

NATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Unshaken_ Daniel Chapter 4

Dr. Mark Batterson

In 1860, there were 54,543 doctors in the United States, only 300 of them were women and none of them were black. That year, the New England Female Medical College admitted its first African American student; Rebecca Lee Crumpler would become the first black woman to earn a medical degree, a Doctorate of Medicine. To appreciate how high and how hard this glass ceiling was in 1920, 60 years later, there were still only 65 African American women practicing medicine. Dr. Crumpler graduated from med school in 1864. She moved to Richmond, Virginia in 1865. Imagine this, moving to the capital of the Confederacy to practice medicine as an African American woman. She endured relentless racism and sexism, but she did so with amazing grace and tremendous courage. How? How did she do this? Rebecca Lee Crumpler made no distinction between medical practice and religious practice. In her words, it was a proper field for real missionary work. She wasn't just a doctress she was a prophetess. I want you to hold that thought.

March 3, 1865 Congress establishes the Freedmen's Bureau to provide food and housing, education, medical care for 4 million slaves who were now free. The head of the bureau from 1865 to 1874 was a civil war general nicknamed 'the Christian General', Oliver Otis Howard. He helps secure the vote for emancipated slaves and served as the president of the school that bears his name. We've got a few alums at NCC shout out to Howard University.

So Crumpler is practicing medicine but supplies are short, and doctors are few and far between 120 doctors to care for 4 million emancipated slaves. So what does Rebecca Lee Crumpler do? Well, she's already broken one glass ceiling, why not break another one? If slaves can't get the medical care they need, then she will empower them and equip them and train them to be nurses and doctors themselves. In 1883 she publishes a book of medical discourses, the only female physician author in the 19th century.

What does any of that have to do with the book of Daniel? Well stick with me. Daniel spent three years learning the language and literature of the Chaldeans. We talked about this week one, why so that he could influence the culture from the inside out. Daniel is bilingual. The book itself written in two languages, you've got Hebrew - this would have been Daniel's native tongue. And it is revered by the Jewish people as Lashon Hakodesh, or the holy tongue. And you've also got Aramaic, which is the international language of diplomacy, and politics. This is not insignificant; prophets are fluent in two languages, the language of God, and the language of man. And their ability to code switch between them is a gift of the Holy Spirit that I would liken to the gift of interpretation, 1 Corinthians 12.

Now we'll talk a little bit more about that next week but here's the bottom line. We need a word from God. And the way you get a word from God is by getting into the Word of God. It's so critical that we take our cues from Scripture, right now. Scripture is our ideology, it's our theology. May God give you an insatiable hunger for his word that our weekend messages cannot satisfy.

If you want to influence culture, you can't just be Christianese. If you want to influence culture, you can't just create a subculture. We are not trying to build a church we are trying to bless the city to the third and fourth generation and we are praying some bold prayers. We're praying one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Here's the problem. We like saying, come to church and that's great. Listen; please invite your friends to our online campus - live.national.cc. But Jesus said, "Go into all the world". And this is not just geography, this is ethnology and technology. In fact, If you're from somewhere around the world that our online camp just let us know where you're from around the country, where are you from technology is allowing us to literally fulfill this great commission, and it encompasses every sphere of society.

The Dutch politician and theologian Abraham Kuyper said it this way, "There is not a square into the whole domain of human existence over which Christ who is sovereign over all does not cry, mine." I don't care who you are. I don't care what you do. You are called by God to be a prophet to your sphere of influence. We get so focused on people going to heaven that we get this backwards. What did Jesus say what did Jesus pray? "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is heaven invading earth. This is eternity invading time. All too often I think we're guilty of complaining about culture, rather than creating it.

I love Michelangelo's maxim, "Criticize by creating". You can do nothing wrong and still do nothing, right. Goodness is not the absence of badness. It's not enough to not be part of the problem. God calls us to a higher standard. What is it? To bring supernatural solutions to seemingly impossible problems. That's who we are, as the Church of Jesus Christ. How? With some prophetic imagination. We're gonna be talking a lot about it the next two weeks. Bottom line quit cursing the darkness and light a scented candle with the aroma of Christ. How? Write a better book. Start a better business. Draft better legislation. Produce a better film. How? With the help of the Holy Spirit.

And Speaking of films - 1930s a producer at 20th Century Fox writes a letter to the presidents of prominent Christian colleges asking them to send screenwriters, he wanted to produce films with redemptive storylines. One of those presidents wrote back and said he would rather send his students to hell than Hollywood. God is raising up a generation of Daniels and Esthers and Deborahs and Nehemiahs ordinary people with a prophetic anointing that enables them to do things they can't take credit for.

