

2 Kings 20:1-21

We've just viewed the incredible event whereby up against overwhelming odds Hezekiah humbled himself, went into the *house* of the Lord and cried out *to* the Lord. 185,000 Assyrian soldiers had surrounded his city, had already wreaked havoc throughout Judah and now they were banging on his door. The enemy came to him, sought to undermine his trusting *in* the Lord or his looking *to* the Lord for his deliverance, but Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, spread out the situation (literally) before the Lord (in that he'd taken the letter that was sent to him by the enemy to the Lord) and said, "God there's nothing too hard for you, incline Your ear; and hear, open Your eyes, and see. These guys have done a lot of damage to a lot of people and they think that You're no more able to protect us than their gods were able to protect them. But those other people weren't serving the Living God, just little trinkets of wood and stone, the work of men's hands. So God I pray that you'd save us now from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone." Which is to say that he appealed to God for *His* names sake, for *His* glory, that all might know that He alone is God and there is none like Him.

So Isaiah sent to Hezekiah with the word of the Lord saying, "Since you've prayed to Me I've heard." and God said, "This guy thinks he's been unstoppable because of his own might, he's been unable to recognize that the only reason that he's been pummeling these other nations is because I've been using him as the rod of My anger, to punish other nations in their wickedness." and He said to the king of Assyria, "But I know where you live, and now *your* arrogance has come up before me, and now I'm going to put *My* hook in *your* nose, and *My* bridle in *your* lips and turn you back by the way which you came." And God promised Hezekiah that He would defend him, and save him for His own names sake, and for His servant David's sake. You know it's always best to let God fight your battles for you, I've discovered that He's much more capable of taking care of circumstances and situations than I am. And when I get out there and begin defending myself, or seeking to vindicate my self on a certain issue, it generally only makes matters worse; but when I don't seek to stand on my own but just let the Lord sort it out, things wind up much better. So when you're having a problem, you feel surrounded on every side, people are perceiving you wrong, or it seems as though the enemy is just overwhelming you. Rather than trying to run out and remedy everything all the time yourself, making sure everyone understands what's happened, and that you're innocent and all the rest, let the Lord deal with it, for His names sake. He knows the situation and is well able to vindicate you, or take care of you, or whatever the need may be. Now if you've violated someone, or willfully offended someone, than yeah, you need to make that right, but if there's been misperceptions, people are viewing you in an untrue light, God will take care of that, don't worry about needing to justify yourself.

Just give your situation over to the Lord in prayer and let God fight for you.

Well Hezekiah did just that. And verse 35 of chapter 19 tells us (read), I'm not sure what other ways corpses come, but there these were-all dead. So Sennacherib departed just like God said he would and he wound up being assassinated in his own country by his own sons, and we read in vs 1 of ch 20.

Vs1

Underline that last sentence there in vs 1, “Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.” Now this is a physical reality for us all, we’re not going to live in these bodies forever.

Place yourself in Hezekiah’s shoes, what would you do if you went to the doctor and all the sudden the test results are in and he says, “Listen, I don’t know how else to put this but your body is wracked with cancer and there’s nothing we can do, your terminal.” And he gives you weeks, maybe months to live. How would you begin to “Set your home in order”? It’s amazing to me how a brush with our mortality has a tendency to recalibrate our perspective to that which is really important. All the sudden those petty arguments that have kept you from talking with a brother or sister in the Lord, or perhaps in your family, those walls begin to come down. And you realize that those things just really aren’t important in light of the brevity of life, the finality of death, and the reality of eternity. And you begin to want to set things in order, reconcile relationships, get serious about your relationship with Jesus. I was talking with a young man last week (doesn’t fellowship here) but I called him about an appointment that we had, and I could tell something was bothering him. And I said, “Is there something I can pray about for you?” And he just starts crying, says, “I got some bad news.” I was expecting to hear perhaps that his wife had cheated on him, or perhaps she was leaving him, or something along those lines, they’re supposed to move in a few months to help start a church plant in some western state and my mind just assumed that something had happened between them. And he’s trying to speak through the tears saying that it’s difficult for him to say out loud, so I just encouraged him to take his time, and he tells me that he’d been to the doctor and that they’d found a tumor in his back around his kidney somewhere between the size of a golf ball to a baseball and that they were concerned that it might be cancerous. And I must’ve called him at just the right time, he said he hadn’t even told his wife yet, was trying to deal with it and all, he has about a 2 yr old little girl and the whole thing. He’s supposed to have it checked out and possibly removed Friday, but I’ll guarantee you that over these last few days his whole life has been rocked and that he’s been reevaluating his priorities. What would you do in a situation like that?

