

WHEN YOU ARE ASKED TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

One day Henry Ford once came up with a revolutionary plan for a new kind of engine. His idea was that the pistons of the engine would be set at an angle to each other rather than in a straight line. He called his idea the V-8 motor. He sketched it out on a piece of paper and took it to his engineers. As the engineers studied the drawings, one by one they came to the same conclusion. Their visionary boss just didn't know much about the fundamental principles of engineering. They told him flat out that his dream was impossible. Ford said, "Produce it anyway." They replied, "We can't produce it, it is not possible!" Ford told them "Go ahead, and stay on the job until you succeed, no matter how much time is required." For six months they struggled with drawing after drawing, design after design. Nothing worked. Another six months, still nothing. At the end of the year Ford checked with his engineers and they once again told him that what he wanted was impossible. He told them to keep going and they did. As we all know, eventually they discovered how to build a V-8 engine.

Have you ever been asked to do the impossible? Today we are continuing in our series called No Compromise, looking at the life of Daniel and we come to the second chapter.

Daniel 2:1-11 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. 2 So the king summoned the magicians, enchanter, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, 3 he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means." 4 Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it." 5 The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. 6 But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

What the king was asking the wise men of Babylon to do was humanly impossible. He was asking them to not only read his mind but then to interpret what his dream was about and tell him the future. It was impossible. If they did not do it, they would all be killed.

I want to tell you from personal experience over the last 28 years I have been in ministry that there are many times in life when I was asked by God or by others to do or pray for the impossible. Let me suggest to you this morning 8 simple steps when facing an impossible situation. These are in your bulletin written down, but please feel free to take notes.

1. Act in Faith – stay calm and don't panic

When facing an impossible task, do not panic or be afraid. Daniel had good reason to be worried. If you knew that someone in power was trying to assassinate you, you would probably panic. He didn't.

Daniel 2:14 When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

Once again we see here that Daniel's faith is being tested. He is probably only around 19 years old when this happened. He learns that one of the most powerful men on the planet has ordered his assassination and he speaks with wisdom and tact. Not bad for a young teenage kid. He did not panic. He was not afraid.

Let me ask you, what are you panicked about this morning? That financial situation – I'm never going to get out of debt. That feeling of being completely overwhelmed. That report from the doctor. What are you worried about this morning? Your marriage? Your future? Your dream? Don't panic.

We need to put our faith in God. He has done miracles in the past and He is able to do the miraculous in your life today. Years ago, the idea of building a canal through Panama to link the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean seemed to be something that was impossible. Eventually they attempted the impossible and the Panama Canal became a reality. After working on that seemingly impossible mission, the men who build that canal wrote a song. The song said: "Don't send us back to a life that's plain, we who have shattered a continent's spine. Easy work? No not again. Haven't you something that's more in our line? Got any rivers you say are not crossable? Got any mountains you can't tunnel through? We specialize in the wholly impossible, doing what nobody ever could do." We who have found faith in Christ have tasted the impossible, nothing else should satisfy.

2. Ask Why – learn all the facts

When facing an impossible situation it is important to learn all the facts first. If somebody asks you to do the impossible you need to find out why they are asking it. What is motivating their request?

King Nebuchadnezzar was angry with his wise men. Why? It was because he was afraid. He had a recurring nightmare that bothered him and scared him. He wanted answers. When people are panicked and they are in a crisis they get emotional. Have you ever had someone at school or at work lash out at you, only to find out later that they were really going through a hard time in their life when they did that? When people are hurting they lash out at others around them. Daniel sought to first understand the facts behind what was happening.

Daniel 2:15 He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

You should never make a major decision based solely on emotion. You should not make business decisions based on the way you feel at the time. Feelings lie. Get the facts first. What is the reason behind the request? What is the motivation?

