

STANDING IN A BOWING WORLD

13

Objective: To show the importance of obedience to God in an immoral world
Thesis Worship is only relevant when God is obeyed totally
Subject: Worship
Text Daniel 3

ATTENTION

Everybody knows how to bow.

The dictionary explains bowing in this way:

1. To bend the head or upper body as a sign of respect or greeting
2. To submit to pressure or someone's demand.

Bowing is an expression of submission!

And whether you believe it or not everybody bows and bowing can be both negative and positive.

Bowing that is positive is paying homage to one's Creator. The Bible refers to this as "Worshipping the Creator".

Bowing that is negative is paying homage to what the Creator created. (Isaiah 44:13-15)

NEED

The world demands we bow our knee and worship the god of the age.

Satan has caused the believer to lower his standard of life by influencing him to accept the lifestyle of worldly luxury and temporary convenience.

1. He makes the drug addict think that the drug is needed.
2. He makes the alcoholic think that a sip won't hurt.
3. He makes the dope man think that he's making a living.
4. He makes a single woman think that she has to have some physical intimacy.
5. He makes the single man think that he has to be a player.
6. He makes the children think that they have a right to talk back to parents.

7. He makes a couple think that it's okay to live together as long as they're thinking about marriage.
8. He makes a married man think that it's okay to sneak around.
9. He makes a married woman think that it's okay to spend more time with the girls than she does at home.
10. He makes the church think that sin is okay because our God is a forgiver.

And you will agree with me that we've begun to bow at times when we should be standing.

Many of us have bowed to the images that the world had placed before us.

The world has camouflaged sin and renamed it:

- Fornication is called safe sex
- Shacking up is called common law marriage.
- Homosexuality and lesbianism are called sexual preference. GO ON!!!

ILLUSTRATION:

History reports a conversation held by a man and Abraham Lincoln about standards. Abraham Lincoln asked the question, "How many legs does a COW have?" "4," the man said.

Mr. Lincoln then asked, "If we CALL the tail a leg, then how many legs does a COW have?"

"That's easy," said the man. "The cow would have 5 legs."

Abraham Lincoln said to the man, "Now that's where you're wrong: just CALLING a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg."

APPLICATION:

The point is this: Sin no matter what you call it, is sin.

- If it is grey it is sin
- If it is black it is sin
- Done in the dark it is sin
- Done in the light it is still sin

The church must take a stand against the images of sin and of the world.

As young people we must have standards that cause us to Stand up, Stand out, stand down and stand in.

The song writer George Duffield admonishes us:

*“Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you;
You dare not trust your own.” GO ON!!!*

SATISFACTION

But by recognizing God’s ability and authority, and determining to obey Him, Christians today can refuse the sinful demands of a bowing world and stand when the whole world bows.

King Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon during the time that Jerusalem was taken captive.

Daniel and his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego found favor in the eyes of the king.

They had gone from slaves to governors in just a few years. (Relate story in Daniel 1)

But just like anyone who lives captive in a land that is not his home, they ran into a problem.

They served a God who hears, sees and understands but Nebuchadnezzar and his subjects served a god who hears not, sees not and understands not. GO ON!!

As the drama unfolds

The king set up a golden statue of himself. Then he declared “National Worship My Image Day” throughout the kingdom.

The scholars say that his reason for building the image was because he wanted to unify his kingdom and promote his authority as king.

So the decree was issued throughout the Kingdom that when the music was played, that all would bow down and worship the golden image that the king had set up.

Daniel 3:7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and* worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

It must be noted that the severe punishment was for not bowing and worshipping.

The order seemed innocent, but it compromised a belief.

The act of bowing to the image was understood by the King to be an act of worship; homage which should be rendered to God alone.

Satan has come along and caused us to compromise our faith in Christ by encouraging us to do and accept things that appear to be okay on the surface, but in reality are acts against our God.

And the number one way he gets us to do this is by promoting the notion that since everybody else is doing it, you might as well go with the flow!

There's an image up before our children that presents Harry Potter as acceptable.

It seems innocent on the surface, but how can it be when Harry Potter is associated with terms such as sorcery, witchcraft, casting spells, communicating with the dead (necromancy). (Galatians 5:19-21)

Michael D. O'Brien, author of *A Landscape with Dragons: The Battle for Your Child's Mind*, says, speaking about the Harry Potter books, "The series uses the symbol world of the occult as its primary metaphor. This has the potential of lowering a child's guard to the actual occult activity in the world around us, which is everywhere and growing."

I declare again that the church must take a stand against the images of sin.

