



SERMON NOTES

SURGE

Heroes Needed

Pastor Carl Toti
April 2-3, 2016

SURGE: (a sudden powerful forward or upward movement, especially by a crowd or by a natural force such as the waves or tide).

“Søren Kierkegaard wrote, “Twelve men united on being Christians have recreated the face of the world.”

Philippians 2:15 (KJV)

“That ye may be blameless and harmless (uncontaminated), the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; “

“We are at a truly Augustinian moment, for St. Augustine died in north Africa with the Vandals at the gates, and he had lived through the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in A.D. 410, the date that is the most celebrated milestone in the decline and fall of Rome’s Western empire after eight hundred years of Roman dominance.” –OS Guinness Renaissance

Daniel was an Old Testament hero. He remained faithfully devoted to God in crooked and perverse generations. What lessons can we learn from him?

IDOLATRY

Daniel 1:1-4 (TLB)

“1 Three years after King Jehoiakim began to rule in Judah, Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem with his armies,² and the Lord gave him victory over Jehoiakim. When he returned to Babylon, he took along some of the sacred cups from the Temple of God and placed them in the treasury of his god in the land of Shinar.³ Then he ordered Ashpenaz, who was in charge of his palace personnel, to select some of the Jewish youths brought back as captives— young men of the royal family and nobility of Judah—⁴ and to teach them the Chaldean language and literature. “Pick strong, healthy, good-looking lads,” he said; “those who have read widely in many fields, are well informed, alert and sensible, and have enough poise to look good around the palace.”

Scripture condemns idolatry, not atheism. Because everyone worships! Man was created with a need to worship – something or someone – if not God then an idol.

Idolatry is the elevation of a preliminary concern to ultimacy. Something essentially finite is given infinite significance. The conflict between the finite and the infinite leads to a conflict of ultimates. Paul Tillich’s preferred definition of idolatry is found in Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 1:16:

God has been desecrated in our culture. We have replaced the sacred with the secular. What's good is bad; what's bad is good. Right is wrong and wrong is right. Up is down and down is up. Normal is weird and weird is normal.

IDENTITY

Daniel 1:5-7 (TLB)

"⁶ The king assigned them the best of food and wine from his own kitchen during their three-year training period, planning to make them his counselors when they graduated. ⁶ Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. ⁷ However, their superintendent gave them Babylonian names, as follows: Daniel was called Belteshazzar; Hananiah was called Shadrach; Mishael was called Meshach; Azariah was called Abednego."

All of these young men had a godly upbringing evidenced by how they stood by their convictions. They were all given godly names that would remind them of God. The name Daniel means "God is my judge." The name Hananiah means "Beloved of the Lord." The name Mishael means "God is without equal." The name Azariah means "God is my helper."

But their names were changed so that they would be reminded of a pagan god. Daniel's name became Belteshazzar, meaning "the god Baal favors." Hananiah's name became Shadrach, meaning "illuminated by the sun god." Mishael's name was changed to Meshach, meaning "who is like unto Venice." Azariah's name was changed to Abednego, meaning "the servant of Nebo."

"It's not that the gospel has lost its power but that the church has lost its belief in the power of the Gospel." –CT

IMMORALITY

Daniel 1:8 (NKJV)

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

A PURPOSEFUL heart or a mind made up – possess three traits.
COMMITMENT, CONVICTION & CONFIDENCE

Soon, as the legalization and then normalization of polyamory (romantic involvement with more than one person at the same time), polygamy, pedophilia and incest follow the same logic as that of abortion and homosexuality, the socially destructive consequences of these trends will reverberate throughout society until the social chaos is beyond recovery. We can only pray there will be a return to God and sanity before the terrible sentence is pronounced: "God has given them over" to the consequences of their own settled choices.

Guinness, Os (2014-07-01). Renaissance: The Power of the Gospel However Dark the Times (p. 20). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.