

FAITH CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

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From *Pastor Sheri's Desk...*"

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DEAR HEZEKIAH...

I am always fascinated by the life of King Hezekiah. I have had the occasion this month to delve into his life once again, in our Wednesday Night Bible Study and even in a Sunday message. As I study the life of Hezekiah I find him to be an incredibly refreshing type of leader – especially in light of our day – where leaders are obsessed with opinion polls and godly values are sacrificed on the altar of political correctness. Hezekiah was a king who was zealous for God –

2 Kings 18:5-6

He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. [6] For he clung to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses.

To give us some brief context, it was a rough time for Israel. They had grown cold in their relationship with God. They had wandered so far from Him that they actually had to be taught all over again how to worship the Lord (2 Kings 17:28). After which they began again to worship Him, but unfortunately this was *in addition to worshipping their pagan gods.*

Life Application Study Bible: *“They worshipped God to appease Him rather than to please Him, treating Him as a good luck charm or just another idol to add to their collection.”*

So, needless to say – God had to turn up the heat as He does in His love and faithfulness. Israel was exiled to Assyria. And the sad thing is – this didn't need to happen. For God had warned them previously to destroy the pagan influences that He knew would lead them away from Him. But they didn't obey Him in this.

Just when things seemed beyond hope – God raised up King Hezekiah. God breathed new life into the remnant through him. Hezekiah removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones, and cut down the Asherah poles. And get this –Hezekiah even destroyed the bronze snake Moses had made! Why? Because the Israelites had been burning incense to it! Talk about courage – *I've heard of churches splitting over painting the bathroom a different color --can you imagine destroying something Moses had made? Moses!*

Hezekiah's kingdom was small – but it rose to great importance under his leadership. How did this happen?

2 Kings 18:7

And the Lord was with him; wherever he went he prospered...

But the sun wasn't always shining for King Hezekiah. He had the King of Assyria breathing out threats and attacking all the fortified cities of Judah. He also compelled Hezekiah to pay a heavy tribute and was constantly trying to intimidate Hezekiah and his people – threatening them with destruction.

After one such incident when the Assyrian king had sent a delegation to issue more threats – Scripture tells us that it really got to Hezekiah.

2 Kings 19:1

And when King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth....

But fortunately that's not all Hezekiah did. Verse 1 continues...Hezekiah "**went into the temple of the Lord.**" He knew where to go! He knew he needed to meet with God. Hezekiah did something else. He sent for the prophet Isaiah. The nation was in trouble and the people and the name of Jehovah were being menaced. 2 Kings 19:3, tells us that Hezekiah told Isaiah, "**this is a day of distress, rebuke and disgrace.**" It was a time when they needed a Word from God.

Where do we go when life is crushing in on us? This is a good soul-searching question for us to bring before the Lord. The answer to it will either help us or it could destroy us. Hezekiah had done well to call on Isaiah because he told him what the Lord had to say about the situation.

2 Kings 19:6

Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master, 'This is what the Lord says: **Do not be afraid of what you have heard--** those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

Next came more threats of destruction **in the form of a letter.** When life delivers its worst, the best thing for us to do is to flee to Almighty God. He is the only One who can give us a shift in our perspective.

Louie Giglio, "Goliath Must Fall" –

It's all about worship. Worship is simply a shift of attention that allows us to see God better. Worship puts God in focus. The difference comes when I shift my thinking before I close my eyes at night. I say to myself, "**This belongs to God!**" Lift your eyes to the One who is actually in control.

Hezekiah sought God in his refuge in the Temple. I just love what he did next. He took that letter that was full of threats, and **he spread it out before the Lord** (19:14). Then the prophet Isaiah prophesied the fall of king Sennacherib. God accomplished this in one of the most dramatic and miraculous ways. That **night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death 185,000 men** in the Assyrian camp! And king Sennacherib? Well, he withdrew to the temple of his gods – where he was cut down with the sword by his own sons! **God took care of it!**

The Homiletic Commentary: Kings, "No Assyrian host again ever crossed the Jordan. Within a few years from that time the Assyrian power suddenly vanished from the earth. The fame of the fall of Sennacherib's host struck the surrounding nations with terror far and wide."

I want to encourage us today that God is still in the business of taking care of us! When we receive those threatening "*letters*" that life sends us from time to time, we can run to Him, and He will help us. No matter what it is – *an unsettling medical report, a bill that seems impossible to pay, a hateful piece of correspondence*, I encourage you to follow the example of Hezekiah – and **spread it out before the Lord, and pray over it.** Just this week, I had an experience where a person came to the church in deep distress over a letter they had received. We brought the situation before the Lord, we prayed, counsel was sought, and God intervened! For you see, they knew where they needed to go. They knew that God would meet them at their point of need. God has not changed! He is still on the Throne!

Philippians 4:6-7

[6] *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

So no more Xinxiangphobia (which Wikipedia tells me is *the fear of mailboxes*). Introduce your mailbox to your God! Communion with God brings us peace. *No postage required.*

He who climbs above the cares of this world, and turns his face to his God has found the sunny side of life. Charles Spurgeon

See you next Sunday. Amen