

## 2 Kings 19:1-37

We tune back in, same “Chap time” same “Chap place” to this the exciting conclusion of the Assyrian conflict with King Hezekiah coming to a head. We left off watching Hezekiah being heckled, being harassed, given a hard time by the enemy Rabshakeh (the main man sorta fella in the army of Assyria) whereby he was taunting the king, and seeking to strike fear in the hearts of the people from beyond the wall. Using “psychological warfare” techniques to give them the mental edge, saying things like, “There isn’t going to be any *body* or any *thing* that’s going to be able to deliver you from our hand.” “And don’t think that your God is going to deliver you either because #1 He’s mad at you for tearing down all of these high places, and #2 He’s the One who sent *me* to destroy *you*.” Both of which were lies, and when the diplomats asked him to speak in Aramaic rather than Hebrew because of all of the people on the wall listening to him, all he did was turn it up a notch. He said, “Hey, they deserve to hear this since they’re going to be the one’s eating and drinking their own waste with you should you not surrender.” And he went on to speak of how good they could have it if they’d just willfully surrender and come with him, but how horrible it would be if they sought to resist his army, then he listed 5 other nations who’d fallen to them, how their gods didn’t deliver them, and the God of Jerusalem would be no different. Ch 18 tells us that they’d already taken several of the fortified cities of Judah, and now here they are knocking on the door of the capital city.

Now this is a serious situation, what do you do? The Assyrians were unbelievably brutal, seemingly unbeatable in battle; there are no less than 185,000 of their soldiers surrounding your city, and the clock is ticking. He’s demanding an answer. Well, this is where we catch up to the narrative, having heard him out, the people answered him not a word, they kept their peace and remained silent. Always a good response when the enemy is harassing *you*, heckling *you*, giving *you* a hard time, making demands *on* you, seeking to obtain a compromise *from* you, just hold your peace and answer him not a word. Don’t seek to reason with him, don’t try to rationalize the situation before him, just hold your peace, don’t engage and take the news to your King (Jesus Christ). Let Him fight your battles for you, deal with the situation accordingly, the enemy way out guns us personally, but our King will deal with the situation properly. So they rent their garments went in before Hezekiah and told him everything that Rabshakeh was saying.

Vs1

Pause right there, already we notice 3 things that Hezekiah did in this his time of trouble, or circumstance of stress that we need to draw attention *to* and make application *of*. When this troubled time came knocking on his door, when this situation that brought stress into his life began to press in on him, what did he do? See it there #1 He tore his clothes, what does that mean? “Jeff, are you saying that when we’re stressed out, or pressed on that we should start tearing our shirts?” No, but what I am saying is that what this speaks *of*, speaks to *us*, because the rending of one’s garment spoke of what? Affliction, and in essence what he’s declaring by tearing his garment is, “This situation is beyond my control, and my ability to deal with on my own.” It’s a declaration, “I’m at the end of my rope, and there’s nothing I can do about it.”

What's the 1<sup>st</sup> thing we want to do when a stressing situation comes knocking on our door? Deal with it, right? I mean, we try to do this, or seek to do that, we put our own efforts and energies into it 1<sup>st</sup> and then if that doesn't work, "I guess I better pray." But what did Hezekiah do? The 1<sup>st</sup> thing he did was recognize, "This is beyond me, it's an affliction *to* me and I'm helpless to do anything about it."

Jesus said, "...*without Me you can do nothing.*" John 15:5 Yet so often we try to deal with matter on our own 1<sup>st</sup> and go to the Lord as our last resort. Hezekiah wisely recognized immediately that he was powerless in and of himself to do anything about his problem. What's the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing he did? #2 He covered himself with sackcloth, what does that speak of? Humility, he humbled himself. Often times we're able to see that a problem is more than us, but that pride begins to swell up, and we don't want people to see us as vulnerable, unable to really handle it, so we continue on as though all is well when in reality things are on the brink of disaster. What did Hezekiah do? 1<sup>st</sup> of all he recognized he was powerless in and of himself to *deal* with his problem, #2 He humbled himself in *regards* to his problem and #3 He went into the house of the Lord. Or to understand that another way, he sought the Lord for the *solution* to his problem.

