

# Only God Can Do That – My Testimony

Daniel 4:2-3

## Preface

In the Old Testament, we read of King Nebuchadnezzar who was a man full of pride and self serving desires. He spent much of his life at war conquering one nation after another. He took millions of slaves for the purpose of building his empire. He was a ruthless and cruel king.

But eventually King Nebuchadnezzar experienced God as the result of a frightening dream and Daniel, a godly man who interpreted his dream. The same king who ordered the fiery furnace be heated seven times hotter for three young Hebrew men later praises God for his blessings.

## Scripture – Read

<sup>2</sup> *It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.*

<sup>3</sup> *How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation. Daniel 4:2-3 NIV*

## Introduction

Some weeks, sermons come to me easily and some weeks I struggle to gather my thoughts and inspiration. Last week was an easy week. I woke up early one morning and God just gave me the message “The Unwanted Gift.” All I had to do was rush to the office and type up the message.

This week God placed upon my heart that he wants me to give my testimony. Early in the week it was perfectly clear to me God wanted me to just share my testimony. As the week has progressed, I found myself looking for other things to preach

about. Don’t misunderstand me, my testimony is one of the most precious things I have and it is one of the few things that no one can ever take away from me. But, I know you have heard it many times before and I am not sure you want to hear it again. But I must be obedient to what God would have me do and trust him for the outcome.

## Content

### 1. A Ruff Start

My earliest memories begin around the age of 5. By this time my father had already abandoned my mother with two children. We lived in Pascagoula Mississippi where I spent most of my time at my grandparent’s home.

On Saturdays I had to either go to a daycare with my sister or spend the day with my grandfather at the local beer joint. My preference was the beer joint as the owner would let me play pool free as long as my grandfather sat at the bar and kept ordering beers.

We eventually lived in a two bedroom duplex that was part of a government housing project much like the ones you see from the interstate in Mobile and Prichard. It was made from blocks and did not have air conditioning but it was a safe place to live and a roof over our heads.

As a young boy, I lived daily with feelings of inferiority. I had no father and no one to give me guidance on how to deal with life. I was often bullied and did not know how to do most of the things other boys did.

I did get to play little league baseball a couple of years. I had to walk about two miles to practice on Saturdays but it gave me an opportunity to participate and be around other boys.

By the time I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, my mother was on her third marriage and we moved to Orlando Florida. There I continued to

be exposed to alcohol but this time it was among the kids my age. By the 8<sup>th</sup> grade I was drinking and looking for ways to get in trouble. All I had ever known was drinking and divorce and I was confident my life would be just more of the same.

## 2. A Phenomenal Youth

In the latter part of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, we moved to Grand Bay Alabama. It was an opportunity for a fresh start but I wasn't looking for a fresh start. I was searching for something but I had no idea what I was searching for.

One day a cute girl invited me to come to her church that night where they were having a revival. I wasn't about to turn down an opportunity be around some cute girls so I went without any thought to the idea I was going to church. The only other time I had been in church was as a child when I attended VBS thanks to a church van and some kind people.

That night as I sat in church and listened to the preacher, I heard him tell the story of how Christ died on the cross for my sins. I heard him speak of being born again. I heard him speak of God's love for me. I heard the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I felt the Holy Spirit of God come all over me. I felt conviction, I felt sadness, I felt joy, I felt relief and I felt sorrow all in one moment. That night I accepted God's gift and began a journey that completely changed my life forever.

The coming years were nothing short of phenomenal. The boy with no father became a child of the King. The boy with no fatherly guidance was sent man after man by God to provide me with guidance, examples and inspiration.

I had a pastor who spent a lot of time with me. There was a Sunday School teacher, a training union director and a youth minister who taught me and mentored me. I made life-long Christian friends and preached my first sermon in that church.

## 3. A Blessed Life

Believing that God would provide a way, I eventually attended William Carey College where I studied the Bible and girls.

One girl in particular always caught my eye when she was on campus. She was beautiful. But still carrying a bit of an inferiority complex, I did not dare approach her.

I had a friend that was from Venezuela who always called me "Tooker." I affectionately called him spic. He was always asking different girls out and was almost always turned down. He kept telling me he wanted me to meet this one girl he was friends with. I insisted I was not interested.

