

20160917 Daniel 2:8-18 Believers in Babylon don't have a pity party - they organize a prayer meeting.

BELIEVERS IN BABYLON DON'T HAVE A PITY PARTY - THEY ORGANIZE A PRAYER MEETING.

Daniel Chapter 2:1-18 - You will remember that last week we learned that Daniel Chapter 2 is one of the most significant chapters in the Bible. In this chapter, God reveals to man the time table of history. We are given a sequence of the great kingdoms and political institutions that will exist prior to the end of the ages. It is impossible to understand much of Bible prophecy without reading and understanding this chapter of the Bible. What I love about the Book of Daniel is that we not only firmly establish a foundation for end-times prophecy, but we also can gather so many insights for how to live our daily lives in an environment that is hostile to our spiritual viewpoint. The text today shows God's faithful followers being placed in circumstances that appear to have NO WAY OUT. But we will see that the Believer in Babylon does not panic - **WHEN FACED WITH TROUBLE THE BELIEVER IN BABYLON DOES NOT THROW A PITY PARTY - HE OR SHE PRAYS !!!**

This morning we start off by reading what I feel is the central point of today's lesson. Please rise as we honor God's Word in the reading of today's passage.

Daniel Chapter 2:13 So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death. 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. 15 He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. 16 At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him. 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.



Last week we saw Nebuchadnezzar having a fitful sleep on his bed. The text further tells us that his sleep left him... it was "struck" like a hammer on an anvil. Nebuchadnezzar was so perplexed by his dream that it became a nightmare to him.

If you have your Bible please turn to Daniel Chapter 2 and you can follow along with me as I start at verse 7.

- 7** *They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation."*
- 8** *The king replied, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm,*
- 9** *that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation."*

These guys are pleading because they know that the king is asking the impossible of them.

- 10** *The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean.*
- 11** *"Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh."*

The wise men readily admit that only the "gods" could do something as miraculous as not only interpreting a dream, but stating to the King what the dream was. The magicians are distraught at this point because they see no human way out.

- 12** *Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.*
- 13** *So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.*

So we see that the King became enraged and the decree went out in the land to kill everyone of the "wise men" who was not able to declare to the king the dream which he had dreamed. So now we see the way God's people act, react, and respond to crises.

HERE ARE A COUPLE OF TRUTH'S WITHIN THE TEXT

- 14** *Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon;*
- 15** *he said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the decree from*

the king so urgent?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter.

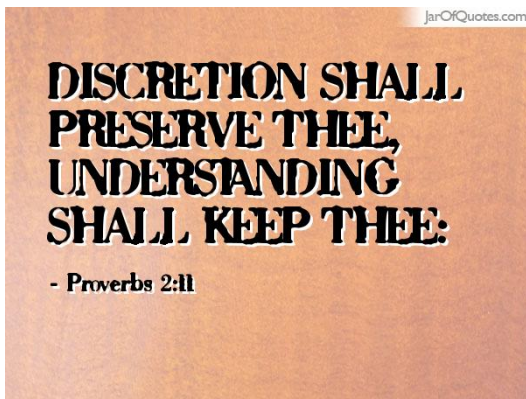
Daniel approaches Arioch with discretion and discernment, and asks, "What's the big hurry?" He responded in peace instead of in panic.

So, what is discretion? Discretion means wisdom. Because discretion is wisdom and wisdom is prudence.

DISCRETION = PRUDENCE

So, let's unwrap this text and see what God would teach each of us through His Word. What is "**discretion**" and how can we exercise it? Several very accurate translations of the Bible translate the Hebrew word "etah" עֵטָה PRUDENCE.

Discretion-Prudence = thinking through beforehand what will be the consequence of your thoughts, words, and deeds.



Thoughts - can be so injurious to our lives that we must choose beforehand to cast such thinking aside. Paul says in his book to the church in Philippi, "**8** Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." *Where is your mind?* Are you so stuck in the past you can't live in the

present? When I find my heart pondering things that are ugly, sordid, or without merit, I tell myself that such things don't line up with God's Word and His instruction for me.

Words - too can have terrible consequences. I am learning that some have been hurt by my words when I intended no hurt at all. Let's be very careful to choose our words as we see Daniel choosing his words wisely in this passage. Prudence says, "Think through the consequence of your words."

Deeds/Actions - can have terrible consequences to ourselves and others. If you're preparing to do something, think through the consequences of what you're about to do.

Church I am dwelling on this matter of Prudence because so many of our problems

originate in our thoughts, words, and deeds. In other words our heads, our hands, and our mouths get us into so much of our messes.

DISCERNMENT



DISCERNMENT

Secondly, we see Daniel exercising "**discernment**". Many people think that discernment means the ability to "see a danger" that perhaps others do not. That is not really the meaning of discernment. That is a tiny piece of the meaning of the word.

Discernment is the making of good decisions based on truth. There is no greater truth found on earth than in the Bible, in God's Word.

