Avoiding The Currents of Compromise

Daniel 1:8 (1-21)

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

Introduction

ILLUSTRATION: In the early part of the 20th Century, an American ship wrecked off the Sicily Isle near the coast of England. According to the Captain’s log, the seas had been calm and the weather clear.

Sometime after the Captain wrote that entry in his log book, they ship ran into some treacherous “cross currents” and drifted way off course. Before the captain and crew even realized what had happened, the ship crashed into the jagged rocks jutting up out of the sea. All aboard were lost.

Life has often been compared to “Sailing the Seas.” Sometimes sailing is SMOOTHE in the Sea of Life.......but at other times it is very treacherous and dangerous.

On the Sea of Life, there are many “cross currents” we must beware of.........and some of the most dangerous currents are The Currents of Compromise.
I’m sure at some time or another all of you have seen the map of the Graveyard of the Atlantic, which shows where hundreds of ships met their doom off of North Carolina’s Outer Banks.

If someone could possibly make a map listing all the names of people, who’s lives were “shipwrecked” by COMPROMISE, I wonder how many names would be listed. Worse yet....... I wonder how many of those would be the names of people you and I knew personally.

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**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “C O M P R O M I S E?”**

According to Webster, To Compromise means, “to settle a matter by making mutual concessions” “to blend ideas for the mutual benefit of others” “to make a shameful or disreputable concession.”

Is it always wrong to COMPROMISE? NO, as a matter-of-fact, sometimes it is necessary.

For example: In a marriage relationship it is not unusual for a husband and wife to have differing opinions on matters such as FINANCES or HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES or PARENTING ISSUES. If the husband and wife are not willing to make some compromises and concessions on those matters, division will reign in the home.......and “no house divided against itself can stand.”

In matters of OPINION, we all must be willing to make some concessions from time to time.

BUT WHEN IT COMES TO GOD’S WILL, COMPROMISE IS NEVER ACCEPTIBLE!!!!
Today we are looking at the life of one of the most honorable and respectable men in the entire Bible, a young man named, DANIEL.

As we study the life of this noble young man, and three of his Hebrew friends, let’s see what we can learn about AVOIDING THE CURRENTS OF COMPROMISE.

First of all........let’s look at:

I. THEIR COMPROMISING SITUATION

1. DANIEL was a teenager when his country collapsed under SIN and MORAL DECAY. But Daniel was not a typical teenager. Rather than “sowing his wild oats” and “testing the boundaries”............DANIEL maintained his honor, integrity and undying devotion to GOD.

2. It was during his teenage years, his people were carried off into captivity in BABYLON.

Let’s pick up the record in VERSES 1-7

3. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego found themselves in a situation where they could either COMPROMISE their beliefs and just go along with the flow.............or........they could stand their ground and live for the Lord.
4. Consider the Compromising Situation they found themselves in:

(A) They were in **A NEW HOME.** vs. 1, 2

These four boys had been born and raised in or around Jerusalem, the Holiest City on earth. There they were constantly reminded of God and His importance in life.

The Temple was there. The Holy Priests of God were there. The Prophets of God often came there to proclaim God’s message to His people.

Now they are over a 1,000 miles away in a new home. No temple, No priests, No prophets of God. Separated from all Godly Influence, these four young men are surrounded by heathen worship and false gods.

Not only were they in a **NEW HOME,**

(B) They were being taught **A NEW WAY OF LIFE** vs. 3, 4

They were being taught a NEW language and a whole NEW way of looking at life. All their lives, they had been taught to look at life from a Godly point of view, now they are being taught to look at life from a GODLESS point of view.

They were being taught that all the things they had learned when they were younger is wrong, outdated, old-fashioned and irrelevant. They were under extreme pressure to adopt a whole new way of thinking.
The so-called “intellectual elite” of our society is trying to get us to do the same thing: We are being told to accept homosexuality and alcohol usage and filthy language and perverted sex as normal human behavior.

But folks let me tell you something: GOD has not changed his MIND about a single thing! What God said, 4,000 years ago........3,000 Years ago..........or 2,000 years ago still stands! It doesn’t matter how “knowledgeable” this world becomes in its own eyes..........it doesn’t matter if the whole world stands against GOD.......GOD’S WORD will remain true!

These four young men were in A NEW HOME
.....they were being taught A NEW WAY OF LIFE and thirdly.........

(C) They were offered A NEW DIET. v. 5

All their lives, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego had lived by the strict dietary laws handed down by God.

By Jewish standards, the king’s food and drink that was being offered to them was likely UNCLEAN.

In all likelihood, the MEAT that was being offered to them was the same MEAT that was offered to their false gods............so to eat it would have SPIRITUALLY DEFINED THEM.
(D) They were given **A NEW IDENTITY** vs. 6, 7

Nebuchadnezzar wanted these four young men to completely forget who they were......and assume a whole new identity.

