

# *Taking Your Faith Private*



*Part 4 – Isn't Persecution Good?*

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## *What's the Issue?*

1. As Christians, we are called to speak (about) the Truth.
2. As Christians, we are called to live as witnesses to Christ, ambassadors to the world, and to remain distinct from culture.
3. We feel the pressure to remain silent, or to live out our faith privately, but we are largely unaware of the reasons for this pressure, or why it is happening.
4. Many of us have come to accept the premises (ideas) that contribute to our silence.

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## *The Series So Far...*



Week 1: Stigma and Silence

Week 2: Tolerance and Intolerance

Week 3: What's Wrong With Keeping Silent?

**TONIGHT: Isn't Persecution Good for the Church?**

Next Week: How Should We Live as Light?

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**Last Week**



- Why Do We Need To Speak Out At All? Is it really a problem if we keep our faith to ourselves?
- Aren't our good actions enough? Can't we just witness through our actions?
- Haven't we done enough harm in speaking publicly? Aren't some of the worst expressions of Christianity magnified by the media's ability to swoop in and report our bad conduct?

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## Stigma



How Are Stigmas Formed  
and Disseminated?



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**Tonight**



- **Isn't Persecution Good for the Church?**
  - Does the silencing of Christians in the West constitute persecution?
  - Is the silencing of Christians in the West the type of persecution that fuels the church elsewhere?
  - Has there been any precedent for the church exploding in growth when it has self-censored itself?
  - Is this persecution, or are we becoming ashamed of the Gospel in favor of our own comfort and security?

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## **Daniel 3:1-6**

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”

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**Daniel 3:12-14; 16-18**

“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.”

Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? . . .

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 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. 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.”



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**Daniel 3:24-26**



“Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren’t there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?”

They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.”

He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!”

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## **Daniel 3:26-30**

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.”

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.



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### THOUGHTFUL



Test everything, hold on to what is good...

Many hours of research are dedicated to prepare each one of our series. We explore the scriptures, the breadth of Christian scholarship, contemporary authors, and consider a wide range of sources outside of our faith.

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### FAITHFUL



Set apart Christ as Lord...

We all have questions. But we learn together in a way that tackles the deepest part of our doubts while making sure that our purpose is clear: to always know the reason for the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, and to be prepared to share that answer with everyone who asks us about that hope.

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