

Lent 2023 - Part 2
Hezekiah: Praying under Pressure
Isaiah 37:1-38
March 5, 2023

I. The King RESPONDS to the THREAT. (Is. 36; 37:1-13)

- A. Acts of REPENTANCE and HUMILITY. (v.1)**
- B. A TURNING toward GOD. (v.1-4)**
- C. God's COMFORTING words in RESPONSE. (v.5-7)**
- D. Yet no CHANGE in the SITUATION. (v.8-13)**

During Lent we are begin to allow the Spirit to expose parts of our lives that we would prefer to avoid. Hezekiah is confronted by a situation that he cannot avoid. Assyria is knocking on the door of Jerusalem. And they are talking trash about all that they are going to do when their army shows up.

1. Kid's question: Have you ever been so scared of something that you prayed? What happened?
2. What situations in your life allow you some sense of identifying with the way Hezekiah might have been feeling in this passage?

II. Prayer as a DECLARATION of TRUST. (v.14-19)

- A. Prays what he KNOWS not what he SEES. (v.15-17)**
- B. He allows the KNOWING to shape the SEEING. (v.18-19)**
- C. He PRAYS into a LARGER reality. (v.20)**

Hezekiah prays. And prayer takes many forms, as we have seen over the last while in Adult Sunday school. But this prayer is a declaration of trust. It's a process of Hezekiah speaking with God to remind himself of what is true. It's a powerful way to pray.

3. If you have to describe what prayer usually looks like for you in a single phrase (like "declaration of trust") what would you say? Are you happy with that about your prayer life?
4. What is one area of your life where what you know about God and what you see happening don't match? How might this be an invitation to prayer?

III. God's RESPONSE to the PRAYER. (v.21-38)

- A. He answers BECAUSE Hezekiah PRAYED. (v.21)**
- B. He CONFRONTS the PRIDE of Assyria. (v.22-29)**

C. He PROTECTS the UNFAITHFUL. (v.30-38)

It's fascinating to see God respond immediately to Hezekiah's prayer. He sends a message through Isaiah to comfort and encourage the King who has nowhere else to go. And in God's response there are few things that speak clearly to us.

5. How confident are you that your prayers can move God to act? Why?
6. Has your own unfaithfulness ever limited your desire to pray? Or the hope you have in prayer?

IV. Finding PERSPECTIVE in our PRAYER. (Ps. 73)

- A. It STARTS with TURNING toward God. (v.1-2,14; Ps. 73:16-17)**
- B. KNOWING by faith is different than SEEING. (v.9-20; Heb. 11:1)**
- C. Don't treat FAITHFULNESS as COLLATERAL. (v. 1-4; Is. 30:1-5; Ps. 34:18)**
- D. God WILL never FAIL. (v.26-27; Is. 46:9-10)**

One of the key things we need to bring into our prayer life is a change in perspective. We often pray from the way we see things. But Hezekiah does some specific things that shift his perspective as he prays.

7. Where is God calling you to turn toward him right now? How would that turning look in your life?
8. What things can you do to help you grow your ability to "know by faith"? What has helped that to happen in the past for you? What could you do now?