Prophets don't predict the future. Listen to me, prophets are the future. They break glass ceilings, they blaze new trails. How? With that same 10 x anointing that helped Daniel do what he did. It is available to you. I pray it on your life right now. And that brings us all the way back to Rebecca Lee Crumpler.

In America in 1860 a black woman learning the language of medicine was the dynamic equivalent of Daniel learning Chaldean, and it inspires me. I know code switching has a lot of connotations, but that's what prophets do. They get a word from God and then they exercise the same gift that Daniel did this gift of interpretation. Prophets speak two languages. Prophets have what W.E.B. Du Bois called second sight or double consciousness. I'm taken a little bit of liberty right here, but it's the ability to see things and say things in two ways. We need that 10 x anointing, we need that double consciousness. We need that prophetic imagination to come up with those supernatural solutions to those impossible problems. Why? So that God's kingdom can come. So that God's will can be done on earth as it is in heaven?

Alright, let's do this thing. Daniel chapter four, you can meet me there. Here we go. Verse one, *"King Nebuchadnezzar sent his message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: "Peace and prosperity to you!"* ² *"I want you all to know about the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God has performed for me."* ³ *How great are his signs, how powerful are his wonders! His kingdom will last forever, his rule through all generations."*

This sounds so good. Nebuchadnezzar is saying all the right things. But I'm gonna call his bluff. Virtue signaling is as old as Nebuchadnezzar. It's publicly expressing an opinion that's socially acceptable, that's politically correct, but it's disingenuous. It's saying the right things, but you can't just talk the talk; you have to walk the walk. My concern is it relates to cultures that we would rather look good than do good and we'd rather be right than be righteous. That's not good enough. It's not going to get us where we need to go. A lot of virtue signaling, a lot of virtue shaming, right now, and we'll talk about a little bit more in our post message Q & A.

Virtue signaling, it's not going to get us where we need to go as a nation. Newsflash, hash tags aren't going to get us where we need to go as a nation, political ideology not going to get us where we need to go as a nation. Listen, praying for people who work in that sphere of influence, is not easy right now. We are praying for you.

Now here's what I believe. We need revival. We need revival. And revival starts with repentance and repentance starts with the church. 2 Chronicles 7:14, *"If My people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

We're going to keep climbing that Upper Zoom. By the way, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday new rhythm, we're going keep climbing that Upper Zoom. We're gonna keep standing on, keep kneeling on that promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14

Verse four, "*I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous.*"

Now if you read this whole chapter, tell me if you notice who's narrating it. Really interesting, verse four Daniel takes the mic and he hands it to Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar himself narrates this entire chapter which is amazing because it lets us into this ancient kings head space into his heart space. The word prosperous in Aramaic can translate luxuriant. Nebuchadnezzar is living in the lap of luxury. He is the epitome of Babylonian privilege. And that's when a dream scares him, half to life. You read all about it, verse 10, I'll give you the cliff notes. In that dream Nebuchadnezzar sees a tall tree so tall you can't even see the top, it provides food, and it gives shade. And then in the vision a watchman appears and says, cut down the tree, cut off the branches, shake the leaves and scatter the fruit. Now it sure seems it sure sounds like this tree is being destroyed. Yes, the tree is being cut down to size, no doubt. But if you know anything about dendrology, this is called pruning. Okay, if you want a tree to grow the right way, you've got to trim it you've got to prune it for structural integrity, for maximum fruitfulness. Pruning mitigates the risk of broken limbs. And here it is this is key, It allows for new growth, for new growth.

You get to the end of the dream and there's a promise God leaves a stump. Why? So that it can grow again. You tell me, you tell me. Does it not seem like God is cutting down that tree, is shaking that tree? Does it not seem like a season of pruning in the church, in our country? But I want to personalize this. How and where is God pruning you? He loves you, just the way you are, loves you too much to leave you that way. Listen, God wants to produce fruitfulness in your life. And one of the ways that he does it is through pruning. Why? Because he loves you. Potential, God's gift to you what you do with it is your gift back to God. And pruning is a part of this process.

I don't know how we're gonna look back on 2020, I don't know yet. But I'm more and more convinced it's a year of pruning. I'm more and more convinced it's a year of reckoning and I'm going to talk more about that next week.

Versus eight, "*At last Daniel came in before me, —he who was named Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God.*"

And in verse nine, he flips the coin and doubles down. "*The spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you.*"

I got the strangest prompting this week as I was preparing this message. Someone needs to hear what I'm about to say. I trust the Holy Spirit in you. I have no idea who that's for. I have no idea what that is about. I want you to hear me. I trust the Holy Spirit in you and God does too.

