

GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR WORST SITUATION 4: SEEK GOD'S WISDOM

GOD IS THE REVEALER OF DEEP THINGS: DANIEL 2 vv 14-45

I will like to share with you two stories from the Bible about people in quite similar situations as Daniel and his three friends. The first concerns a young girl taken captive from the land of Israel and forced into servitude in the land of Syria. Her story is told in 2 Kings Ch 5. To me this is the story of the faithfulness of a slave girl in a foreign land. This captive Israeli girl was servant to Naaman's wife. Naaman was the commander of the army of the king of Syria, and suffered from leprosy. This girl, in spite of her dire situation – far away from her native land, away from loved ones and all that she had grown up with, forced to serve in a foreign, heathen culture – still showed herself faithful by proclaiming the power of God in a foreign land. Her words that Naaman could find healing at the hands of the prophet in Israel carried so much weight that they were reported to the king of Syria. For that to happen, she must have conducted herself in such a manner that she had come to be known as a trustworthy person, so much so her advice was never doubted, and consequently her words carried weight even with the king that he acted on it and sent Naaman to Israel in search of a cure for his leprosy.

All of that because a slave girl remained faithful to her God in a foreign land. She did not allow her dire situation prevent her from making herself available for God to use for His Glory. If you read the story to verse 19, Naaman, after he had been healed by the Prophet Elisha, made a promise never to serve any other except the God of Israel. That was from the commander of the army of a regional power in those days. You can just imagine the type of influence he would have had as a God believing worshipper when he went back to his country. All because a slave girl opened her lips at the right time even in very, very difficult conditions.

Compare that to the second of my two stories found in Psalm 137. Here we are told that the musicians from Jerusalem hung up their harps on the willow trees by the rivers of Babylon and wept. They preferred to mourn their captivity rather than proclaim the Glory of God in a foreign land. One commentator noted that God had to look to Daniel and his three friends to proclaim His Glory in that same foreign land. The musicians hung up their God given talents and wept instead. Even when their captors demanded that they sing a song from the land of Israel. What an opportunity they had then to make proclamation about the greatness of their God. Either they never saw the opportunity they had been presented with, or they allowed their sorrow stemming from their captivity overwhelm them to the point of inaction.

This brings us to Daniel and his three companions. They were not only captives in a foreign land; they were now facing the death sentence on the orders of the king. What had led to the king's judgement against all the wise men in Babylon? Let's go back a little bit in the chapter to see how this situation had developed. The king had demanded that his wise men relate to him his dream and then the interpretation, but in verse 10 we are told that the astrologers had said to the king, "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer." And going on to verse 11, "What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men."

These so called wise men had by their lips condemned themselves. They had shown themselves false along with their practices. In Deuteronomy Ch 18: 9-13, the practices of magicians, enchanters and astrologers and other false practices was expressly forbidden by God. Anyone caught practising such things were to be put to death. So in effect these Babylonian wise men had by their own lips brought down God's judgement on themselves. This shows us that we should not be moved by what is happening around us. God rules in the affairs of men. He has been doing so since He made creation and still does so today. In the book of Daniel we have been studying, He made a king dream such a terrifying dream that troubled his mind and robbed him of peace.

The event that unfolded from the time the king had his dream shows God accomplishing His purpose through divine events that protected His servants and brought Glory to Him. By their own lips God exposed the foolishness of the wise men of Babylon and the futility and falsehood of the practices they believed in. And today we do not have to be troubled even when politicians say "We don't do church." They think they are wise and smart like the wise men of Babylon, but their foolishness will also be exposed. We do not have to be troubled when we see false religion been promoted out of political correctness, and true worship been denounced by the media, institutions of state, and the so called wise men of today: the educators and the scientists.

Are we facing persecution in our places of work because we represent the true living God? Or in our communities? Or in our schools and universities? All we need to do is continue to pray that "God's Will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Let us remain faithful. Let us believe He can do and will do the seemingly impossible. In verse 11 the wise men of Babylon said to the king, "What the king ask is too difficult."

When Daniel was told of the matter in verse 15, in the following verse he immediately asks the king for time so that he can interpret the king's dream.

Pause and consider this: in verse 8, the king had accused the wise men of stalling for time because they knew they had been sentenced to death if they do not relate to the king his dream and the interpretation. Daniel and his three companions were also counted with the wise men and were under sentence of death, yet here was Daniel asking for time. And the king agreed. The same king who had just commanded that all the wise men in Babylon be put to death!!