You see it's one thing to recognize a problem as beyond you, and another still to humble yourself and confess an inability to handle it on your own, but where do you go for your solution? Now we'll talk about this a little more in a few minutes so I won't get into it too much right now but just know that we're to turn to the Lord. See the example here, when there's a situation that's stressing you *out*, or difficult days that are beginning to hedge you *in*, recognize it, confess it as more than you, humble yourself in light of the situation and seek the Lord for your solution. Is there anything else you can do? Yes, notice (as the commercials say) but wait, there's more! Not only should you seek the Lord personally, but

Vs2-5

What's going on here? Not only is Hezekiah seeking God *personally*, but he's asking Isaiah to seek Him *prayerfully* as well. So not only should we seek God *personally* in our day of difficulty, but call upon others to seek God *prayerfully* on your behalf as well. This is called body life, bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ. Paul the apostle consistently called upon other's to pray for him. As you read his epistles you find that he appealed to the Romans to pray for him, the Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Thessalonians (in both letters), the Colossians, Philemon, you find the request in Hebrews, and if Paul the apostle saw the need to solicit the prayers of the people of God on his behalf, how much more you and I need others to be praying for us?

Hezekiah is in a distressing, disturbing situation, so not only does he appeal to God personally, he seeks for Isaiah to seek God prayerfully for him as well. And there in vs 3 he's saying, "The chastisement of God is heavy upon us, and we're at the end." There where he says it's a day of trouble, rebuke and blasphemy, that word blasphemy, could be translated "disdain."

The point is that he's seeing this situation as God allowing this trouble, this rebuke, or this disdain to happen to them because He's trying to get their attention. And there's nothing like trouble, rebuke, and disdain that gets our attention and causes us to plant our face back on the floor seeking God like we should've been previously is there? David said it like this, "*Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.*" Ps 119:67 Hezekiah seems to be saying here, "Isaiah, God is really dealing with me, and now I'm turning to Him and seeking after Him like I should've been before any of this took place." Remember back in ch 18 he sought to strike a bargain, a compromise if you will with the enemy and all that did was open the door for the enemy to come in like a flood and Hezekiah is saying, "I want to get right again." But he sees the situation like a woman having had a long laborious labor, and now that the time for delivery is here she's so weak she can't deliver therefore both will die. He's saying, "There's just no strength in me now to do what needs to be done, if God doesn't do it, we're destined for destruction." Bingo, now God has him right where He wants him.

It's too bad that so often we have to be taken to such an extreme end before we'll confess our inability to do any of it and admit that God will need to do *all* of it. But what's happening here? His weakness is setting the stage for God's strength to be made perfect, that's what Jesus said; "*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*" 2 Cor 12:9 The grace of God will be exuded in this situation. Surrounded by the enemy on every side, doomed to destruction apart from divine intervention, a confession of utter helplessness, desperation, and despondency, he cries out to God, and God will step in and save him, that's the gospel. Mankind doomed to destruction, utterly helpless to do anything about it, but if we'll confess it, humble ourselves before God in it, and cry out to Him, He will rescue us, step in and give to us His salvation.

And we note this reference to, "The Living God" in vs 4 which is a direct/intentional contrast to the dead idols that he's conquered so far. And the idea behind the "remnant" that is left is with regards to all the fortified cities he's already taken, the Assyrian historical record tells us that apart from the 46 cities of Judah that he'd taken and those killed that he'd taken captive 200,150 people. Now did he inflate his records, are they perhaps exaggerated a bit, I don't know, but the point is that when Hezekiah is speaking here of a remnant, you begin to get the idea that he's really at the end of himself on multiple levels. So he's calling for Isaiah to pray for him.

Vs6-7

Translation, "Don't even worry about it, I got it all under control." God says, "It's all a smoke screen, this guy is blowing smoke and he doesn't even know what he's talking about, he's going to hear a rumor, return to his own land, and there he'll die by the sword himself." Guess what the most often repeated phrase, or the equivalency thereof is in the bible. "Do not be afraid" or "Do not fear" or "Fear not" more than any other phrase, the command to not be afraid is repeated throughout the scriptures, you know why?

Because we're a fearful people, we're fraidy cats, but the problem is that when fear grips our heart, it has a paralyzing, or sterilizing effect on the will and way of God in our lives. It just freezes us up, and in reality fear is just the opposite of faith, it sends the message, "God I got to be honest, I just don't trust You on this one. You may've been in control a minute ago, but I'm not so sure now." But the bible says, "...*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*" 2 Tim 1:7 We read in Isa 41:10, "*Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*" It's sorta like the David and Goliath incident, Goliath was out there taunting Israel everyday, but they were all terrified, and because of that what did they do? Nothing, but when David got there, even as a kid, he was full of fear, he was full of faith, and so what did he do? He moved out onto the battlefield, looked at Goliath and said, "*You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands.*" 1 Sam 17:45-47 And the bible tells us that when David moved out onto the field that he began to literally run towards the army to meet the Philistine, and you know the story, but the point is that fear will paralyze us as to where faith will propel us forward, because we trust that there's nothing to worry about with God because He's in control. Jesus said that we're not to fear the one who can kill the body, but rather Him who can destroy both the body and the soul in hell. So Isaiah sends the message to the king, God's got it all worked out, you can rest easy. Perhaps that's word for some here tonight, you're proverbially in sackcloth over an issue, you've rent your garments and have come to the house of the Lord, rest easy, God's got it all worked out.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, don't lean on your own observation, your own understanding, just continue to acknowledge and seek the Him in all that you do and He'll continue to direct you in the way you should go.