There's a lot happening right here. We're reminded of the name given to Daniel by Nebuchadnezzar. Please hear what I'm about to say the enemy wants to undermine your identity in Christ. How? By giving you a false identity, fashioned in the dominant image of cultural icons. Did you hear what I just said? The culture wants to name you. The culture wants to tame you. And Daniel somehow remains Daniel. How does this happen? I'm gonna tell you exactly how. The internal pressure of the Holy Spirit at work in his life is greater than all of the external pressure that Babylon can bring to bear. Daniel is spirit filled. Daniel is spirit lead. JND - psychologists would call it just noticeable difference. It's the thing that sets you apart. It's the X Factor. It's the IT factor. It's the thing that makes you noticeable and remarkable and unstoppable. It's that 10 x anointing that we talked about week one. It's the Spirit of God, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead that dwells in you. That is your JND. That is the just noticeable difference in our lives.

Now, this is hard to explain, stick with me. At this point outside Israel, gods were geographical gods were territorial. They sheltered in place. They only had power in their jurisdiction, not Yahweh. Daniel is 900 miles from the temple in Jerusalem doesn't matter. Why? Because God doesn't dwell in temples made by human hands. The Talmud says it this way. "From the day the temple was destroyed God has nothing in this world, but four cubits of Halakha. Halakha - Hebrew for law, oral and written etymologically. It means the way or the way of walking. The curveball is four cubits. What's that about? God has nothing in this world, but the four cubits of Halakha. Well, according to one rabbinic tradition, four cubits, which would be six feet refers to you and to me. And that's precisely what the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians six, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?" So many people don't know this? This is a game changer. You are a walking, talking Torah. You are a walking, talking temple.

Daniel will never see the temple again. Temple is 900 miles away. No, no, no, no, no, no temple is right here, right now. You are the only Torah some people will ever read. You are the only temple that some people will ever visit. I hope you're picking up what I'm throwing down. Daniel is the Torah. Daniel is the temple to the most powerful person on the planet in the sixth century BC.

Listen to this. Nebuchadnezzar plunders the temple in Jerusalem. That doesn't deter God. God uses a human temple named Daniel to do what Israel's army could not and bring an ancient potentate to his knees. That's the power of God in you. You're the only Bible some people ever read. You're the only church some people will ever attend. Listen, as terrible as this COVID crisis is as much as we can't wait to meet again. It has reminded us you can't go to church because you are the church, hash tag NCC anywhere.

Now, here's the amazing thing about Daniel. Daniel is operating in the gifts of the Spirit 700 years before those gifts are even named or identified. Birds don't need or anthropologists to fly; fish don't need a ichthyologists to swim. Daniel is functioning in at least six of the nine supernatural gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 - they don't even exist yet. But Daniel is exercising them.

Please hear me, we are entering a season where we need to download and upgrade the gifts of the Spirit out work in our lives, and it's happening. God is activating words of wisdom and words of knowledge. God is activating faith and healing and miracles. By the way, today, four years ago today God healed my lungs. 40 years I had asthma and God says, "Be open". I haven't touched an inhaler from that day to this day. How do you steward a miracle like that? You believe God for even bigger and better miracles.

Do you need healing today? Our prayer team is ready to pray with you pray, for you and believe God for a miracle. We are being reminded of how dependent upon the Holy Spirit we are. In him we live and move and have our being. Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord. We need the Spirit of God to stir and prompt and reveal and seal and heal and comfort and convict and quicken. We just need the Holy Spirit to take over and fill these temples in a way that we have never experienced.

Next week we'll talk about the gift of prophecy. I want to talk about prophetic imagination? I want to take two minutes talk about one of these gifts that I think is overlooked and underappreciated. It's a gift of discernment. If you're taking notes, you'll find this in the notes tab if you're at our online campus. If you're taking notes, you can jot this down. It's the ability to distinguish between what is true and what is false. But let me nuance this a little bit. I think that includes false motives. I think it includes false humility. I think it includes false narratives. It's rightly dividing the word of truth, 2 Timothy 2:15. It's an awareness of the enemy schemes, 2 Corinthians 2:11

The enemy, who I don't like to give a whole lot of airtime to, but I think it's important. Three signatures, you know the; One, he's the accuser of the brethren. One of the tactics he uses is guilt and shame to keep us trapped in the past. So there's no energy left for us to dream about a better about a different future. You have to identify the false accusations. Cancel culture is playing right into the enemy's hands. One strike and you're out. No, it's not how we roll. 70 times seven, this is a moment for an extra measure of grace. And there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Aren't you grateful today? Would you just take a deep breath, no condemnation for those who are in Christ?