You see, what that tells us is if we stand for God and are prepared to conduct ourselves in such a way as to bring Glory to Him, He will always back us up. He backed up that slave girl whose story we had earlier examined. Naaman went to Israel seeking a cure for his leprosy; he came away knowing and acknowledging that there is a God in Israel.

Unless God Himself has decided that it is time for us to leave this earth and come home, no power in heaven or on earth can do us any harm. God will back you up, no matter what situation you may be facing. No power in heaven or on earth can determine our time here on earth. Another thing to consider is that even the most powerful of despots will always bow to God's will. God was going to use Daniel and his companions to bring Glory to Himself and Nebuchadnezzar's decree of death was put aside to make that happen. I do not know what may have gone through the king's mind when Daniel asked for more time, but God wanted him to agree to that request, and he did agree.

Are you facing a seemingly impossible situation? God requires that you lean on Him. He alone can show you the way. Daniel did not go back home to start walking up and down, getting stressed out, thinking what dream did the king have? He immediately went back to his three companions, explained the matter to them and asked them to seek God's face, and plead for His intervention in the matter. I believe this was what God was waiting for anyway. An acknowledgement that He was needed in the affairs of the kingdom. He had been intervening anyway: He gave Nebuchadnezzar the dream, he allowed the king to grant Daniel's request for time. When things we do not understand or things that are troubling to us come our way, we have a tendency to think we are in the situation on our own and God is far away and uncaring.

I myself have prayed, or more accurately shouted, "Lord don't you see what is happening? Do something." Sometime we behave as if God was some incompetent being who needs to be prodded into action. Yet it all boils down to us wanting things done our way instead of just waiting on God and allowing Him to have His way. What Daniel and his companions did was to seek God's wisdom. They were in effect acknowledging that they knew God

reveals the interpretations of deep mysteries. And was this a mystery to them? They not only had to know what the king dreamt, but also had to interpret it.

And God proved Himself faithful as He always does. And Daniel was not slow in acknowledging what God had done, nor was he stinting in his praise (vv 19 – 23). How do we react when we have experienced a breakthrough? After we have faced some difficulties and suddenly we were able to resolve it. Do we think we did it in our own strength? Or do we offer sincere praises to God? I know I should praise Him more. But the thing is, I quickly forget. I think, "O thank you Lord, you've done it." And then within a matter of days, or even less, it's, 'Okay Lord, I want you to do this. And what about that situation? O Lord, why are you taking so long?" Quickly, and so often, I forget what has gone before.

Even in preparing for this sermon. I was really struggling earlier in the week and up to last night; I kept on praying "O, Lord, what am I going to say? What do you want me to say to your people?" Yet earlier this morning when I started to make a bit of headway, and I started to relax I could literally feel pride rising up within me. It was like, Yes, I Kayode, have done it. That feeling of pride was so strong that I had to consciously quench it. Yet last night I was staring at the computer screen, and all I could think was, "What am I going to say?" I got up, went out to the car and checked the engine oil. I knew what the engine oil would be like because I had checked it in the morning before going out with my wife, but I repeated the exercise in the evening, as if there would have been a change in the few hours since I had checked it. Well, I figured, go outside the house, continue to pray, and maybe I would get some inspiration. Yeah, inspiration from checking the engine oil. And I kept dipping the dipstick in and out several times as though that would make a difference. I didn't stop there. I started shaking the car to see the water level in the radiator bottle; I could have just opened the cap to see the water level, but I had to be different. O well, you want some inspiration. Go out and start pottering around with the car engine.

Then this morning, things became clearer, and I had to battle with pride. A lot of us, if we are truthful with ourselves, are like that.

And now, back to the interpretation of the dream, which again shows us that God has ultimate control of every situation, and the whole world is His domain even now and would ultimately come under His rule. Look at verse 21 where Daniel said, "He sets up kings and deposes them." In the interpretation of the dream, that was what in effect Daniel was saying to king Nebuchadnezzar: that God sets up kingdoms and deposes them. The head of gold was the Babylonian kingdom, followed by the Median and

Persian kingdom, then the Grecian Empire, and finally the Roman Empire. All these were ultimately destroyed as God established His dominion which filled the whole earth and is everlasting.

What does this tell us when faced with challenging situations? God is still in control; even when it does not seem like that, and He seems so far away. What we need to do is constantly seek Him, seek His wisdom and be prepared to give Him the Glory: always. When things seem so muddled up, we need to remember He is the **ONLY** revealer of mysteries. There is no mystery so deep that is deeper than God's wisdom. And even when all seems clear and we are cruising along and at ease, we still need to lean on Him, to acknowledge that there is nothing we can do on our own!