

The God of the Impossible *Topical Message*

Topic: Discipleship
Subject: How do we know God's presence when he feels absent?
Complement: God shows that he is with us in "impossible" situations.
Purpose: The listeners will trust God to be with us in "impossible" situations

Introduction

1. Interest: This is not my typical message, but it has been an encouragement to me. The "Footprints in the Sand" story shows only two footprints in the sand. "In those most difficult times of your life when you saw only one set of footprints in the sand, it was then that I carried you."
2. Need: God is there when we often think that he is not. How can we be faithful disciples when we do not see God at work?
3. Subject: How do we know God's presence when he feels absent?
4. Background: We often fail to sense God's presence with us.
5. Preview: Three stories from the Bible teach us about conflict, something impossible, and praise.

I. Daniel's three friends saw God in their fiery trial (Dan 3).

- A. Conflict: In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar saw a multi-metal statue, but it morphed to be all gold in chapter 4!
 1. Daniel 3 depicts the entire statue in gold, and all are commanded to worship it. This was difficult for strangers in a foreign land.
 2. What would be so difficult about moving one's body to fall down? Yet Daniel's friends resisted it.
- B. Impossibility: The fiery furnace was where blocks for building were fired, so it was extremely hot when they were thrown in, so much so that it killed the guards (3:17).
- C. Praise: King Nebuchadnezzar praised God. In the times when we feel weak, God joins us in the fire. In fact, the fourth man in the fire is always with us, even when there is no fire.

II. Daniel found God's protection in the lion's den (Dan 6).

- A. Conflict: After prayer was deemed illegal, Daniel continued to pray faithfully toward Jerusalem.
- B. Impossibility: Daniel committed himself to be dinner for the lions, not dinner *with* the lions, but dinner *for* lions, yet God delivered him.
- C. Praise: Darius honored the Jewish God instead of his own.

III. Jesus walked on water to deliver his men from death (Matt 14:22-36).

- A. Conflict: Jesus sent the disciples away so they would be tested in his absence. Peter was conflicted in his faith, wondering whether it was really Jesus walking on the water.

- B. Impossibility: As an experienced swimmer, Peter still could not walk on water, so he began to sink.
- C. Praise: "Lord, save me!" was answered (14:30).

Conclusion

1. God shows that he is with us in "impossible" situations (Main Idea).
2. In 2024, Mina went through a difficult period with the birth of his second baby. Mina dreamed that the one on the right of Jesus on the cross was laughing while the one on the left encouraged him. During his difficult time, Jesus delivered him from his situation.