Vs8-13

So he ups the credentials of war that he has, spits out 5 more nations on top of the previous 5 that he mentioned in the last ch for added impact. And he says in essence, "I'll be back." He's saying, "I'm leaving for a moment, but don't think this is over, and don't think you can trust a word from your God regarding deliverance." In other words, he's calling God a liar! Did you see that there in vs 10? "Don't let your God in whom you trust deceive you." Tell me this isn't a classic psychological attack of the enemy, the warfare that rages in our minds, and he whispers in your ear, "You don't *really* think you can trust God to deliver you do you?"

Especially if you've seen other people in similar situations, perhaps broken marriages or something, and now you're right there. And you're wanting to reconcile, to let God restore and renew, and the enemy says to you, "You seen what happened to so and so, and the other couple that was in this situation, you don't really think it's going to be any different with you do you? It's over, this is just the way it's going to be and there isn't anything God or anyone else is going to do about it?" That's what's going on here, "You can't really trust in the Lord, haven't you seen what's happened to every other nation we've encountered, it's going to be just the same with you." Now when that voice starts speaking to you, what should you do?

#### Vs14-19

What just happened? Hezekiah turned his *cares*, turned his *despairs* into *prayers*. He took his problem and laid it out before the Lord in prayer, he took the letter to the house of the Lord, spread it out and said, "Lord you can see this, now would you deal with it?" And what I want you to see is that he went to the Lord 1<sup>st</sup>, and this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time we've seen him do this in this ch. We generally go to a counselor 1<sup>st</sup>, or call the pastor 1<sup>st</sup>, but I'm going to let you in on a little secret, the counselor, and the Pastor is just as powerless to deal with your problem as are you. And often times they feel exasperated and frustrated because they want to help, but there's nothing that they can do, other than take it to the Lord with you, seek the word of the Lord along side of you. But learn to establish the habit of seeking God 1<sup>st</sup>, when that proverbial troubling letter comes special delivery to you, spread it out before the Lord, lay it down at the feet of the Lord. Say, "God, You can see all of this, you know my innocence in this, would You remedy this God? This what's being said, this is what they're doing, and yet you know my heart, rescue me Lord." and give God the 1<sup>st</sup> crack at your problem, and you'll find things going much smoother than looking to Him lastly. He took his despair, and turned into prayer, Peter said it like this, "*Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*" 1 Peter 5:6-7 Not *some* of your cares, not only your *really big* cares, all your care, for He cares for you.

And the 1<sup>st</sup> thing that Hezekiah did was to call upon Him in the light of the covenant that He'd made with Israel, "The One who dwells between the Cherubim" there above the mercy seat. Then He confessed that He alone is God, there is no other, and He's the Creator of all things. What's that? Proper perspective, once you realize the magnitude of your God, it really helps alleviate a lot of stress, He's created every thing, translation = "Nothing is too hard for You, my magnanimous problem is but a miniscule thing for You." Then he begs God for His full attention, "Incline Your ear, open Your eyes" Listen to what he's said, look at what he's written, check out my situation. And He says, "You know there's a lot of truth to what he's said, he has laid waste the nations.

He has cast their gods in the fire, but they weren't gods, they were mere wood and stone, the works of men's hands." But then look at vs 19, what's the bottom line reason for Hezekiah's appeal? The glory of God, "Save us O Lord I pray, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone." For Your name's sake God, would you deliver us?

Let me tell you something, that kind of prayer will move the hand of God. When you want to see God move, not for your reputation, or so that you can look so spiritual, or for your own self centered end, but *for Your name's sake*. David often prayed that way, "*For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.*" Ps 25:11 "*You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name's sake, Lead me and guide me.*" Ps 31:3 "*Revive me, O LORD, for Your name's sake! For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.*" Ps 143:11

#### Vs20

Underline a couple of phrases there in your bible, "Because you have prayed to Me, I have heard." But understand that adversely the same is true, if you *don't* pray to the Lord, He won't hear. God hears your prayers, but if you aren't taking the time to pray, than how can you expect God to hear and respond? One other thing real quick perhaps you've noticed as we've made our way through to this point the common thread that's been woven up to this point has to do with hearing. At least 11 times throughout these 20 vs we see the words "hear" or "heard." Hezekiah "heard" what Rabshakeh said and he responded in a certain way, then God "heard" and responded, Rabshakeh "heard" a rumor and responded, so on and so forth, have ears to "hear." The words that we hear so often dictate the response that we take, to hear a threat and *fear*, to hear the word of God and be bolstered in *faith*, to pray and know God *hears*, all those things can determine our course of action. So what do we want to do? Make sure that we're hearing from the Lord, taking heed to *His* word, and not the *hearsay* or the gossip chain, or the voice of the enemy, incline your ear to the Word of God, take heed to the voice of the Spirit of God, not the wiles and devices of our enemy.

