

## **STAND when you're asked to do the impossible**

### **Daniel 2**

I had the strangest dream on Friday night. Who can tell me what it was? *Impossible you say?* Well, that's the situation in today's reading.

King Nebuchadnezzar was having disturbing dreams, nightmares, that caused him to not sleep. I don't know about you but I get pretty cranky when I don't get enough sleep. King Nebuchadnezzar calls on his psychic staff and demands that they tell him the dream. Not the meaning of the dream but tell him what he dreamed. It's an impossible task.

They know they can't do it so they tell the king "you tell us your dream and then we can tell you what it means." That didn't make the king happy (remember no sleep = crabby king) and he demands "tell me my dream and what it means or off with your head."

It was an impossible task. They tried to explain no human could do it and their gods weren't available to help them. That ticked the king off and he ordered that the whole company of his wise men be killed, all of them, including Daniel and his friends.

What do you do when you are asked to do the impossible?

Pastor Rick Warren, in his message on this story from Daniel, points out that Daniel shows us 8 steps to take when you are handling an impossible task.<sup>1</sup>

#### **First, Don't Panic or be afraid**

Daniel had a legitimate reason to be worried – his life was on the line. The most powerful man on the planet sent out orders to have him killed. He had every reason to panic, but he didn't.

Daniel 2:14 (NLT) "*When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, came to kill them, Daniel handled the situation with wisdom and discretion.*" Once again, Daniel's faith is tested and he passed

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<sup>1</sup> Warren, Rick. "Unshakeable: When you are asked to do the impossible" <http://saddleback.com/watch/media/when-youre-asked-to-do-the-impossible>

with flying colors. This is an amazing young man. When the guard shows up to kill him, he didn't panic and he wasn't afraid.

Q: What are you are panicking about right now? Job problem? Finances/debt? Health situation? Marriage? Future? Don't panic.

Second, **Ask why?** You need to learn all the facts and the motivation behind the request. When somebody asks you to do the impossible, you need to find out what's behind the request. You need to get all the facts and the motivation and if there is emotion involved (which there usually is in these situations), and find out what's fueling the situation? In this case, the king is afraid, terrified and he's taking out his fear on everyone else.

Maybe you're going to go to work this week and your boss is going to come down on you. And you think what's going on here? Most likely they are getting pressure from their boss and it's being passed on to you.

*Daniel 2:15 "Daniel asked the king's captain, 'Why has the king issued such a harsh decree?' So Arioch told him all that had happened." You've got to get the facts.*

Proverbs 23:23 *"Get the facts at any price, and hold on tightly to all the good sense you can get." (Living Bible)* Don't make a major decision just on emotion. Don't make a business decision on the way you feel. Feelings lie. Get the facts. What do I need to know in order to do what I need to do?

Third, **ask for time to create a solution.** Your boss comes in and says I need this done and it's an impossible task, you need to ask for time to create a solution. The reason you want to ask for time is because in a crisis the greatest temptation you have is to be impulsive. In a crisis you are thinking emotionally, not logically. So, step back, take a deep breath, calm down, talk to God before you rush into action.

Daniel knew he was going to need some time with his God. So, *"Daniel went at once to see the king and requested more time so he could interpret the meaning of the dream for the king."* Daniel

2:16. He's going to give it his best shot, he's not going to say it's impossible (like the other guys did), he's going to die trying.

Notice, he went at once. While you want to take time for the solution, you want to make contact with the person who has done this right away. Daniel goes immediately to the source of his pressure, his pain. He courageously faces the fear head on.

Q: What are you procrastinating about because it might be painful? What do you know that you need to do but you are avoiding because it might be painful? What are you pretending in your marriage is not a problem and you are just sweeping it under the rug, trying to ignore it but it's become a mountain? What are you pretending isn't a problem in your life – a weakness, something you do over and over that you can't seem to stop but know you need to? Procrastinating doesn't solve any problems. Delay doesn't make it better, it usually makes it worse. Time does not heal wounds. The only way to get rid of fear is move against it. So you immediately as for more time to create a solution.