Unaware of his scheme to play match-maker, I agreed to meet him in the grill after chapel on a Tuesday morning. He had also invited the girl he had been telling me about.

To my surprise, the girl was the beautiful blonde I had seen so many times on campus. Her name was Pam Powell. I was immediately smitten. Before long we were dating and within a couple of years we were married. She became my first wife and my only wife. This week I was on my old college campus and I took a moment to stand in that grill to reflect and thank God.

We have been blessed with two children and now a daughter-in-law and grandson. We are looking for "Mr. Right" for the son-in-law and we will be all set.

Seriously, God has blessed my life immensely. I have gone from a boy with no father to the son of the King. From a boy full of insecurity to a man with confidence in what God can do.

A father myself, I have leaned on God's direction for parenting. I have trusted God's leadership for what is right and it has always paid off.

I have made many mistakes but His grace has always been sufficient. God's forgiveness has always allowed me to return to the throne of my Father and continue in His blessings.

#### 4. A God Given Ministry

God has blessed me with a wonderful life. My teenage years could have been disaster but instead they were phenomenal; thanks to God.

I have been blessed with a wonderful family in who I am so proud. I love every moment I have with each member of my family. They mean so much to me.

But I want you as a church to know something. You have been the blessing of the latter half of my life. How could I have ever known that God would bless me yet again with a ministry that is so rich and meaningful to me? You are not just a ministry; you are my church and my friends.

Every single week I think about how blessed I am. Every deacon's meeting I think about how blessed I am to have such fine men with whom to serve God with and be friends. God has blessed me with a ministry and a church that I have grown to love.

Illus: On Friday, I left my office with a trailer carrying a shooting house my son and I built. As I began down highway 98, I encountered a couple of farmers moving some large harvesting equipment and hogging the road. As I went around them I waved. In seconds my cell phone was ringing and one of the farmers was ragging me about the color of my shooting house. When I hung up the phone I thought to myself how blessed I am to have such friends who are members of our church. God has blessed me with the ministry of Barnwell Baptist Church and many great people.

Illus: This past Wednesday I traveled back to William Carey College where one of my professors was being honored. His name is Dr William Clawson. It was sad to see Dr Clawson walking up the sidewalk all humped over and pushing a walker. But as I sat and listened to men speak of his influence on their lives, I wanted to speak too. Dr Clawson was one of the godly men in my life who influenced me and helped me find God's will for my life.

Most people are busy seeking success through every means possible. As I looked at Dr Clawson, I realized that he never sought success. Instead, he obtained significance. He touched countless lives. He taught many young people the word of God and he became a friend and mentor to so many young ministerial students. He obtained something much greater than success; he obtained significance.

This should be my desire and your desire. We must pray for God to use us to touch other's lives with our own ministry.

#### Conclusion

Illus: About 12 years ago I marched myself over to Foley to the John Deere dealership with the intent of purchasing a new riding mower. I had to do it quick before my wife changed her mind.

I bought a brand new John Deere LT160, 42" cut with a 16 hp Kohler engine. Over the years, every time I used the mower, I took the blower and blew off the grass clippings and dirt and then hosed it off and put it in the garage. I will confess that on 2 occasions I have even waxed the thing. Now that is eccentric.

A few years ago I ran into a light pole with it and busted up the entire hood and front end. I ordered a replacement and the mower to this day looks very nice, not brand new but very nice.

A couple years ago the rod in the engine broke damaging the internal parts and completely locking up the motor. The mower sat in my shop with the cover on the floor, the engine taken apart and in a bunch of pieces in a box. It was a sad sight to behold.

The people at John Deere and Wilson Dismukes both said it wasn't worth spending any money on and I should get a new one. But they didn't see what I saw. I still saw value. In fact, I saw an LT160 that had the ability and potential to be a great riding mower for many more years to come. I saw something that needed a little work and investment but had plenty to offer.

God sees the same in you. God sees His children as broken but fixable. If we will just trust and obey His instructions, He will do great things in our life.

All of us have broken parts; some physical and some emotional. But with a little investment and work, we still have plenty to offer. Through the love of God in Christ Jesus, we have potential beyond measure.