

God rescues His people

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[0 : 0 0] you turn with me, please, in the chapter that we read earlier on in 2 Chronicles chapter 32. I'd like to take as the text for my meditation, verse 19, although I'm not going to limit myself to this verse, but to the passage as a whole. 2 Chronicles 32, 19, they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they spoke of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of men's hands. I said to the kids that I, as a child, I used to read with pleasure the book of Kings and the book of Chronicles. I loved story and I still love history, so it was something I could relate in my Bible reading. It was easier for me to read Chronicles than reading Romans or Thessalonians. And so it was a part of the Bible I read often as a child and I loved it. And certain kings became very precious to me. As I read through these books, I couldn't believe how many bad kings were in Israel and how very few good kings.

And some of these kings have comments written by the Holy Spirit about them. So for example, we read about David and the definition of David or what God thinks of David was, a man after his own heart. Now God thinks of David, a man after my own heart. What a statement. Imagine God having the same impression about me and about you. What a count for that would be. But also, every king in Judah is compared with David. If a king does well, the Bible says he did good in the eyes of the Lord like David did. If a king wasn't good, it says, and the king did evil in the eyes of God, not like David. It is the one, the example for all the kings that followed him. David was the way a king should be. Solomon, the son of David. He wasn't as good as David. And yet the Bible tells us that Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. No one was as wise and as rich as Solomon. People came from all over to hear him, to hear his speeches, to meet with him and to see the wealth of his kingdom. And when the Queen of Sheba went to Jerusalem and saw the wealth and heard the wisdom of Solomon, she said, God really loves these people to give such a king. I mentioned to the children about Josiah. And this is what the Bible says about Josiah.

Before him, there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his might, according to the law of Moses. Nor did any like him arise after him. What a statement. Wouldn't it be wonderful, friends, to find these things written about us? Some of us long to have that testimony of God in our own hearts. Some of us worry about salvation, worry about our eternal destiny. We are not sure if our repentance is sincere, if our faith is living.

[4 : 1 4] Imagine having such a statement about yourself from God himself. And then there is Hezekiah, who is the king that we are going to deal with.

And this is what God said about him and his word. He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him.

What God says about Hezekiah is that he was even better than David, the king. No one was like him, friends.

And one day, this faithful king finds himself under attack. The Assyrians come against him and against the people to conquer the land and to bring the whole people in exile.

And it's strange that a faithful king had to suffer and to experience persecution and suffering.

[5 : 3 2] Our idea is that if we are faithful to God, God will bless us. And the Old Testament shows us that those who are faithful to God prosper and flourish and enjoy the blessing of God.

And yet Hezekiah, who was the most faithful of them all, find the whole kingdom shrunk to Jerusalem. Because the rest was taken by the Assyrians, conquered by the Assyrians.

And suffering are a common experience for the Church of God. The people of God often experience what Hezekiah did.

Hezekiah experienced opposition. An army, a mighty army, a mighty people has come against Him. To oppress, to destroy, to kill.

There is opposition against this good king and against the people of God. It's not the first time. King David experienced that. And many kings after him experienced that kind of opposition.

[6 : 47] People from the outside, enemies from the outside, coming against the people of God. Things haven't changed. The people of God is today under attack.

Think how many of our brothers and sisters are opposed, are persecuted, are killed, are imprisoned, are tortured. Because they are faithful to God. They are the Lord's people. They are following Jesus. And what is the reward for that faithfulness? Opposition. Struggles. We shouldn't be surprised when the Church is under attack.

We should be surprised when it isn't. Because normally, the Church is opposed. He is oppressed. Jesus said to his disciples, in this world, you will have tribulation.

The Apostle Paul said to Timothy, anyone who wants to be faithful to Jesus, is going to be persecuted, is going to be opposed. It's the common experience of the Church, to be opposed.

[8 : 04] We like for the people to hear us, and to listen to us. After all, we are sharing with them, the wisdom of God, the word of God. It will be good for them to do it. And yet, they won't.

And they will come against us. In this country, it's not the Muslims who are opposed and persecuted. It is the Christians. We don't put any bomb, we don't threaten any terrorist attack, and yet, it is the Church that is under attack.

It is the people of God who is opposed and persecuted. But also, in this experience, you find that there is derision.

Hezekiah is mocked. But above all, God is mocked. They spoke against God.

Why are you trusting your God? Is he better than any other God? The other gods didn't save the Philistines and the people in the north.

[9 : 15] They never saved the Syrians. Do you really think that your God will deliver you from my hands? They were mocking God. And in our text, it says that they spoke of the God of Jerusalem like all the other gods.

They treated the real, living, only God like he was a statue, an idol. Made by the hands of men. And often, friends, what happens when we try to share the gospel, as we try to be light and salt in our communities, that the people we love and hope will come to Christ mock the very Jesus that we preach to them.

they make jokes about him. They blaspheme him. They use his name in vain.

Can you see that this is not so much an attack against us, it's an attack against God. The devil was using the Assyrian army and the Assyrian king to fight and argue against God.