#### Vs21-24

In other words God is saying to the king of Assyria, "All this boasting you've been doing in boasting against my people has been in reality boasting against Me." Which is to say that when we bad mouth God's people, we're bad mouthing Him, (that hurts a little doesn't it?) But remember when Jesus said that what you do to the least of these my brethren you do it to who? "To Me." Notice

#### Vs25-26

These vs amaze me in that God will even use the wicked for His righteous cause. God is saying, "You're so blinded by your own pride thinking you've done all this stuff, and all you've been doing is dealing out My righteous judgment upon the wicked, those who've not feared Me. That's the only reason you've defeated anyone, because I've ordained it from the beginning that I would use you as the rod of My anger." And in the book of Isaiah we see a very specific rebuke from the Lord to Assyria there in ch 10, turn quickly to Isaiah Ch 10 Vs 5-15

God is saying, "You've been nothing more than an instrument in my hand and now you've exalted yourself, its time for you to be brought low."

#### Vs27-28

This is poetic justice, this is how they would lead their captives back to their land, by hooks in their noses threaded together by rope and marching them hundreds of miles. God says, “You’ve done all this boasting like you’re all that, but I know who you are. I know your dwelling place, your going out and coming in, and your rage and your arrogance have come up before me and its time to pay the fiddler.”

God knows you intimately, Heb 4:13 “*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*” Of course you could read the 1<sup>st</sup> 12 vs or so of Ps 139, God searches us, and knows us, He comprehends our thoughts afar off, there’s not a word on our tongue but behold he knows it altogether. He knows that we’re but dust, you can masquerade all kinds of things before all kinds of people, but God knows the facts.

#### Vs29-31

In other words, God’s dealing with the Assyrians is going to happen fast. They’ve been there encamped against the city for a while so they weren’t able to plant crops. God’s saying, “No problem the ground will yield plenty for you on its own this year.” And they must’ve been approaching a Sabbatical year or something because God says, “It’ll do the same thing next year and then you’ll be out there in the 3<sup>rd</sup> planting in peace.” And as for the remnant that’s been left, underline those phrases there in vs 30 because it’s what God wants in your life as well. “Take *root* downward, and bear *fruit* upward.” And the balance has to be there, in that order, if you want to bear fruit upward that will last, you have to take root downward as well. It’s like the root system of a tree, if it doesn’t go deep with it’s root to match its upward growth, it’ll eventually topple over. So you need the good and deep root system in the word of God, what does the bible say? “*Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*” Ps 1:1-3

#### Vs32-34

There you have it, not so much as a single arrow will fly into Jerusalem, that’s a pretty bold prophecy considering there’s at least 185,000 blood thirsty soldiers parked right outside their walls. But Isaiah is confident in the word of God, willing to stand on it and trust in it. Why is God defending and saving the city? For His own sake, and for His servant David’s sake. Why does God defend and save you? For His own sake, and for the sake of the Son of David, the greater than David’s sake, Jesus Christ

#### Vs35-37

Now we don't know if it took that angel all night, or 15 minutes to wipe out an army that size, the bottom line is that they're not little fat baby looking characters with diapers and all playing harps on clouds. They're some serious individuals, they're not beautifully adorned women that go on the top of Christmas trees, they have the propensity to be incredibly fierce should the need arise. And the bible tells us that they are, "...*all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*" Heb 1:14 Pretty exciting to think that they've been given watch over us and are prepared to do God's bidding with regard to us at the uttering of His Word.

So this all went down exactly like God said it would, how important it is to learn to turn our despairs into prayers, not respond to what we've heard from the enemy, but from the Lord and let Him fight for us, and defend us, not because we deserve it, but for His own sake, and for the sake of the Son of David, the greater than David, Jesus Christ.

Prayer Points: Lord Help us to learn what it means to cast our cares upon You knowing that You care for us, to turn our despairs into prayers, help us to take root downward in Your Word and to bear fruit upward to Your glory. Give us ears to hear and to heed you, help us not to listen to the lies of the enemy and when we're confronted with stressful situations, may we humble ourselves, come into Your house, seek after Your direction, and not be too proud to seek a network of prayer. Thank You that You're in control, help us to rest in You.