But here’s the news flash, in reality we’re all terminal, the wages of sin is death, now whether that visits us in 15yr, or 15 minutes we don’t know, and it was really grace here that God informed Hezekiah so that he might do what he needed to do to establish someone to take his place on the throne. That’s specifically what he’s being told, “Get things lined up for the next guy because you’re going to die.” But I wanted you to think for just a minute on what the reality of this means for each of us, because ultimately you shall die, and not live, are you ready to enter eternity with out regrets? Is your house in order, if not, pray that God would equip you accordingly to make it so, that He’d give you the boldness mingled with humility to make that call, or to share with that individual that the Spirit’s been convicting you about. Make sure your wife or your husband and your kids are ensured of your love for them, make sure that Jesus Christ is your chief priority, set things in order because life is but a vapor and then we’re gone, after that your opportunity will be gone.

Vs 2-3

Few things to notice here, #1 in vs 2 he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord. In other words he did the best he could to get alone with God, he was obviously incredibly ill, there were no doubt various servants around him, and he turned towards the wall to try and get alone with God and then he began to pray. Or to understand it another way, he took that which troubled him to the Lord. This is sort of a situation where he prayed in secret and was rewarded openly, that's what Jesus said. He said, "...when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." Matt 6:6

Hezekiah wasn't trying to look super spiritual, or be all pious in front of his servants, he turned his face towards the wall, began to weep bitterly, or intensely, and he cried out to the Lord to remember him and how he'd walked uprightly before Him. 3 Things he mentions, #1 "I have walked before You in truth." No shadow of deception, no seeking to get away with things discreetly, no dealing with others deceitfully, just a man of upright integrity before God. Straight up on his business deals, doing right before God and man. #2 "I have walked before You with a loyal heart." Or that might even be rendered, a "perfect" heart, he's not saying that he's sinless, but that in the deep recesses of his heart he's been committed *to* the Lord, sought to be in line and in step *with* the Lord, this word speaks of the attitude of his heart. He's served the Lord with his whole heart. The record tells us concerning Hezekiah, "*He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses.*" 2 Kings 18:5-6 His heart was loyal to the Lord, and #3 "I have done what was good in Your sight." Wouldn't that be a great testimony to have at the end of your life? That you had walked before God in truth, with a loyal, committed, and uncompromising heart, having done that which is good in His sight?

And really what Hezekiah is doing here is pouring his heart out to the Lord and asking God to heal him physically; now listen, there's nothing wrong with pouring your heart out before the Lord, weeping intensely over a situation that moves you personally in a great way. Be it for your own health, your family, a lost individual or whatever. The bible says, "*Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.*" Ps 62:8 But when it comes to praying, and asking God to do something for us, I believe its always best to couch such requests in the words of our Lord, "Nevertheless, not my will, but Your will be done." Because you've heard the phrase, "Be careful what you ask for, you just might get it." And there are times that God will allow us to move in His permissive will so that we might learn to long more for His perfect will even though we're not able to always connect the dots as to how it's beneficial for us in the moment.

We sometimes forget that God is in the business of working out our eternal best interests above and beyond our temporal well being. Not that He's not concerned for our temporal well being, but His priority is upon the eternal. But more often than not, our priority is on the temporal, and now and then God will allow us to come to that place whereby we're willing once again to humble ourselves under His hand and trust His direction for our lives through allowing us to pursue our own path 1st. And once we realize the frailty and foolishness of that, we're prepared to accept His will once again, we're just stubborn that way, God help us to simply walk in His will, His ways, according to His good judgment for our lives. The bible teaches us that God is the giver and taker of life. And we'll develop this more fully in a next time, but it seems here that Hezekiah is setting his affections on the things of this world here. Not in a sinful/carnal way, he just doesn't want to die (not that I can blame him, who does?) But when we set our affections on the things of this world more often than not, (if not always) it serves as a snare to us. Just remember that.

Vs4-6

What a radical succession of rapid-fire promises that God just spills out to Hezekiah in these few vs. Having just come back from the men's conference having listened to Bob speak about the promises of God, it seems that they're jumping out all the more prevalently to me as I read the scripture. And there's a couple things we want to see here, #1 there in vs 5, God hears our prayers, and He sees our tears. And you might note that God hears our prayers immediately.

