

Life in the Kingdom

WHAT HAPPENS IN PRAYER

TEXT: 2 Kings 18-19

INTRODUCTION:

Hezekiah, the man:

king of Judah.

godly, loved Lord

began reformation

put away idolatry, cleansed temple

reinstated sacrifices; worship singers (choir)

the heart of all in the nation not with him, but he was genuine.

2 Kings 18:3 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

2 Kings 18:5 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.

2 Kings 18:7 The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.

Hezekiah faced two problems with prayer

- the invasion of Judah by Assyria
- his own approaching death

In the account of what happened as Hezekiah faced these two colossal problems as a man of prayer, we learn much about what happens in prayer.

I. THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD IS INVOKED.

A. Concerning the invasion

1. The might of the Assyrian army & Sennacherib's boast

2 Kings 18:29-30 "Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; 'nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." '

2 Kings 18:33-35 'Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 'Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?' "

2. The prayer of Hezekiah

2 Kings 19:14-19 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. "Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. "Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands -- wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. "Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone."

3. God's verbal answer

2 Kings 19:22 'Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice, And lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel.

2 Kings 19:27-28 'But I know your dwelling place, Your going out and your coming in, And your rage against Me. Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back By the way which you came.

4. God's action answer

2 Kings 19:35-37 And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses -- all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

B. Concerning his impending death

1. Announcement

2 Kings 20:1 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.' "

2. Prayer

2 Kings 20:2-3 Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

3. God's answer

2 Kings 20:4-7 And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. "And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David." ' " Then Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs." So they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

4. God's confirmation

2 Kings 20:8-11 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What is the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?" Then Isaiah said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?" And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees." So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.

Luke 1:37 "For with God nothing will be impossible."

II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE ONE PRAYING IS REWARDED.

A. It is false to say that righteousness doesn't count.

- 1. We are not saved by deeds of righteousness.**
- 2. But God does reward righteous living and righteous deeds**
 - a. at the Judgment Seat of Christ.**
 - b. through the answering of prayer.**

Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

James 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."

B. Some reasons that righteous living helps our prayers to be answered:

1. We are more in line with the purposes of God.

- a. It was God's will to deliver His people during a time of national revival.
- b. It was God's will to defeat the blasphemous Sennacherib.

2. Our motives are purer before God.

- a. Hezekiah's motive not entirely selfish
- b. He had no heir to the throne
When Isaiah said, "Get your house in order.", one of the things he meant was appoint a successor to the throne.
- c. Hezekiah was not finished with the reform and revival he had begun in the land.

3. We are better prepared to use the answer God sends for His glory.

One of the things Hezekiah did in the last 15 yrs of his life was to cause the "men of Hezekiah" to assemble certain worship songs that are now our Ps. 120-134 and to set in order portions of the OT Scrip. Several of our old manuscripts of OT books have at the end of them the Hebrew letter HZK for Hezekiah, meaning they were copied by his scribes.

III. THE GRACE OF GOD IS BESTOWED.

2 Kings 19:34 'For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.' "

CONCLUSION: Is there something about your own prayer life that needs changing tonight?