

## Anchored Daily Daniel 2:25-49

Summary: Reflect on Daniel's confident leadership in Daniel 2:25-49 with Sarah Landon.

Have you ever been put in a position of authority? Have you ever seen leaders and thought what it might be like to be in their position, making decisions, gaining the admiration of people, directing the course of a project, a team, a family, a classroom, or something else? I remember looking up to people in leadership, imagining how I might one day lead like them. One day I even ended up in a leadership position I had daydreamed about, and as you might expect, reality was much harder than I had imagined. My personality is one who really struggles in an environment without leadership. If there's a leadership vacuum, I feel a deep tension inside and sometimes have to hold myself back from jumping in and providing some kind of direction (it's not always a blessing). I have high expectations for people who fill leadership roles. But having led in the past, I also have great compassion and respect for those who take on leadership and have to make hard decisions. This is Sarah Landon, willing leader, supportive follower, and sometimes awkward bystander.

Today we read through the climax of one of the great stories in Daniel's life. A tale of life and death, mystery and revelation, God and king. We're in Daniel 2, verses 25 through 49. It's worth the read, so feel free to pause and come back to finish the podcast if you haven't read the passage yet.

We start in the tension knowing that King Nebuchadnezzar is literally losing sleep, and by all accounts his mind, because of this recurring vision. His sleep-deprived, irrational brain is now ready to tear people limb from limb and destroy them on account of not being able to read his thoughts.

On one hand, I respect the fact that he values truth enough to put a qualifier around his request. The way I see it, if he tells them the dream, it makes it super easy for a false prophet to make up all sorts of nonsense and tell him what he wants to hear. BUT, if someone already knows his dream, surely they would have a legit interpretation too. So it's a pretty good litmus test, really. On the other hand, it's pretty harsh: read my mind or die. And by doing so, he would lose every one of his advisors and their wisdom along with them. Nebuchadnezzar has absolute authority; he is in leadership of the greatest civilization of his time. I can't imagine his mental state if he actually had followed through with his threat to off all of his advisors and then continue tormented by his dream.

But fortunately, we don't have to imagine it, because God steps in through Daniel. Phew!

Speaking of Daniel, I get the sense that he is someone who is really confident. Who else, in the tension of the presence of the king, on the cusp of mass murder, draws out their response to answer, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?" Rather than getting directly to the point, to settle the king's anxiety, he begins with a negative, declaring that no one else can do it. Now, while he has the king's rapt attention, he points to God, praising Him before these unbelievers and skeptics. I'm sure you could've heard a pin drop. And only then does he unveil the dream and its interpretation. I think we get a glimpse of the power behind his confidence in verse 28, where he says "but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days." Daniel is able to stand surely before this strung-out

monarch and his desperate aides, not because he's an incredible guy, rather because he serves an incredible God.

The king, the one who is the leader of vast lands, has the power to preserve or take a life, respected and feared, falls on his face. He honors Daniel, but more importantly, he utters these words in verse 47, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery." Daniel's obedience to God, his regular devotion and connection and to him made him a conduit for God to have his glory known by the most powerful human on earth and let King Nebuchadnezzar know just where he stood in the world. He might be a powerful guy, but he is not God and now he knows who really is.

Immediately, Daniel is thrust into leadership and he brings his friends along with him. In the midst of Babylon, with foreign gods, the land of excess, God arranges to put His people in a position to lead. I'm not sure our Jewish exiles particularly wanted to be where they were, but God had called them on mission and given them the opportunity to serve an entire kingdom.

When we are put into roles of leadership, even reluctantly, may we look to Daniel's example and bring a confidence with us rooted in the God Who Saves. We may be out of our depth, but the God who put us there never is, and when we rely on Him, trust Him as He grows us through the circumstance, and cling to Him through every challenge, He gets the glory, which is what we're here to do after all, isn't it? Join me in prayer.

Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint.  
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.  
(Psalm 61:1) Amen.