As young people we must have standards that cause us to Stand up, Stand out, stand down and stand in.

PUNCH: Don't you be bowing at standing time.

In verses 12 & 13 it was reported to the king that when the music played, the 3 Hebrew boys did not bow to the image.

The Chaldeans were attempting to chew the Hebrew children up and spit them out.

I want you to know that you'll lose some friends when you take a stand. GO ON!!

But that's okay!

It's okay because you have taken a stand for right!

- Nelson Mandella stood up against apartheid
- Martin Luther took his stand against the atrocities that were leveled at the people of his color.
- And the list can go on!!!

But it is extremely lucid that the one who stands for the right never loses! Hallelujah!!

The three Hebrew boys stood out!

So much so that the king would make spectacles of them while at the same time allowing them another chance to conform to the decree.

Daniel 3:15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; *well*: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace...

One of the keys to this success story for the three Hebrew boys is this:

Now not only would they stand out, but they would STAND IN for each other.

They had each other's support.

- Sometimes we have to intercede for the husband who bows to drinking or the wife who bows to smoking
- or the child who bows to rebellion
- or the friend who bows to fleshly weaknesses.

Punch: In this evil world, we need each other's support. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

In verses 17& 18 they talked as if they had a made-up mind.

They talked with assurance.

They knew that God was able to deliver them.

But if it was God's will that they burned to death, then so be it:

- I will not bow and worship your image.
- I know about the furnace.
- I know the consequences.
- But I will not bow!

They took a stand. They **STOOD UP** for what they believed.

The Advent Messengers sang:

*“Stand up for Jesus no matter what’s wrong
Stand up for Jesus if even death comes along
Stand up for Jesus no matter what’s wrong
Stand up! Stand up! Stand up strong!”*

VISUALIZATION

It is recorded that the men who took the 3 boys to the fiery furnace were burned because the flames were so hot, but the 3 boys fell down into the furnace.

And I’m told that the king went quickly to the furnace.

He looked into the furnace:

Daniel 3:24 ... Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

Daniel 3:25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

It is worth noting that they had to endure the ordeal of being thrown into the fire.

There is no suggestion here or elsewhere in Scripture that the believer will be cushioned against trouble and suffering except by the presence of the Lord with him in his crucible.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were able to stand when the whole world around them bowed because God was with them and they were with Him.

- They were able to stand in spite of the accusations being thrown at them from the Chaldeans.
- They were able to stand in spite of the furious confrontation with Nebuchadnezzar.
- They were able to stand because they knew God was able to deliver them.
- And they were able to stand because they were determined to obey Him even if He didn’t deliver them.

Rich Mullins: “You meet the Lord in the furnace a long time before you’ll meet Him in the sky.”

ACTION

The God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is alive today.

They stood for Him and He stood for them and they were promoted because they stood up in a bowing world

It’s standing time.

It’s time for the church to lead a massive invasion into Satan’s camp and take back everything that he has stolen.

- Somebody needs to take back his/her dignity.
- Somebody needs to take back his/her family.
- Somebody needs to take back your loved ones from off the block. GO ON!!

Satan came to kill, steal and destroy.

But when the church can come together and be in one accord we can go down to Satan’s camp and take back everything he took from us.

Tonight I’m taking back my health; I’m taking back my strength; I’m standing up; I’m taking a stand!

Is there anybody here who’ll stand with me?

- Can’t bow down to worldly mess
- Can’t bow down to guns and gangs
- Can’t bow down to drugs and thugs
- I won’t bow to crack cocaine
- And I won’t bow to sickness and pain
- Can’t bow down to stinkin drinkin
- Can’t bow down to abusive men
- Can’t bow down to wayward women
- Can’t bow down to sin in my life
- Can’t bow down to misery and strife
- I’ve bowed before, but I’ve made up my mind that I won’t bow no more

The only time I’ll bow down is when I’m on my knees praying to God

ACTION

Tonight as we sing the song, I Have Decided to Follow Jesus, if it is your desire to stand in a bowing world, please join us at the altar as we pay homage to the God of the three Hebrew boys.

1. (Song must be sung as the movement is made to the altar)
2. (Offer prayer in connection to what was preached)
3. (After the prayer make the following appeal)

THE CALL

- A. Determine before God tonight that you will serve Him no matter what circumstance you might find yourself in? (One Hand)
- B. Determined to know the One who can give you the determination to stand in the midst of trials? (Both Hands)
- C. Determined to stand when the whole world bows? (Shake the hands of the preacher)

THOUGHT

Decisions can take you out of God's
will but never out of His reach.