Fourth, **enlist prayer support from your friends.** Now of course, Daniel knows he is going to pray about this and pray all night, but this thing is too big and he knows he needs others praying.

*"Then Daniel went home and told his three friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah what had happened. Then he said, 'Pray that the God who rules from heaven will be merciful and explain this mystery, so that we and the other advisors won't be put to death.'" Daniel 2:17-18*

Q: Do you have any prayer partners? If you had a major crisis today, who would be the first five people you would call and ask to pray? If you don't know who those people are, I highly recommend you build a prayer team today before the crisis comes because you will face impossible situations and you need to know who to call. Who you gonna call? Daniel knew immediately who he was going to ask to be in prayer along with him.

Turn the question around, who knows they can call you to be in prayer for them? This is why small groups, life groups are so

important. Men you need 4-5 other men to meet with every week for encouragement and support. Women you need this too. People you journey through life with together – people who you know you can count on and who can count on you for prayer support. You need to be able to ask for prayer the way Daniel did.

Notice that Daniel wasn't only worried about his own skin, but he was concerned about others as well. He wasn't just worried about getting laid off, he was worried about the whole office getting laid off – and killed. These other workers, they aren't his friends, they aren't believers, but Daniel still cares about them. That is a mark of a Godly person – praying for the people in your life even if they have a different lifestyle or belief than you.

**Fifth, Pray and expect God to give supernatural help.** When I say supernatural, I mean the kind of help you do not have on your own power, your own wisdom, your own logic. You need supernatural help when you don't have the connections, the education, the wisdom, the answers. You pray and you expect God to give you supernatural help.

Here's the interesting thing about this, God wants you to ask. Over and over again in the Bible God wants you to ask.

While Daniel was in Babylon, there's another young man named Jeremiah who was left back in Judah. Jeremiah 33:3 records this message from God:

*"Call to me and I'll answer you, and I'll show you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own!"*

Jeremiah 33:3 (Mes) That's exactly what Daniel needs. He could guess for a thousand years and never come up with the king's dream. He needs to call on God and trust God will show him the meaning.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:7, *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."* Ask, Seek, Knock = ASK. God wants you to ask. God says "Call to me and I'll answer you". Some of those problems you've been having – you haven't asked for help.

This is what Daniel did, he comes to God in prayer and says I can't figure this out on my own, I need your help. Now, there is one condition, pray and **expect** God to give you supernatural help.

Jesus continued in Matthew 7, *"if you [humans]... know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"* v.11. If God loved you enough to send his son Jesus to die for you on the cross to solve your biggest problem, eternal salvation, then everything else is pretty small in comparison. Why do you trust God to get you to heaven but don't trust God to help you with your problems. All your problems are minor compared to God forgiving you all your sins. Trust God to hear and answer your prayers.

The book of James puts it this way: *"If you need wisdom, **ask God**, and he will gladly give it to you. He won't resent you asking. But when you ask him, **be sure that you expect him to answer**, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is tossed by the wind. People like that should not expect to receive anything from the Lord."* James 1:5-7

Pray and expect that God will help you. He won't resent you for asking but expect him to answer. So, pray and keep on praying. You might have to pray all night. You might have to pray for weeks, maybe even months or years. But pray and expect God will answer.

Sixth, **worship God**. Worship simply means focusing on God. It is getting the focus off of ourselves, off our problems, and turning our attention to God and expressing our love for God. This is what Daniel did. He spent all night praying and then in v. 19: *"During the night God revealed and explained the mystery of the dream to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven."*

During the night God reveal to Daniel the dream and its meaning. And Daniel immediately began to praise God – that's worship. The next couple of verses show us how to worship when facing an impossible situation.

First, you Praise God for who God is . *"Then Daniel praised God saying, 'Our God, your name will be praised forever and forever! You are all-powerful, and you know everything!'" Daniel 2:19b-20 (CEV)* Daniel praised God for his faithfulness, his power, his forgiving nature, his grace and mercy. Daniel was praising God for God's nature, God's attribute.