And the church, the people of God, was just a way for the devil to hurt God and to attack God. So, friends, when they mock us, when they laugh at us when we preach the gospel, it's not against us.

[10 : 49] It's against God. This is the experience, the common experience of the Lord's people. We're under attack not so much for our own name, our own sake, but for the sake of Christ.

They hate us because they hated Christ first. The world hates Christ and so as we stand for him, the world will come against us.

Thinking that by hitting us and hurting us, they will destroy Christ. The experience of the Lord's people is one of battle. Paul uses that picture in the New Testament.

He encourages us to be good soldiers, to fight the fight set before us. Life is not easy in this world because we are the followers of Jesus.

Secondly, what is the response of the Lord's people? It's a balanced response. The people of God find itself under attack. How do they respond?

[12 : 01] In two ways. They prepare themselves for the battle. We read in our chapter that Hezekiah with the men and many closed the water outside the city, rebuild the walls, strengthen the walls, had weapons ready, shields and swords, so that when the battle came, they were ready.

They were not fatalists. They were not saying, God will do whatever God is going to do. No, they got ready for the battle. They prepared themselves for the battle.

They were wise. They used common sense. they used the means that were necessary for them to win that battle. They didn't wait and see what happens.

They got ready for the battle. And sometimes, as Christians, that's where we fail. We pray, we plead for God's mercy and help, and that's all we do.

But God has given the church means to fight this battle. There is heavenly armor to wear for this battle.

[13:22] We can pray for the salvation of sinners in this community. But if the gospel is not preached in this community, how are they going to be saved? Of course, God is sovereign in salvation.

God saves his own for sure. But if we do not preach the gospel, how are his people going to be saved? We need to use the means. We need to be prepared.

We need to do things as God's people. But then, as they go ready for the battle, we read that they prayed and cried to heaven.

So, it's a balanced response. It's not just let's do everything in our power for the good of the kingdom, but also let's pray.

And maybe some of us are let's do for God and other people is just let's pray. And we need both. we need to be ready for the battle.

[14:28] We need to use the means that God has provided for his church. But we need to pray. We need to pray. And in the book of Kings, that prayer is recorded.

And it is a wonderful prayer. It is a short prayer. As the king, Ezekiah, goes into the temple and he presents the letter of the king to God. He said, this is what they are saying about you, God.

He is mocking you. He is laughing at you. He is treating you like the other gods who are not really God. And Ezekiah argued his case before God saying, it's not against us.

I am not asking you to deliver us for our own sake. All I am asking you is to glorify your name. Show to this evil king that you are indeed the true and living God.

Manifest yourself to him. Glorify your name in this battle. And God answered that prayer. All I am trying to say is, friends, we are in a spiritual battle.

[15:45] There is opposition. We are a minority. People don't listen to us. When we preach the gospel, there is a spiritual battle going on. We have to use the means that God has given us.

But as we use those means, let's do this in prayer. When a sermon is preached, it has to be accompanied by prayer.

because no preacher will ever save a soul. No sermon will ever save a soul.

It is God who saves. And we have to ask God to fight for us. to argue our case, to defend his people, to deliver his people, to fight for his people.

We need both. We need prayer and we need works. Then in this chapter we find a forgotten truth.

[16:56] The city of Jerusalem is under siege. the most powerful army in those days against a city, a small kingdom.

And Hezekiah speaks to the people and he says to the people, don't be afraid of them. Don't be dismayed. Don't worry.

With him is an arm of flesh. with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles. This is something that we often forget as believers in our struggles.

Be they personal struggles or congregational struggles or ecclesiastical struggles, denominational struggles. We forget that God is with us.

We forget that with us is the Lord Jehovah our God. That if God is with us who can be against us?

[18:08] We often fight our battles. We often fight as Christians in our own strength. Trusting in our own wisdom, in our own methods and plans and doing.

And when the enemy is too big we despair. Because we forget that the battle is the Lord's.

It is his battle. And he is with us friends. There's an occasion in the prophet Elisha and he is surrounded by enemies and the servants are terrified and he prayed and he asked God Lord open their eyes that they may see who is with us.

And the heavenly host is with the servant of God. We might feel that we are small in number friends.

We might feel ourselves powerless and hopeless but we shouldn't because with us is the Lord our God.

[19:23] The one who made the heavens and the earth is with us. The one who made all things by the word of his power is with us. The one who has planned whatsoever comes to pass is with us.

The one who from everlasting to everlasting is with us. The one who never changes is with us. The almighty God is with us.

Why should we be discouraged? Jesus could say to his disciples no one can defeat the church not even the powers of hell.

Why? Because he is with us. It is his church where his people where his body we belong to him and he is on our side.

But also it says Hezekiah said to the people he will help us to fight our battles. He will help us and fight our battles.

[20 : 34] He will fight for us. And we are going to see that Israel doesn't have to use any shield any sword anything. because God fought for his people.

