

How You Can Have a Firm Faith in the Face of Crisis, Including COVID-19

Dr. Mark Rutland, pastor, former president of two universities and *New York Times*' bestselling author, has experience with crisis—as do most of us in these days of COVID-19.

In a recent episode of *The Leader's Notebook* on the Charisma Podcast Network, Rutland examines how faith impacts life in the midst of crisis. He looks to what he terms “the call report,” or report of how he was called into office, of the prophet Isaiah to give us a word for our times. He says Isaiah begins his call report in the sixth chapter of his book by pointing to the death of King Uzziah: “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple” (Isa. 6:1, KJV).

But who was King Uzziah? Rutland says, “Uzziah had been a young king. He was a very religious king. He brought back temple worship; he was a patron of the priesthood. So certainly Isaiah, who is a priest, loved him and appreciated him. He was a very charismatic young king; he brought to the throne a lot of success, immediate success militarily, and economically, there was kind of a national resurgence under Uzziah.

“But then, at the peak of his career, as he became more successful and became more prominent, in the pride of his heart, in arrogance, he attempted to insinuate himself into the priesthood and go into the temple and perform priestly duties,” Rutland says. “This was absolutely forbidden. Even the king is not a priest; only priests are priests. So the legitimate priesthood resisted him. And Uzziah the king became

so angry that he was stricken with leprosy.” Rutland explains that it was a disgrace for the king to have leprosy, and ultimately, he died of the disease, adding, “So this is the historical reference point that Isaiah is referencing when He begins Isaiah Chapter 6.”

Rutland says we should think about God using this specific point in history to appear to His servant. “Why would he appear to Isaiah the prophet at exactly that moment in human history as a King, seated upon His throne? Don’t you see, He’s sending him a wonderfully comforting message. He’s saying, ‘I know that you’re worried because the king of Israel is dead. But I’m showing you that the King of heaven is alive.’

“He’s saying to Isaiah and to us, ‘You’re concerned, you’re burdened, you’re worried about the future because the throne of your country is empty, but I’m revealing to you the throne of heaven is occupied. That’s the reason that the little word ‘also’ is so important. ... ‘In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord.’

“In other words, he’s not denying that the king has died. Faith in the face of crisis is not denial,” Rutland says. “We don’t deny that there is a virus abroad. We don’t deny when the economic indicators all go down. We don’t deny that the stock market is in trouble or whatever it is. We are not immune from the crises of life. We live in the history of our own day. We live in our own contemporary society. We have to; we’re here. And faith is not denial.”.

To hear more of Dr. Rutland’s wisdom on how we can face crises with faith, not fear, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}