Second signature, smoke and mirrors, he masquerades the Bible says as an angel of light. Angel of light makes wrong seem right and right seem wrong. There's a lot of that happening right now. We live in a culture where it's wrong to say something is wrong. I think that's wrong. We sacrifice truth on the altar of tolerance where we celebrate, God help us, where we celebrate as right things that we know are wrong. This goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. The serpent calls into question what God said. How? Just a slight distortion to cast out; even quote scripture to Jesus in the wilderness. What makes you think that the enemy won't try to misinterpret and misapply scripture in your life? You need to rightly divide it need the gift of discernment. Curse of Ham Exhibit A. I mean come on, slave owners used and abused the Bible to defend their racism.

And finally, the enemy is called the father of lies. I love the way Pastor Heidi our pastor of prayer and our Sozo team says this, "Anywhere there is a loss of hope you have believed in a lie of the enemy." His

native tongue false narrative, false ideology, fake news, we have never needed discernment more than we do right now. Let's keep it real.

Verse 19, Daniel was perplexed. It's okay to be confused. Different translations use the words alarmed, appalled, confused, worried, and scared. And does that sound like about where we are right now? This COVID crisis seems to be making a resurgence. Conversation around racism sometimes feels like a fiery furnace. Hey, listen, at least we have an election coming up so that should calm things down - or not. I know we're tired, we're frustrated. We're angry. We're exhausted. We're genuinely concerned about a country that seems to be at a crossroads. Please hear me. Don't lose faith. Don't lose heart. We're going to confront the brutal facts but we're going to do it with unwavering faith. Why? Because God's got this. God's got you. The battle belongs to the Lord. Don't lose faith in the end of the story.

I am so out of time just gonna go for verse 29. At the end of 12 months, I love it. God gives Nebuchadnezzar a year. He is so long suffering. He is so patient with Nebuchadnezzar's pride. But at some point enough is enough. He's a year older but he's not a year wiser. He's a year prouder and a year louder. Nebuchadnezzar was talking, taking a walk on the flat roof of the Royal Palace in Babylon as he looked out across the city. He said, just look at this great city of Babylon. You'll have to forgive me this. I built this city built this, built this in rock and roll, like that's what's probably going through his head, okay, " And I by my own mighty power, have built this beautiful city as a royal residence as an expression of my royal splendor."

First of all, who talks like this? Right? And what is going... Could he be any more impressed with himself? There comes a moment where there's a straw that breaks the camel's back. And it's almost like pride takes over his entire personality. It says the king is reduced literally to animal instincts. "Let him be given the mind of an animal for seven periods of time." I want to be careful here, I want to exegete this without too much liberty, but you know, psychologists would talk about our lizard brain This most primitive part of our brain that really only gives us two options fight or flight. And there's some of that happening right now. And you flash forward seven years his hair is like eagles feathers, his nails are like birds claws. Listen to me. It's a picture of what pride does and it's not pretty. Pride will bring out the worst in you it will reduce you to animal instincts.

Some lessons take seven years to learn. Some lessons take seven years of humbling. Some lessons take seven years of pain and suffering. This is right about rock bottom. I want you to hear this. We may give up on God; God doesn't give up on us. It's like he gives Nebuchadnezzar a seven year grace period.

I'm gonna close with this. It's the tipping point. It's a turning point. Verse 26, Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar, "Your rule will be restored." God is in the restoration business. Your rule will be restored when you acknowledge that heaven rules. One of my all time favorite movie moments I'm going to close with this, invite the band to come. Rudy all time classic, you know having this moment in

the chapel with Father Cavanaugh and Father Cavanaugh says, "Son, in 35 years of religious study, I've come up with only two hard incontrovertibly facts - There is a God and I'm not him.

Have you had that revelation yet? There is a God in heaven. He is seated on his throne. He's not nervous. He's gracious. He's loving. He's powerful. He's just. He's merciful and his kingdom is gonna come and his will is going to be, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. But would you do that right now?

Listen, playing God is exhausting. It's what Nebuchadnezzar does his entire life. I think one of the greatest gifts God can give us is letting us get to the end of our rope, letting us come to this revelation that the world doesn't revolve around us. And because of that we don't have to keep the planets in orbit. You don't have to solve every problem. You don't have to judge every issue. You don't have to be right every time Why? You're not God.

Can I invite you in this moment to surrender your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He died on a cross. You mean the cross to Christ. He loves you. He loves you. On the third day, rose from the dead, walked out that tomb and that is what makes all things possible, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." If you're at our online campus right now, would you just raise that hand? Our team is ready waiting to pray with you, to pray for you. And I want to be the first to say welcome to the family.