And he gave a great deliverance. Friends, every time there is a trial in your life, God will never leave you nor forsake you.

He is on your side. He is with you. He is there to help you and he is there to fight for you. in your struggle with sin you will never achieve anything unless God fights for you.

He will never say no unto sin and yes unto righteousness unless God fights for you. He will never resist temptation unless the Lord fights for you.

as a church we will never grow. We will never defeat the enemies of the church and belief and sin unless God fights for us.

[21 : 41] And the good news is that God is with us and he is fighting for us and he is helping us.

We might not see it. Maybe it is not the measure we would like to see it but God is with us and God is fighting for us.

some generations have seen wonderful deliverance. When there is revival what is that friends? It's God fighting for his people. Establishing his kingdom to the ends of the earth. God is with us friends and God fights for us.

We have the victory. We'll have the victory friend. The church will conquer because the fight belongs to God. And no one can defeat our God.

Not even our unfaithfulness. Not even our lack of faith. No one will defeat our God. Finally, a wonderful deliverance.

[22 : 52] Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed. They cried to heaven friends. They cried. It's something we do when we are desperate. We don't cry unless, especially men, we don't cry unless we are at the end of our resources.

And Hezekiah cried. And just in a verse, we are told, the Lord sent an angel who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria.

Just in a verse, God destroys a mighty army. A king that said, no one will defeat me. Your God, even your God will never defeat me.

The people of God prayed, and that man is defeated. in a sense, it's not even God who fights, it's an angel sent by God.

Imagine if God himself had come down from heaven. Imagine if he had rent the heavens and come down. The whole earth would be gone.

[24 : 09] God sent an angel, and he fights for his people, and the people have the victory. A glorious deliverance, friends, because it is the work of God.

Our salvation is the work of God. The salvation of sinners around us is the work of God. The salvation of his church is his work. It is God's victory, friends.

Not ours, it is his. But we enjoy the spoils with him. Let's think of our individual struggle with sin.

We have defeated sin in Christ Jesus. He fought sin for us. He fought the devil for us. He fought the powers that are against us on our behalf.

He defeated them for us. So, we have become more than conquerors in Christ Jesus. It's not our doing. It's not our victory.

[25 : 22] It is his. So, the glory goes to him. The glory goes to him. Not to ourselves, our own spirituality, our own prayers, our own repentance, our own faith.

It belongs to him. It is his doing. And the glory goes to him and only to him. And this deliverance, friends, God vindicate himself.

Remember, the derision, the mocking was against God. The fight was against God. It was God who was mocked.

God was undermined. and God defeats his enemies and proves to his enemies, I am God. And I'm sure when the king of Assyria was mocking God, the Assyrians were laughing with him, having a great time.

Someone else was laughing at those words. And that was God. God, sitting on the throne in heaven, heard this little man speaking against him.

[26 : 45] And God laughed at him. And God vindicated his name. And this man who was going to destroy Jerusalem, no one could stand against this man.

His own children killed him. he stood up against God, and God destroyed him.

That, friend, is what happens to all the enemies of God. For the people of God, it is his favor, his presence, his blessing, his help.

For those who stand up against him, the shame and destruction everyone who stood up against God failed.

The devil tried at the beginning. He stood up against God and is defeated now, just waiting to go into the lake of fire.

[27 : 52] God. This man, Sennacherib, stood against God, and he paid a very high price for that. Many today are like Sennacherib, laughing at God and standing up and resisting God.

They won't last. But maybe you are standing up against God today. maybe you are like Sennacherib, laughing at the word of God and the warning of God and the power of God. And you think that somehow you will escape him, that somehow you will flee and avoid his judgment and punishment and discipline. You might for a season, you might be spared for a time. But a day will come when you stand before him. And you have to give an account. And maybe, I hope not, but maybe you will be like those who treated the God of heaven like the gods of the other peoples.

my friend, don't do that. It's not wise to fight God. What's the point?

[29 : 24] It's a lost battle. You won't be spared. You will be punished with everlasting punishment. punishment. Why will you?

Why will you fight a God who has reconciled the world unto himself in Christ Jesus? Why will you resist him when he's offering blessing to you?

Why will you refuse his grace? If you refuse his grace, you will receive his punishment.

If you reject his grace, you will experience his righteousness. My friend, please, surrender to Christ. Bow your knees before him. Confess your sins unto him and ask for his mercy. And him, says the Bible, there is plenty of redemption.

[30 : 33] And him is mercy. He has no pleasure in your destruction. He has no pleasure in your judgment. He wants, my friend, he wants that you turn and live.

If you surrender to him, he will welcome you into his kingdom. If you surrender to him, he will be at peace with you. If you surrender to him, he will be on your side.

He will be your God, your deliverer, your savior, and your king. And all the wealth of his kingdom will be yours.

All the glory that belongs to him, that the father will give him, he will share it with you. Isn't that a great reason to come to Christ?

Isn't that a very good reason to welcome him into your life, to receive him as your Lord and savior?

Let's pray.