

Week 36a – Tough Questions – What Happens if God Doesn't Show Up? Part 1

Hey everybody – Tim Perry, pastor of Spiritual Discovery at Christ Community Church coming at you with Week 36 of Tough Questions.

I've got something I want to talk with you about this week. It has to do with God showing up whenever we're in a jam. Have you ever been in a situation where you need God to act fast? Sometimes He does – sometimes He doesn't. Well, what happens if He doesn't show up?

Well, I'm going to read you a couple of things out of the Book of Daniel. It's from today's reading out of the chronological Bible.

8 At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. 9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live forever! 10 Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, 11 and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. 12 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up." Daniel 3:8-12

So there is a big showdown staged here between these Jewish guys, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and King Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar wants everyone to worship him. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego worship only Yahweh. So the big showdown is set. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were called in to give an account of this to Nebuchadnezzar and here's what they said.

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 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. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." Daniel 3:16-18

Nebuchadnezzar was furious and if you know how the story plays out, they're thrown into a fiery furnace and their resolve to worship God only was put to the ultimate test.

Well, this last weekend, I was with a bunch of college age kids and high school age kids at a concert. While I was there, I thought it would be interesting to ask them this question about God and what would happen if God didn't show up. I got a lot of really interesting answers when I asked around about it.

So if you have every thought about this question – does God every let you down – does God always show up when you ask him to? And if God doesn't come through, what does that does to your faith?

Let's listen to a few of these guys and then I'll come back at the end with a wrap up. It's some pretty interesting stuff – give it a listen.

Woman: "I feel like if I were in that situation of like whether I was going to bow down to someone else or die, I feel like they didn't necessarily know that God was going to show up, but they had faith that if He showed up that was His plan. And if He didn't, maybe the plan was just to show that they were willing to die for something that was – why would they die for something that they didn't believe in. So I think that relating that back to my own life – if I'm praying for something and maybe God doesn't necessarily act the way I think He is going to, it's not the plan that I thought was going to happen and I go through it anyways because He has a plan to use me through it.

First Man: "So what would I do if God didn't show up? One of the best ways that I would describe that would be with a song that I know. It goes: *All your promises won't let go of me, all your promises won't let go of me* so I'm just going to cling to the promise of Jesus that He'll always be with us whenever. And also a verse in Hebrews that really speaks to me is *Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we don't see*. So even though I don't see it, I know that He's preparing a way for me and I know that the momentary troubles that I'm going through will achieve for me an eternal glory that will far outweigh them all."

Second Man: So what would I do if God didn't show up when I thought he would? Well, I know a lot of people would say or at least they would think that it would shake my faith, but in the end I know that God always knows what's best for me and what's best for the world and if Him not showing up for me when I thought he should – if I let that shake my faith and then it would just make me doubt everything and I wouldn't be able to live my life. So the thing that I know is that I'm just a small little gear in God's plan – in his giant machine and Him acting or doing what He does with my life is making everything better – so I would have faith until the end. If God didn't show up, then I know that I would be with Him and I would just do my best to let God work through me and accomplish His will."