Notice, Daniel specifically states "your name". What does that mean? Think about the commandments. Of the top ten, one of them is about God's name. The second commandment teaches us to not use God's name in vain because God's name is given to use for prayer, praise and thanksgiving. It's not a cuss word or exclamation. This is ranked right up there with don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal and some of you need to work on that one.

When Jesus taught us to pray, he say pray like this, "Our Father in heaven HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME". Honored be God's name, treated with value, respected.

You might think, what's the big deal about a name? A name represents character, it represents who that person is. When we say someone has a good name, we mean they are trustworthy. God's name represents all of God's character and qualities. Our use of God's name represents God to others. I challenge to think about this one – how are you using God's name?

So, first you praise God for who God is and then you Honor God for what God does. This is the difference between God's character and God's action. V. 21 *"YOU control human events. YOU give rulers their power and YOU take it away. YOU are the source of wisdom and knowledge. YOU explain deep mysteries, because even the dark is light to you! YOU are the God worshiped by my ancestors."* Daniel 2:21-23a (CEV) Daniel is praising God for who God is and honoring God for what God does.

Then Daniel thanks God for helping him. V. 23 *"Now I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors, for you have given me wisdom and strength. You have told me what I asked for and revealed to me what the king demanded."* Daniel 2:23 (NLT)

God, I'm so grateful, so thankful for all you've done for me in the past, for what you're going to do right now and what you will do in the future. You worship God for who God is, what God does and a whole lot of gratitude.

Seven, **use what God shows me to save others.** God doesn't just want to save you, but remember John 3:16 "*For God so loved THE WORLD [the whole world!] that he gave his only son.*" God wants to bless and save the whole world and God has chosen to work through us so that others will be saved.

In v 24 "*Then Daniel rushed to see Arioch [captain of the guards], who'd been ordered to execute all the king's advisors. He said 'Call off the execution, and take me to the king and I'll explain the meaning of his dream.'*" Imagine him running into the palace, call off the execution, I've got it. God not only told me the dream but the meaning too. Get me in to the king so we can all live. Daniel used what God showed him to save others. This is called witnessing.

This is what we are called to do as followers of Jesus. We are to use what God does for us to save others. We are called to tell others about Jesus – about how God loves the whole world, that he sent his only son Jesus to show us how to live, to die a cruel death on a cross taking on himself the punishment for our sins so we can have forgiveness and rising from the dead three days later to give us the promise of eternal life with him. As his followers we seek to follow his teachings and to become more and more like him. This is the greatest message ever given and the one we are entrusted with telling to others.

So Arioch gets Daniel in to the king who wonders, is it true? Daniel can you really tell me my dream?

Daniel's reply gives us the eighth step. When you get the answer, you **point people to God.** Don't take the credit yourself because God gave it to you. This is exactly what Daniel does. "*Daniel replied, "No wise man or psychic or fortune teller or astrologer can explain the mystery of your dream. [No man could solve this impossible problem you've given.] BUT there is a God in heaven!* [I

am so grateful for this. Things might be falling apart BUT there is a God in heaven. And that is what gives the world hope.] *“There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries and he has chosen to show you what will happen in the future . . . And now, God has revealed this mystery to me, not because I'm smarter than everyone else, but for your benefit, so that you O king may understand it.” Daniel 2:27-30*

What a bold witness. Daniel doesn't take credit he points to God. If you always point the credit back to God, God can and will do great things through you. This is evangelism – sharing the good news, point others to God.

This is your calling in life – pointing people to God. Use your platform – whether that is school or workplace, team or your family. Use where you are and whatever situation you have in life to point others to God.

Well, Daniel goes on to tell the king his dream and explains what it all means. (This could be a whole message in itself). Basically Daniel tells the King the statue represents major world powers that will rule the earth. But all of these man made empires will crash and burn and only the solid Rock, the Kingdom of God, will last forever. The dream reveals that Daniel's God is the power behind all earthly kingdoms and one that can never be destroyed.

The king was so happy to know what his dream meant that he honors Daniel **and his God**. Daniel is appointed to an even greater position with greater responsibility.

Q: What seems impossible in your life right now? I encourage you to do the 8 things Daniel did and trust that God will help you so that you can stand even when you are asked to do the impossible.