Years ago new engineers in the Lamp Division of General Electric were assigned, as a joke, the impossible task of frosting light bulbs on the inside. None of the engineers took the assignment seriously. It was an impossible task by engineering standards. Eventually, however, one young man named Marvin Pipkin was given this impossible task. Instead of just writing it off as a joke, he studied the matter. He learned all he could. Eventually he developed an etching acid that gave minutely rounded pits instead of sharp depressions. This not only frosted the glass but strengthened it as well. His discovery revolutionized the light bulb industry. He did the impossible because he took the task seriously and learned all the facts.

3. Ask for Time – to create a solution

When facing an impossible situation it is always good to give yourself time to create a solution. The reason for this is that often if we just respond to the challenge quickly we act impulsively. If you get in a car accident, immediately as you get out of the car you are not thinking logically or rationally. You are thinking emotionally and impulsively.

When I was 15 I was in a car accident. My brother was driving my sister and I and his girlfriend to a youth retreat. A pick up truck ran a red light and hit our car. My brother got out and ran over to the other driver and started fighting with him. His girlfriend got out and ran over to try and stop him from getting in the fight. My sister was beside me in the back seat. She just freaked out and started screaming and jumped over the seat to get out the front. My head had been sliced open in the accident and I was bleeding badly. I just got out of the car and stood there in the middle of the street in a daze. Thankfully, in the car behind us were friends that were also going to the youth retreat. They quickly pulled me into their car and drove me to the hospital. They were thinking rationally.

It is more important to make the right decision than to make a fast decision. Step back. Take a deep breath. Calm down. Talk to God. Ask for the time you need to process the problem.

Daniel 2:16 At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

Asking for time does not mean that you procrastinate. It says “At this, Daniel went ...” He acts on what he has been told and immediately went to the king to make his request. Often when we are faced with an impossible or difficult situation we tend to procrastinate. You know that what you need to do is difficult or painful so you just keep putting it off.

Let me ask you, is there an issue in your life that you have been putting off dealing with? You know that something has to be done but you are procrastinating. Maybe you are just hoping it goes away? Maybe you are just pretending that it is not a problem? Procrastination only makes problems worse. It solves nothing. Time does not heal all wounds, sometimes you need the surgery.

4. Ask for Help – get support from friends

After speaking with the king, Daniel immediately goes to his friends and asks them for help.

Daniel 2:17 Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 18 He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

He asks his friends to pray for him. He knows that he is going to be spending personal time in prayer, but he first asks for prayer from others. Who do you have praying for you? Do you have any prayer partners? If you got home from church today and found yourself in a major crisis, who would you call? Who would you ask to pray for you? If you don't know who those people are, if you haven't lined them in advance, I highly recommend that you build a personal prayer team. Everyone needs one before the inevitable crisis comes in your life.

This is why everybody needs to be in a small group. The best place to get your prayer partners and prayer team is the people you meet with in a small group every week. You do not need hundreds of people praying for you, but you do need four or five.

Calling the church to pray in Kuwait.

5. Ask God – pray for supernatural help

When you are facing an impossible situation in your life, you need to go to the One who is able to do the impossible for help. You need to pray. Do not try to do the impossible in your own strength.

Daniel 2:19-23 During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision.

As Daniel was praying, God revealed the answer to his problem. There was no possible way that he could have learned and interpreted the king's dream in his own strength, but God did the impossible.

Jeremiah 33:3 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'

God never called us to live the Christian life in our own strength. He wants us to turn to him for strength. God never shuts his storehouse until you shut your mouth. The Bible says you have not because you ask not. There are so many things that God wants to give you and show you in your life, but He is waiting for you to ask. The Bible says ask and it shall be given to you. Knock and the door will be open. You have not because you ask not.

I have seen God do so many miracles in my life. He is still working miracles today.

Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said: "one can't believe impossible things." "I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast -- Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass

So many things you have already missed out in your life simply because you never asked God for it. God says call to me. I'll answer you. Some of those problems you thought I'm never going to figure this out because you didn't ask God. You could have said God show me the great and wonderful things because there's no way I can figure it out on my own.