It is real interesting when you look at the Hebrew meaning of each of their names, and the Babylonian meaning of their new names.

**DANIEL** meant, “God is my judge”  His name was changed to **Belteshazzar**, which meant, Bel Will Protect.

**HANANIAH** meant, “God is gracious”  His name was changed to **Shadrach**, which meant, “Inspiration of the Sun.”

**MISHAEL** meant, “God is without equal.”  His name was changed to **Meshech**, which meant, “Belonging to Aku.”

**AZARIAH**, meant, “The Lord is my helper.”  His name was changed to **Abednego**, which meant, “Servant of Nego”

5. What does one do when he finds himself in a **COMPROMISING SITUATION** such as this?  Well, he can do one of two things:

-He can either take the LOW ROAD and COMPROMISE everything he believes in.  OR......He can take THE HIGH ROAD and refuse to compromise his beliefs.

6. These FOUR HEBREW TEENAGERS chose to do the latter.
II. THEIR COURAGEOUS STAND

READ: DANIEL 1: 8-17

1. Think how easy it would have been for these four young men to COMPROMISE everything they believed in:

   a. It would have been so easy for them to have said, “Well everybody else is doing it, we might as well do it too.”

   b. OR........they could have said, “We will obey the KING “outwardly”.........but “inwardly” we’ll still keep our faith in God.

2. But these four young men were wise enough to realize that if they made ANY CONCESSIONS at all........that they would get caught in the Currents of Compromise that would eventually lead to the un-doing of their FAITH.

3. So together, these four young men took A COURAGEOUS STAND and determined to remain faithful and true to God, no matter what the consequences.

   You see, The Babylonians could change their homes. change their education change their diet and change their names

   BUT........they couldn’t CHANGE THEIR HEARTS!!!!
4. Just how important was this courageous stand? Well, their un-willingness to compromise on this matter of eating the King’s royal food, gave them the resolve not to compromise later in life.

-For example, in DANIEL 3, we find Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego being thrown into the fiery furnace, because they refused to compromise their faith by bowing to the idol of Nebuchadnezzar.

-In DANIEL chapter 6, Daniel, who was 80 years old at the time, was willing to risk dying in THE LION’S DEN, rather than compromise his faith in GOD.

In both situations, GOD gave HIS DIVINE PROTECTION and miraculously spared their lives.

5. The only way to AVOID THE CURRENTS OF COMPROMISE is to RESIST THE CURRENT by taking a bold and courageous stand for GOD........like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

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A P P L I C A T I O N and CONCLUSION

So what does A SITUATION four Hebrew Young men found themselves in thousands of years ago have to do with you and me?

Actually, it has a lot to do with us.

COMPROMISING SITUATIONS present themselves to us all the time:
-AT WORK You may be real tempted to give less than your best or “cut corners” every way you can, because you don’t think they’re paying you enough money or because you don’t like your boss or supervisor.

-WHEN YOU’RE WITH FRIENDS (especially non-Christian friends) You may be real tempted to act like them and talk like them, and indulge in their sinful habits, under the pretense you are trying to have an influence on them........when in reality, they have influenced you by pulling you down to their level.

-WHEN YOU’RE OUT OF TOWN it is very easy to make compromises ........after all, no one knows you from Adam, and the chances you will run into anyone who does know you are slim and none.

-WHEN YOUR FINANCES ARE TIGHT it is very easy to make compromises by withholding your giving to the Lord, or by getting some extra money in an unethical manner.

-WHEN A MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITE SEX pays some attention to you, or seems to listen to you and understands you better than your mate, it is very easy to compromise your faith, and your marriage relationship.
Think of a COMPROMISING SITUATION as a “fork in the road.” You have a choice as to which way you will go.

.........You can either take THE LOW ROAD.......by doing whatever is the easiest, what everybody else is doing, what is the least risky.

.........OR you can take THE HIGH ROAD......by refusing to compromise your faith, your integrity and your honor, no matter what the consequences.

ILLUSTRATION: Back in the 19th Century, KING ALBERT of ENGLAND issued a DECREE to all citizens of ENGLAND. The Edict read:

Citizens of England, the King will no longer provide protection to those who travel THE LOW ROAD. Only those who travel the HIGH ROAD, the KING’S HIGHWAY, will be guaranteed protection on their journey.

The same is true for you and me. Any time you or I take the LOW ROAD of COMPROMISE, we have no guarantee of God’s protection, because the LOW ROAD takes us out of God’s will.

The only assurance we have of GOD’S PROTECTION is to take THE HIGH ROAD.......THE KING’S HIGHWAY.

Brothers and sisters, in this time when the moral fabric of America is decaying before our very eyes and so many determine what’s right and wrong by what is socially acceptable, may we who are GOD’S PEOPLE take the high road by standing firm on God’s Word!!!