

Cottonwood Creek Church

DANIEL

SESSION TWO: DEPENDENT FAITH

DANIEL 2:1-23

9.15.24

MAIN POINT

We must rely on God in the midst of the many pressure points in life.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Describe a time when you experienced increased pressure or anxiety.

What were the circumstances surrounding that experience, and how did everything work out?

Today's text reminds us that we can rely on God when life presses in on us. God is sovereign, near, and watches out for us. In Daniel 2, God orchestrated everything that happened: He is the One who gave the king the dream, and He is the One who revealed it to Daniel. God gives us wisdom when we lack understanding and ability, just as He did for Daniel. And God is worthy of our adoration, so we can praise Him, even when we are in the midst of the pressures of life.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ DANIEL 2:1-13.

Why do you think the king reacted so harshly about his dream?

What would you have done if you were Daniel and his friends?

In the first few years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he was likely stressed and anxious, as any king would be. He had dreams, his spirit was troubled, and he didn't sleep well (v. 1). This is no surprise, because even though he held the power and prestige of ruling the great kingdom of Babylon, no ruler was invincible, and any shift in power brought potential threats. In the ancient world, dreams were especially meaningful for a ruler and his nation. He employed a number of different people to help interpret them. The only problem was, the king demanded that they not only interpret his dream, but first describe the dream itself. An impossible task! In fact, God would prove the words of the Chaldeans true that skill would have to come from a God who was not of flesh (v. 11).

READ DANIEL 2:14-19.

What do we learn from Daniel's response of bold faith? How might that translate to our lives when we feel threatened or overcome?

What does Daniel's response say about his view of God? What role did his companions play?

How does Daniel's reliance on prayer and seeking God's wisdom serve as a model for us today?

What keeps us from asking for God's wisdom first? What are some of the reasons we rely on our own wisdom instead?

Having heard about the impending threat, Daniel went to make an appointment to see the king. Even though his life was in danger, he went in faith. The captain of the king's guard had already been sent out to kill the wise men, and Daniel knew his life could be over at any moment. Yet before God revealed anything, Daniel asked for an audience with the king. Daniel's response might seem crazy or radical to us. How could Daniel know God would give him the understanding he needed to know and interpret the dream? He didn't, but he had faith that God was in control of everything that was happening, even when it felt hopeless.

READ DANIEL 2:20-23.

What was Daniel's response to God giving him the vision of the king's dream?

What specific things did Daniel say about God in his song of praise?

What is the takeaway for us from Daniel's words in these verses?

Having received clarity about the king's dream, Daniel's immediate response was praise and adoration. He blessed God for providing what he could not provide for himself. He praised God for being in control, even when they couldn't see it.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How do we typically respond when God reveals something difficult to us? What can we learn from Daniel's attitude?

What is your initial reaction when life starts pressing in on you?

What is one thing you have learned to be true about God from a past experience when your faith was tested?

Where are you most tempted to rely on your own wisdom? Where do you need to ask for wisdom from God today?

PRAYER

Take some time in prayer to ask God for the wisdom that you try to provide on your own. Humble yourself before God, who is sovereign over all, and trust Him to be true to His character, even when you can't see it.

COMMENTARY

DANIEL 2:1-23

2:1 Nebuchadnezzar's dreams took place in the second year of his reign, which might appear to conflict with the claim that Daniel's three-year training program (1:5) began in Nebuchadnezzar's first year (1:1). However, by Babylonian reckoning Daniel's second year of training occurred during what was considered the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (604-603 BC; see note at 1:1 about reckoning time). Therefore, the king sought interpretation of his dreams in 602 BC, shortly after Daniel had completed his three-year education.

2:2-3 On magicians and mediums, see note at 1:20. The Hebrew word for sorcerers comes from an Akkadian word that can also mean witchcraft. Chaldeans is both a general ethnic term for the Babylonian people and, as used here, a specific term for priests who served as astrologers, soothsayers, and wise men in the king's government.

2:4-7:28 The narrative switches from Hebrew to Aramaic in v. 4 and continues in Aramaic until 7:28. Chapters 2-7 pertain to God's revelations about the Gentile nations. The structure is chiasmic (ABCCBA).

2:5-9 Some versions translate the phrase my word is final as the dream is forgotten. It is better to translate it as referring to the certainty and finality of the king's demand. Nebuchadnezzar withheld the facts of the dream not because he could not remember them but because he wanted to test his wise men.

2:10-11 This candid confession by the wise men admits that despite all their incantations, magic, and astrology, they were not capable of receiving supernatural revelation.

2:12 Wise men is a general term for all the king's counselors, who gained their knowledge through occult practices.

2:13 Daniel and his friends were subject to execution because they were in the class of wise men; they had not participated in any of the discussions with the king.

2:14-16 That the king would grant a stay of execution under these circumstances is more than remarkable.

2:17-19 The mystery refers to a secret that can only be known by divine revelation.

2:20-23 Daniel's song of praise includes the two key ideas of the chapter: First, God is sovereign over the political affairs of humanity because he removes kings and establishes kings. Second, God alone can give revelation by giving wisdom to the wise

and by revealing the deep . . . hidden things, even the king's mystery that had stumped the wise men.