

STORIES

Do you like listening to stories?

Hanna does; evening ritual

“Elmer the Elephant”; colourful, not grey

Understand? 8 months; no concept of “being different”

Snuggles up, relaxes in Dad`s arms, but highly alert;. Colours, Dad`s voice, the turning of pages ,

Story not just about words, but an experience. Comfortable, at peace, trust, safe

Elmer already thirty years ago

This is a OLdER story:

Yet, God wants to tell it again,

Encourage: Sit back, listen not with head only

PRAY: invite you to speak to each (bigger than our understanding, higher than our thoughts)

Corinne set scene: Back drop :

God allowed conquer,

God gave favour , knowledge, special skills GOD IS IN CONTROLE

- in ch 3: same main characters:

Picture N.”King of the universe”; flew into rage,

- sneering at other gods

- ready to kill; fiery furnace as tool

- again: 3 young men from Jerusalem, bright, quick to learn, trained to serve Neb. highly regarded ; accepted new names, asked for alternative to food

Picture Not willing to bow and worship N..... clear NO; DETERMINED

STICKING OUT DRAWING LINE CLASH OF POWER IS INEVITABLE

- our God is able to save, even if he does not, we will worship only Him

v.23: "So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, securely tied, fell into the roaring flames"

- v.24+25 N. jumped up in amazement: "Look, I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed" ;

calls 3 out, praises God as unique, only God who can rescue like that (no more sneering).

Too fast; Unbelievable/impossible/unreal

A piece is missing: what happened in the oven

Picture

Look at picture;

what do you say/think

Memory of American lethal injection, spitting; revenge

Regret? About future, about their actions? Bowed physically only (friends did)

3 friends spoke: "MAY YOU BE BLESSED AND REVERED, LORD, GOD OF OUR ANCESTORS, MAY YOUR NAME BE HELD GLORIOUS FOREVER"

LOOKING TO God, not asking for help,

- "God of our ancestors": a rich phrase:

- God of all time: of past, of future into all eternity

- our nation, covenant, relations, promises, gave guidelines, led, saved, miraculously fed and watered

- hope of future "forever"

Acknowledged as SOVEREIGN GOD, GOD OVER ALL ONLY TRUE GOD

God who made everything also judge of everything

“your ways are right, your judgements are true”: v.28b - 29

- not a general acknowledgement, but personal: **ALL that you have done for us**
- because of our sins: WE deserting you, not listening, breaking covenant
- not: “our leaders”, “previous generations”, WE
- reaping justice, **GOD OF JUSTICE**

GOD OF MERCY

- **“treat us in accordance with your great mercy” don` t abandon us forever,** remember covenant, for the sake of your own name
- no way we can now worship you as you have back in J: no temple no prophets, no sacrifices
- we are sorry , we humble ourselves, no right to open our mouths in complaint

INSTEAD: bursting into PRAISE

May you be blessed, praised and extolled forever

- READ v 57-63 (too long to be a song)
- Spontaneous, yet also in control: focus their mind: bless the Lord, **fire + heat**

READ v 82 – 88; PEOPLE!

Bless the Lord, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego: WE need to start

At that point

N. calls 3 out, amazing

Neb confesses there is **ONLY ONE TRUE GOD**

A big story, nearly unbelievable; apart from it`s repetitiveness

Apart from Corrie ten Boom, Shabnam, determined long before
TRUE STORY, OUR STORY, FOR Here and NOW. God speaks, we listen

Difficult times, confusion, what to believe, hot under collar +

2 Simple Questions:

- do we believe in all powerful God?
- Am I determined to act on my believe?

CALL TO PRAISE DURING NEXT MONTHS; are we determined?