



Easter Sunday

Pastor Peter LaRuffa

Thanks for joining us on Easter Sunday, one of our favorite holidays. It's my hope & prayer that you experience the joy that can be found in none other than our risen Savior and reigning King Jesus. Our hope is built on nothing less than this principal truth - Jesus Christ has risen from the grave and brought about "the death of death" for Him and for all who believe, even people like us. If this is new to you, confusing to you, or even offensive to you, just let us know. It would be our pleasure to meet & discuss with you today or some other time.

Whether you're a lover, a hater, a veteran or a guest, a seeker or a skeptic, know this:

We're glad you're here.

Happy Easter!

Pastor Peter LaRuffa
Pastor Aaron Barnett

1 Corinthians 15:53-58 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

B. Business for profit that is ruthless and has no concern for ethics or marriage and family life at all

If you're a Christian and you decide to be just as ruthless or barely legal to make a living, then you're bowing to the image of our culture.

C. A world of sports that our kids have been thrown into that's no longer about fun but is a multi-billion-dollar industry

Bowing down to this 'Sports Idol' might screw up some of the things that matter most like children seeing a good marriage and having a solid home life where there's margin in the calendar and less stress over finances and schedules.

II. If You Want to Keep Trusting God You'll Need a Theology That's Bigger than "Your Best Life Now"

The theology of God that the 3 young men in this chapter had is captured in **v. 17** and **18**.

Daniel 3:17-18 "... Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Three of the most important and courageous words that demonstrate a theology of trusting God are found right at the start of **v. 18** and they are, "But if not..."

They knew God could deliver them and they were trusting that God would deliver them, but they were saying God may sovereignly choose for His own good purposes to not deliver them.

Throughout the Bible and Church history good, godly men and women who were filled with faith found themselves in circumstances where God didn't deliver them, but allowed them to suffer even unto death.

Hebrews 11:36-38 "Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy..."

III. To Embrace a Theology of Suffering You Have to Know the One Who Already Suffered Most for You

There are places in the Old Testament that talk about how 'the angel of the Lord appeared.' That was an appearance of the Jesus Christ before He ever took on flesh and entered into this world.

Daniel 3:25 "Look! I see four men and the fourth is like the Son of God."

If you're a Christian, then go into the furnace of your trials with Jesus Christ, who promised to never leave you or forsake you.

He goes with us into the furnace today, because He went into the ultimate furnace of God's wrath for us alone on the cross! The fiery wrath of God against sin was poured out on Him instead of us!

He's the only One who went through the fire of God's wrath in our place.

No other religion talks like this and no other god can save you like this. That's why Nebuchadnezzar actually spoke very prophetically at the end of **v.29**.

Daniel 3:29b "... there is no other God who can deliver like this."

Unlike Nebuchadnezzar who only spoke about God, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego made Him their God. They knew Him and were willing to trust and serve Him even if it meant death.