Often times if we don't see immediate results we begin to wonder if God really even hears us, or perhaps our prayer is being stored away in Heaven and God will get to it in the order that it was received. Like going to the DMV for your license or something, you pull the tag and wait on your #, or you call a billing company about a question on your bill and you have to wait for the customer service to get to you in the order they received the call. But that's not the way it is with God, He hears us *immediately*, before Isaiah even got off the palace grounds God turned him around to take a message to Hezekiah that He'd heard his prayer. But what else, God *seen his tears*, did you know that the bible says that God takes note of, and stores up your tears? Ps 56:8 "*You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?*" So not only is God listening to you *specifically*, and hearing you *immediately*, but He's keeping an eye on you *personally*. He never leaves you nor forsakes you. God not only heard his prayer, but He saw his tears, we might understand it in such a way as to say that God listens and attends unto our prayers *compassionately*. Too many times, (though perhaps we'd never verbalize it this way, or articulate it in this fashion) it seems like we sort of imagine God all walled up and not really concerned for us, but if we pray hard enough/long enough, and serious enough we might *convince* Him to act on our behalf. But what I want you to see here is that we don't have to *convince* God of anything because He's not listening *callously*, or *coldheartedly*, but rather *compassionately*. We serve a God who is full of compassion, tender in mercy.

The bible says, “*But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.*” Ps 86:15 And again, “*The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy.*” Ps 145:8 So see that here, we serve a gracious and compassionate God. The 2nd letter to the Corinthians teaches us that God is the God of *all comfort*, Who comforts us in all our tribulation.

Vs 5 tells us what God has done, what He will do, and the subsequent results of that in Hezekiah’s life, key phrases in this vs are, “I have heard,” “I have seen,” “I will heal,” and the subsequent result “You shall go up to the house of the Lord.” Those are all promises. And when is it that God is going to raise him up? On the 3rd day, now that sounds familiar doesn’t it? Seems to be some redemptive qualities in there somewhere don’t there? But on the practical side see that his healing (though miraculous) wasn’t instantaneous. It would be 3 days before he was able to go up to the house of the Lord, don’t be confused as to the forms of God’s healing on our lives, all healing comes from God. Whether it be through the natural process of our bodies that He’s instilled in us, or the medium of medicinal means, or an instant touch by His Spirit. But just because you’re not immediately made physically well when you pray, that doesn’t mean that God’s not doing the work, God’s will, done God’s way involves God’s timing as well. If for whatever reason God deems that we’re to lay in bed for a week, than that’s what we’ll do, but believe me when you roll out of bed it’s because in God’s mercy He’s raised you up.

In vs 6 God heaps 3 more promises on top of the 3 He’s already given Him and the reasoning for His promises. Not only will God heal Hezekiah practically, but He promises him 15 more years specifically, notice the “I wills” of vs 6. “I will add to your days 15 yrs,” “I will deliver you and *this city* from the hand of the king of Assyria,” and “I will defend this city” again God’s promise of defense, there’s none better, if God be for you than who can be against you? These are incredible promises, promises of peace, the deliverance, and defense of God Himself and a declaration of life for 15 more yrs. Why would God do this? Is it because of Hezekiah’s spiritual résumé back in vs 3, because he’s such a great guy? No, For God’s own name’s sake, and for the sake of His servant David.

So that He might be glorified and His promise to David, that he would have someone on the throne of his descent. And again we draw attention to the fact that the reason God moves mercifully in our lives isn’t because of anything good in us, but rather for His name’s sake, for His glory, and for the sake of the Son of David, the greater than David, Jesus Christ

Vs7

Look at that... No “Alakazoo, Alakazam, Abracadabra,” or waving of his magic wand. No smoke and lights showing of the miraculous, just “Put some figs on that boil will ya!” It was the modern medicinal means of the day, and God chose to heal him in that way, through the means of modern medicine.

People sometime struggle with that. “Am I showing a lack of faith if I take medicine for my illness?” No, you’re showing a demonstration of faith that God is able to and can heal you through that means. Because believe me if God wills to take you home, there isn’t any medicine that’s going to stop Him. But I wanted you to see that he was given a prescription, he did what he was told that way, and God raised him up.

