

## **Sitting on the Bench**

**Submitted by Dr. Anthony Brown**

**Daniel 3:24-26**

***<sup>24</sup>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.” <sup>25</sup>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.” <sup>26</sup>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!”***

A recent conversation with a friend had me, of all persons, listening to the lament of a father who was frustrated that his daughter, a blossoming volleyball player, was spending more time “on the bench” than “in the game.” I say, me of all persons, because quite honestly, sports, beyond tennis and baseball, attract very little of my emotional energy. My friend’s conversation returned to my mind when I started preparing for this devotional and what resonated with me were those words, “sitting on the bench.”

My thoughts went to this familiar scripture in which we see three Hebrew boys defying the King and refusing to bow down to his god. The story is familiar, the furnace, being the penalty of their disobedience, is turned up even hotter and they are thrown in. But instead of it becoming a burial chamber, the furnace becomes a place of testimony and witness. When the tormenters look in the furnace and see, not just the three persons they threw in, but a fourth person “sitting on the bench,” and this individual looks like the most High God. Sitting on the bench with us, walking through the storms with us, juggle the multiple assignments with us, walking beside us when we’re overwhelmed, placing His hand on our shoulders when we are confused, is a fourth person and He doesn’t just look like the son of God, He is God.

That is my encouragement for weary, pressured, anxiety filled believers. God is sitting on the bench with you. YES, I know I could be more theologically profound and remind us that more than a “buddy is on the bench,” He, God, is the coach, the manager, the one in full control. But for me in this moment, it is encouraging to know that even as I sit here with questions, challenges, and uncertainty, the most High God is sitting right beside me. The songwriter said it so well: and He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own, and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known. Since He is on the bench with us, we can take a fresh look at what “winning looks like.” Winning is consistently being aware that The Lord, our God, is with us, and understanding that with Him all things are possible!