Discernment is making those decisions based on Biblical truth. When you think of using "good discernment" think of having a good and wise "sifter". Discernment is the gift to sort out the good or bad in yourself, in others, or in a situation between the good and the bad. GOD'S WORD is the ultimate tried and true sifter. (Hebrews 4:12)

Let me add a little practical advice. Discernment is also the ability to distinguish between something that is a real crisis and something that is a mere inconvenience. When we let our emotions get hijacked and we can't think straight or make a sound decision we will not have discernment. Don't let everything become a BIG DEAL. Everything is not a big deal. God is a God of order not a God of Chaos.

LET'S MOVE ON IN THE TEXT....

16 So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.

So Daniel was faced with a situation which was way beyond his human capabilities. This situation was not his own making. He found himself between a

rock and a hard place. He wasn't able to do what the King required of the wise men, but he knew that HE COULD PRAY.

Then Daniel did what we all should learn to do. Instead of organizing a pity party, Daniel organized a prayer meeting. Let's look at the text.



17 *Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter,*

18 *so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.¹*

Guys we sometimes face situations that seem to have no way out. We face demands and problems that we seem unable or incapable of resolving. Prayer and following God's direction is the answer.

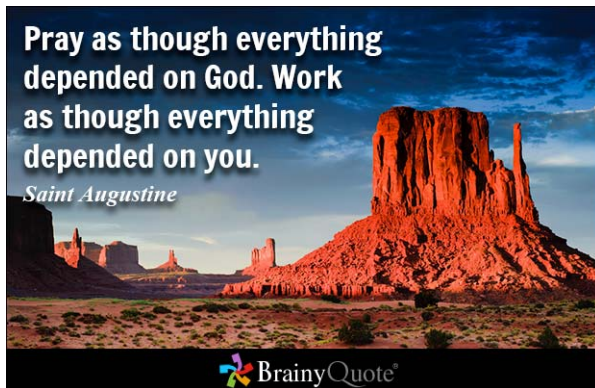
I want to add that most of the time our impossible situations are self-created. I would say it probably is in the neighborhood of 90% self-inflicted. We get ourselves into jams often by trying to meet one of those three basic needs through the flesh. Sometimes problems really do come from some external sources: an illness, a cancer, a car wreck or something that we had nothing to do with brought upon ourselves. That in fact is rare. Sometimes we get ourselves in trouble because we are operating out of fear. Fear of something, or fear of somebody. *"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of a sound mind."* 2 Timothy 1:7

Church..... stop fearing and stop trying to figure out how to work the details of your problem to your advantage. Get on your knees and pray. Get with others and pray through your problems. Your prayer could sound something like this, "Lord Jesus, I've done my best, but I've made a mess of things. Lord I've been afraid of a situation that seems more horrible than I can imagine. Lord, in my fear, I have told you that I don't

¹ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update.* (1995). (Da 2). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

trust you. Lord, give me discernment to sift and choose your positive will for me, and Lord give me the discretion/prudence to think through the consequences of those steps I feel lead to take. Thank you Lord that you have a purpose and a plan for me. Lord, take me through this trial. This day Lord, I choose to trust you. I give you the praise and the glory that you're already working these things out." Amen

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WHETHER OUR PROBLEMS ARE SELF-CREATED OR EXTERNALLY CREATED PRAYER IS THE SOLUTION.



Before we moved to Navasota, we were beset with business problems and money problems. I prayed more intently than I've ever prayed in my life. I finally surrendered and said, "Lord you can take all of my possessions, but I just ask you Lord to preserve my good name." The Lord laid on our hearts to move to Navasota. We came here, lived in our tiny farm house at Pleasant Hill

and we took our kids out of private school and put them into public school. I home schooled Alex for a year to help him make the transition into the world's educational system. At the time, I felt like a failure. I felt like taking my kids out of the classic education of St Thomas was a disaster. This disaster in my mind turned out to be an incredible blessing. It was a blessing for many reasons that are too numerous to list here this morning. God is sovereign. We never go wrong when we just follow Him.

Church, trials will come and worries will come. The 1st Chapter of the Book of James tells us these situations WILL COME. When these problems get control of our psyche, they are the kind of worries that wake us up at 2 in the morning and cause us to stare at the ceiling wondering how we'll get out of this one this time. God has a solution.

1) HIDE GOD'S WORD IN YOUR HEART - Might I suggest that we get into the Word and start living our lives heeding for starters the 30 magnificent Chapters of Proverbs that God gives us. That's a good start to keep us out of creating more problems, and it helps us get out of the problems we are in.

2) DO LIKE DANIEL - Start praying and stop worrying. Philippians 4 tells us, *"4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Daniel called a prayer meeting to pray to the God who is. And who is that God? It is Jesus. Jesus is our advocate. Jesus is our brother. Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He knows our needs before we ask.

Let us pray.