Vs8-11

God is so gracious, isn’t it amazing that we seem to struggle so much simply taking God at His Word? If I was Isaiah, I’d have probably said, “What do you mean what will be the sign? The sign is in 3 days you won’t be dead, you’ll be well, because that’s what God said!” When has the Word of God ever failed, ever? So why doubt now? God’s Word is true, He’s not a man that He should lie, may God help us to believe Him, and take Him at His Word. I suppose that one of the reasons we have trouble trusting God is because we’re so untrustworthy. If we could be trusted it might not be such a stretch to trust in the Lord, but because we’re so unable so often to keep *our* word, we project our limitations upon *Him*. But that’s one of the infinite differences between God and man, men are liars, God is not. But God offers him a sign, ‘You see that massive staircase out there that Ahaz put in that acts as a sundial? Do you want the shadow on it to go forward 10 steps, or backwards 10 steps?’ Hezekiah thinks about it and says, “Well, forward doesn’t seem to difficult (as though that’s simple) so lets see it move backwards.” And the shadow moves backwards 10 degrees, or 10 steps on the sundial of Ahaz. Now some have purported that God caused the entire earth to rotate backwards on its axis in order to make that happen. And God is certainly able to do that, but God is also able to perform isolated miracles that impact or affect only designated areas. Remember when Egypt was being plagued, and Egypt was shrouded in pitch-blackness, but Israel had light right next to them. So God could’ve rotated the earth, but He may’ve just done this for Hezekiah because He’s more than able to isolate a miracle like that. But it’d sure blow your mind to watch that happen wouldn’t it?

Vs12-19

Kinda seems like he’s saying, “Too bad so sad for them but at least I have the promise of peace in my days!” Doesn’t it? And that may be, but we know from 2 Chronicles 32 that he did humble himself before the Lord ultimately. We read with regard to God’s goodness to him concerning his healing, “...*Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.*” 2 Chron 32:25-26 So after all the goodness God showed him, he just got puffed up in it, but that’s the way we are, God blesses our socks off and we walk around like, “Look what I’ve done, what I’ve accomplished!” But the fact is that any good thing that comes into our lives is a gift from God.

But you begin to get an idea of his pride there in vs 15 in those 2 phrases, “My house, my treasure.” He showed them everything. No doubt wanting them to see him as a valuable impressive ally, 2nd Chron 32 tells us that they’d heard of the “wonder” that was done in their land. It probably puffed him up all the more to hear that the news of be it the miraculous healing, the destruction miraculously of the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, or the turning back of the sundial (maybe all 3) had gone out and spread so far. And to heap more envy on top of that he begins to show them all the treasures that the Lord had given to them, entrusted to them. And all they were doing was taking inventory, the enemy comes in either as a roaring lion, or deceptive serpent doesn’t he? And I don’t know why but there’s something about verse 13 that draws my attention to that vs there in Matt 7:6 where Jesus said, “*Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.*” Hezekiah doesn’t know these guys from Adam, and here he is just spilling out to them, showing them everything, but the enemy just comes to rob, kill and destroy. Isaiah comes to him, “What did you show them” “Everything” “Then everything shall be carried away.” Hezekiah was wanting them to see his power, his strength, and rather giving glory to God, He placed the emphasis on his own resources, and so God says, “All that’s going to have to go.” And verse 18 once again shows us how the ripple effects of our sin can go on and on and on. “Even your descendants will suffer the ramifications of your sin.” Our sin in no way affects just us, it impacts everyone around us, sometimes even on down the ages. And we know that Hezekiah humbled himself, but he’d sown already, and the reaping process was irreversible, it’s just an inescapable spiritual law.

Vs20-21

Prayer Points:

God help us to walk humbly before you all of our days. That we not get puffed up and proud over the way You’ve blessed our lives, but that we keep our confidence in You, not in the things of this world. And Lord help us to simply trust You, and take confidence in Your Word, to believe the promises that You’ve given to us, and not to waiver or doubt. For we know that without faith it’s impossible to please You, yet we want to lead lives that are pleasing to You, so would You help us? And help us to set our affections on things above, not on the things of this world, we thank You that You’re a God who hears our prayer, who sees our tears, that You’re merciful and compassionate, and Lord if there be anything out of order in our lives, help us to humble ourselves in order to set those things in order understanding the brevity of life, the finality of death, and the reality of eternity. Help us to maintain the eternal perspective.