from Him.

The posture: *"Yet not what I will, but what you will" (**Mark 14:36**, NIV*).

The strengthening: ***Luke 22:43***: an angel appeared from heaven and strengthened Him.

Teaching emphasis: Submission to God's will does not mean withholding our requests. The presentation highlights divine strengthening even when the requested suffering is not removed.

Reflection: Can we pray both for relief and for strength to remain faithful?

C. **Apostle Paul: Sufficient Grace**
Scripture: ***2 Corinthians 12:7–9***.
The request: Paul described a thorn in his flesh and pleaded with the Lord three times to take it away.

The answer: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (**2 Corinthians 12:9***).

The response: Paul spoke of boasting in his weaknesses so that Christ's power might rest on him.

Teaching emphasis: God's answer may be sustaining grace rather than the removal of the difficulty. Weakness need not mean the absence of His power.

Reflection: Where do we need grace to endure, as well as prayer for circumstances to change?

5. **Application: Remaining Faithful**

- **Pray honestly.** David, Jesus, and Paul brought specific and deeply felt requests to God.

- **Refuse to make obedience conditional.** Follow the resolve of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: trust God without making faithfulness depend on rescue.
- **Submit the outcome to God.** Let the prayer of Jesus shape our posture: not merely our will, but the Father's will.
- **Look for sustaining strength.** Jesus was strengthened by the angels and there was sufficient grace for Paul even when suffering was not removed.
- **Hold to the assurance of God's love.** Let the closing passage from Romans speak into hardship rather than treating hardship as proof of abandonment.

Personal response: What request, disappointment, or trial makes it hardest for me to say, *"But even if He does not"?* What would faithfulness look like in that situation?

Conclusion: Nothing Can Separate Us – ***Romans 8:31, 35, 37–39***.
Trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and the sword cannot separate believers from Christ's love. Neither death nor life, the present nor the future, nor anything else in creation can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Our confidence rests not in an untroubled life, but in God's enduring love. The God whom we trust in deliverance is still God when the answer is different from what we desire. God is able. His grace is sufficient. His love endures. But even if He does not, we will remain faithful.

"All things work together for our good!" – ***Romans 8:28***.