

God Listens

Oct. 18, 2020

Isaiah 37:14-20,30-35

Franklin Graham, the son of the late Billy Graham, said that one regret his father had was that he didn't pray enough. He felt that if he had prayed more and preached less, that he would have seen God do even greater things than he had witnessed over the course of his ministry.



King Hezekiah is described in the Bible as one of the godliest kings of Judah who had a close relationship with God. He was known as a reformer. When he became king, he was most concerned with Judah's present obedience to the Lord.

Judah was filled with visual reminders of the people's lack of trust in God, and Hezekiah boldly cleaned house. Altars, idols and pagan temples were destroyed. And, as we see in this week's lesson, Hezekiah was a man who believed in the power of prayer because He trusted in God.

King Hezekiah knew that the Lord alone was God. So, when he was faced with Sennacherib's threat and an overwhelming and impossible situation, the Scripture says he went up to the temple and spread it out before the Lord. Hezekiah prayed with sincerity and passion before the Lord.

As we consider our own prayer lives, we need to remember the lessons of humility and trusting our great God in all things that pertain to our lives. There is never a situation that He cannot handle. He invites us to come into His presence through prayer. *[excerpts from Glenn Metts]*

The Request (Isaiah 37:14-20)

- When Sennacherib became king of Assyria (705-681 BC) he launched an invasion of Judah.
- Unlike his father (King Ahaz), King Hezekiah trusted the Lord.
 - Instead of seeking a foreign alliance to fend off Assyria, Hezekiah sought the Lord's help.
- Sennacherib had sent his ambassador (Rabshakeh) to Jerusalem.
 - Rabshakeh demanded that Hezekiah and the entire city should surrender.
 - He argued that the Northern Kingdom of Israel had already fallen.
 - Since God didn't protect Israel, Rabshakeh said God would not protect Jerusalem.
- Hezekiah took the Assyrian's letter **"to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord"**.
- With humility, Hezekiah prayed. **"Lord of hosts"** shows great reverence. God was in control.
 - God was Lord of Israel and in control of the Assyrian army even if they didn't know it.
- **"thou art God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms"**
 - Hezekiah wanted all the kingdoms to know that Yahweh was the one and only true God.
- Hezekiah asked God to hear and see the words of Sennacherib which was an affront to the living God.
 - **When you pray, do you believe God will hear?**
 - **Do you pray for your own needs first?**
 - **How should we acknowledge God's will and glory?**



And this shall be a sign to you, You shall eat this year such as grows of itself; and the second year that which springs of the same...

—Isaiah 37:30

The Sign (Isaiah 37:30-32) [see 37:21-29]

- God sent Isaiah to take a message to Hezekiah.
 - God responded to Sennacherib's challenge with a rebuke and a promise that the Assyrians would be defeated.
 - Then God provided Hezekiah hope for the future.
 - God gave a sign that the Assyrians would soon be defeated.
 - The sign involved the agricultural cycle. Within three years' time, the cycle would be back to normal.
 - An invading army ravaged the land, seizing control of the crops to feed the soldiers.
 - The people of Jerusalem could only watch helplessly from behind city walls.
 - The sign God promised was that the few seeds would produce enough food to sustain them.
 - The next year, the roots of the plants would again grow and provide for the people.
 - By the third year, the people would be planting and reaping again. In other words, within three years all evidence of the presence of the Assyrians would be gone.
 - King Hezekiah was very different from his father (King Ahaz).
 - Ahaz did not believe God could save his country and sought out foreign help.
 - Hezekiah knew that without God's intervention, all hope was lost.
 - In Isaiah 9:7, God promised the messiah would come one day. Judah had hope for deliverance in the immediate future and hope for deliverance during the reign of our Messiah, Jesus.
- **Have you ever had a hopeless moment when you knew only God could help?**
- **Do you see God's hand at work in your life when looking back at events?**

The Answer (Isaiah 37:33-35)

- These verses sum up God's response to Hezekiah.
 - Because Sennacherib had insulted the power of the Holy One, Assyria would experience that power first hand.
- Neither an arrow, or shields, or siege ramps would prevail upon Jerusalem.
- In fact, we know from 2 Kings 19:35-36, that the angel of the Lord struck down most of the Assyrian army *"That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there."*
- Sennacherib may have thought he was invincible, but God would teach him he was only a creature before His creator.
- **"for my servant David's sake"** – God promised David He would provide a descendant on his throne. In David's line, the Messiah was born, Jesus our Savior.
 - Note even today, one can visit the City of David and Hezekiah's tunnel.
- God listens to our heartfelt prayers. God acted, Judah was saved, and God was known.
- **What element of Jesus' model prayer do you need to include in your own prayers more often? (Matt. 6:5-15)**



Hezekiah's Royal Seal

Biblical Truth:

***God hears the prayers of His people
and acts to fulfill His purposes for them***

"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