The only prerequisite for asking is that we trust God for the answer. We need to ask in faith.

James 1:5-6 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

That does not mean name it and claim it. It does not mean that if we really believe that God will do whatever we ask of him. It means that we ask knowing that God is able and that God loves us and that God has a plan for our lives.

If you ask without faith, if you do not really expect an answer, then why pray? You thank God in advance. That's called faith. If you thank God after the fact, after he's given it, that's called gratitude. God wants you to have both – faith and gratitude. Thank you God that you're hearing me; thank you God that you're going to give it; and then thank you God that you gave it. Faith and gratitude.

6. Adoration - worship God

Worship is more than just music. Music and singing is one way to worship but there are a thousand of other ways to worship. Worship simply means focusing on God.

Any time I turn my attention to God that's called worship. You don't have to be in church to worship. You can be in your car, or class, or office, or just out for a walk.

Daniel 2:19 ... Then Daniel praised the God of heaven 20 and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. 21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. 22 He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. 23 I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king."

Worship means you get your focus off my problem and you get your focus on God. Get your eyes off of all the problems and focus on the solution. Stop looking at the impossible and focus on the God of the impossible.

7. Answer Wisely - use what God has given to help others

When God speaks to you, use what He has said to bless others.

Daniel 2:24-25 Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him." 25 Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

God spoke with him, and then he spoke to Arioch and then to the king. God wants to bless you so that you in turn can be a blessing to others. God saved you so that you in turn could take that message of salvation to others. God has revealed to you life. Not just for your benefit but so you can help direct others to that life. That's your witness. That's your mission in the world.

8. Answer Humbly - point people to God

When you give people what God has given to you, make sure you tell them where it came from. Point people to God. Don't take the credit for yourself. This is exactly what Daniel does. He gives God all the credit.

Daniel 2:26-28 The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" 27 Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, 28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:

Daniel says that God has revealed this mystery to me not because I'm better or smarter but for your benefit, King. I don't know about you but if I had been 19 and all of a sudden I got the answer that is going to save hundreds of lives and make the king really, really happy, I'd probably want to take at least a little credit for it. But what does Daniel do? He points people to God. If you do that, God will bless your life in ways that you cannot possibly imagine. If you will always point credit back to God, then God can do great things through you.

Daniel went on to tell the king what he had dreamed about. Nebuchadnezzar had been shown a vision of a statue made out of gold, silver, bronze and iron mixed with clay. The statue is struck by a rock that is not cut out by human hands and is destroyed.

Then Daniel revealed to him the meaning of the dream. The dream was about the future. The golden head was the Babylonian empire. The silver chest was the Persian empire that would follow. The bronze belly and thighs was the Greek empire and the feet made out of iron and clay was the Roman empire. These empires would all be destroyed, but the rock not cut out by human hands would become a mountain and fill the whole earth. That means Jesus, and God's kingdom that will never be destroyed, that is going to cover everything.

So what was the result of Daniel's faithfulness?

Daniel 2:46-48 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. 47 The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery." 48 Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men.

That is quite a testimony from a pagan king. In the end, Daniel was rewarded, but it was God who received the honor. While still a teenager, Daniel was made a ruler of all of Babylon.

What is it that seems impossible in your life right now? What is the thing that is worrying you and is making it so that you can't sleep at night?

There was a guy driving his car down the highway at 100 kms/hr. He noticed that there was a fly in the car with him. It was just flying around here and there. The man thought to himself, I wonder if this fly knows how lucky it is? It is impossible for that fly to go 100 kms/hr no matter how hard it flaps its wings. It is going much faster than it ever could on its own. Eventually the fly became annoying, so while it was at the window he opened it and the fly flew out. Do you ever wonder what happens to a fly when it is going down the road that fast and then all of a sudden stops? That's just like us with God when we get inside of Him we can do things we never thought we could've done. Well we don't have to worry about that with God because He has no windows that can roll down. Once your inside Jesus you are in for good.