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GRACE NOTES Radio Program

THEME: Taking a stand - part 1

SONGS: GOD IS ABLE

I'VE NEVER BEEN OUT OF HIS CARE

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. Taking a stand for Jesus Christ has always resulted in persecution – and it's getting worse. It's been reported that more Believers were killed in the 20th century than in all 19 centuries after the birth of Christ combined. Today on Grace Notes, Barbara Sandbek will begin the Biblical story of what four teenaged boys endured because of their stand for the Lord. We pray that this true story of faith and obedience will encourage you to do the same.

How would you like it if you were at home one night and some soldiers burst through your door, arrested you, and took you from your family to a far away land to work for the enemy?

This is what happened to four teenage Jewish boys. Here's the history behind it. According to Deuteronomy chapters 28-30, God had promised blessings to the people of Israel if they obeyed Him, and punishment if they didn't. But they, as a whole, abandoned the Lord God and turned to idols. Daniel 1:2 says...

The LORD delivered Jehoiakim, King of Judah, into Nebuchadnezzar's hand.

King Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful ruler of the time, decided he wanted some of the elite young Jewish men to serve him in his palace. Among these were the four teens, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. They were no ordinary young men. Though the majority of the Israelites had turned from God, they had remained faithful. I thought of how often faithful Believers have to suffer because of the sins of the unfaithful ones, but Psalm 37:28 says...

The Lord will not FORSAKE his faithful ones.

And Psalm 97:10 says...

He GUARDS the lives of his Faithful ones.

And we'll see in this story, the faithfulness of the young men and the faithfulness of God.

The King said he'd give them food and wine from his own table in exchange for their services. Now that's not too bad, is it? Imagine eating king's food. (yum) But for Jewish boys this was very wrong. They'd been taught in the law of Moses not to eat meat sacrificed to idols. It was unclean and offensive to God.

Daniel 1:8 says...Daniel RESOLVED not to defile himself with the royal food. The word 'resolve' means to PREDETERMINE to do or not to do something. It's like how I learned to hit the one pin left on the bowling alley. I was told that if I stared at it before I let the ball go and never took my eyes off of it while in motion, I'd hit it. And I did. Daniel decided BEFORE he was even tempted that he would not give in. He set his heart and mind on obedience and fixed his eyes on the Lord.

The king had changed their Godly names to heathen ones, Belteshazzar (better known as Daniel), Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and taught them his culture, but he couldn't change their hearts.

Throughout life we're all going to be placed in positions of compromise. But we need to resolve BEFOREHAND that we won't give in. We need to pray...

Lord, do whatever it takes to keep me from yielding to sin.

Help me KEEP MY EYES ON YOU!

I can't say I've ever been greatly persecuted in my life and I'm grateful for that. The hardest time I can remember is when I worked in the secular arena and was on a business trip with my boss and colleagues. There was only one car between us, so I had to go wherever they went. We ate and then we went to a place where they had dueling pianos. It sounded innocent enough. I wasn't impressed by their playing - and even less impressed with their speaking. One of the players got up and said in a condescending way, "Welcome to the good ole' Gospel Hour. Let's all stand and sing 'Shall we gather at the river'". Now, believe me, this did NOT have the making of a praise service. I just knew they were going to ridicule my Lord, so I sat where I was and shook my head 'no'. Everyone else stood to their feet, including the people I was with. The player looked around and saw me sitting. He pointed to me and said 'Get up'. My associates agreed that I should, too, but I 'stood' (or should I say 'sat') my ground', at which point he hollered, "Ok, everybody give her a dirty gesture". I endured the embarrassing moment with pride for my Lord. After he was done, and everyone had sat down, I got up without a word, walked in front of the entire audience and out the door. I didn't even care what kind of impression I made on my boss or the others. They were not going to force me to participate in this mockery! A few minutes later, my boss came out, apologized, and said the others were coming, too - and we'd go somewhere else. That night, I was given the opportunity to witness to one of the women who was impressed that I'd taken a stand for the Lord.

Oh, I know that's nothing compared to what many Believers endure, but I felt honored and proud to stand up for Christ. After all, Christ stood for us on the cross, even unto death, and we didn't even deserve it. We can all stand up for what we believe in the workplace or wherever we are. Sure we may not be popular, and get the big promotions, but our reward in Heaven is far greater. Who knows, we may be given the opportunity to impact someone's eternity because of it.

I am truly grateful for my 'It's not going to get too tough verse' 1 Corinthians 10:13...

There hath no temptation taken you but such is as common to men, but GOD is faithful who will not permit you to be tempted above that you are able but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.

God didn't say that we'd never be tempted - but he promised us a way out. We just need to ask for it and be willing to do what He says.

***** GOD IS ABLE *****

Daniel wanted a way out. Since there were no unclean vegetables, he asked the chief official for veggies and water to eat.

Daniel 1:9 says...

GOD CAUSED the official to show FAVOR and sympathy to Daniel.

The official was concerned, though, that they'd look worse than the others and the King would have his head, so Daniel suggested a 10 day trial and he agreed.

After 10 days, they looked healthier and better nourished.

The lesson is this. Standing for the LORD may cost you something. I'm sure they were probably criticized. I can image the comments. "You want to eat what?" But, the result of sacrifice is reward - a clean conscience. Money can't buy that.

At the end of three years of training, they were brought before the King to be interviewed. He found them to be BETTER than all the wise men in the WHOLE KINGDOM!!! – not just the ones they'd trained with.

God BLESSES FAITHFULNESS...

2 Chronicles 16:9 says..

The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to HIM.

GOD WATCHED OUT for THEM...and HE'LL WATCH out for you because He CARES...he really cares.

*** I'VE NEVER BEEN OUT ***

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