

Trouble, Prayer & Deliverance

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[0 : 00] If we turn back to the chapter that we were reading, 2 Kings chapter 19. And when Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and ashes.

And what he says is, this he says, is a day of trouble. It was a day of trouble. In this chapter we can see things, there is trouble, there is prayer, and there is deliverance.

And Hezekiah came to power in 715 BC and he ruled for a total of 29 years. And you know, Hezekiah was one of the few good kings.

Listen to what it says about him. He trusted in the Lord. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, the God of Israel. So that there was none like him.

Before him, there was none like him. After him, of all the kings of Judah, there was none like Hezekiah. And he was one of very few. I think there was only probably since the time of the breakup of the kingdom when Solomon reigned.

[1 : 19] There was probably only about three or four really good kings. And there was none like Hezekiah. He kept, he claved to the Lord.

He honored the Lord. He obeyed the Lord. He obeyed his commandments. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord. And he trusted this God.

And he was committed to God. And he was faithful to God. And you know, God honored him. And God blessed him. Because we read there that the Lord was with him.

And the Lord prospered him. Isn't that a wonderful thing? In the life of any nation. That God is with them. And God is prospering them. And God is helping them.

And that's the way it was with Hezekiah. That things were going really well. And you know, when things are going really well. That's the time when we need to be on the alert.

[2 : 14] To be on our guard. Because trouble was around the corner for Hezekiah. In the form of the king of Assyria. Assyria had invaded all the other countries round about.

It had carried Israel into captivity. So, all the fortified cities round about Jerusalem. When Sennacherib came.

He captured them. And Jerusalem was next on the agenda. It wasn't very far away. And you know, Hezekiah made one of his few mistakes.

He tried to bring, to buy this king of Assyria off. And he shouldn't have done it. He gave him all the gold and everything he could find. Even the gold coming off the temple.

The gates and the posts of the temple. Everything. He says, there it is. You take it and leave me alone. He shouldn't have done it. You see, God would have honored him.

[3 : 15] And God would have helped him. The same way that he helped David, his father. But he was young in the faith. He was worried. And he thought, well, I'll buy him off.

But you know, you can't buy off the enemy of your souls. You cannot make bargains with the devil. And hope to get away with it. The devil will soon come back.

And that's what happened with Sennacherib. He turned. He went away for a while. And then he came back. And he thought, well, he could take Jerusalem as well.

You know, Paul tells us that. Paul in his closing address to the Ephesians. He says and he warns us that we need to put on the whole armor of God.

You see, we're not fighting against flesh or blood. But we're fighting against powers, principalities, spiritual darkness in high places.

[4 : 17] And we need to be on the alert. We need to be on our guard. Because the minute we take our guard down, the enemy is going to get in. And he's going to attack us. He's going to try to destroy us.

And he's going to discourage us in any way that we can. That's what the devil will do. And you know, Paul knew it. That's why he encouraged the Ephesians in his own day.

He knew it. And that's why we should be encouraging ourselves in our day. Because the devil hasn't changed. Nor has his tactics changed. And you know, so that when trouble does come. And be sure of it, friends. Trouble is going to come. We are not going to go through this life and have an easy ticket. It's not going to be plain sailing all the way.

Trouble is going to come. In one form or another. Whether it's sickness. Disappointment.

Discouragement. Whatever. We are going to get our share of troubles.

[5 : 21] Here in this world. And we need to be prepared. You see, trouble when it comes. It comes quickly. It comes when things are going really well.

We think everything is going our way. And nothing is going to go wrong. That's the way it was in the life of Job. You remember the story of Job.

Job was there. And things were going good. The sons were having feasts more or less every day.

But Job would offer sacrifices. In case they sinned in thought.

In their words or in their anything. Job was on his guard. But trouble came. And trouble came suddenly into the life of Job.

And every single thing that Job had was taken away from him. The same in the days of Esther and Mordecai. When the Jews were going to be exterminated from the land.

[6 : 22] It came suddenly. That's the way trouble is. It comes suddenly. And we need to be on our guards at all times. You see, Paul knew it.

He knew it. That's why he encouraged the people to be on their guard. To put on the whole armor of God. Every single piece of it.

And above everything else, he says. Put on all prayer. We need to be people. Men and women and boys and girls. Of prayer. We need to be talking to God.

We need to be telling God. We need to be pleading with God. At the throne of grace. To help us.

We cannot do it on our own. We need God's help. We need God's strength.

Nothing. We cannot do it ourselves. God is there. You see, Peter knew it. The devil, he says, is going about like a roaring lion.

[7 : 23] It made a mess of Peter quite a few times. That's why we have Peter's epistle there. To tell us. To help us. To encourage us. Along life's journey.

So that we won't be God the same. Because trouble will come. And for Hezekiah, it was round the corner. With a capital T. And there was no escaping from it.

Hezekiah had prepared. You see, Hezekiah did all the right things. He took down all the high places. He removed all the altars.

The altars that they had built to foreign gods. The Ashteroth poles. He destroyed every one of them. And he burned them. And the bronze snake. The Nehushtan. The bronze thing.

That Moses had set up. You remember the story. Well, Moses set up the bronze snake. And those who looked on it would live. He destroyed that. Because they were worshipping the bronze thing.

[8 : 23] Instead of the living and the true God. And then He cleansed the temple. They had the Passover.

He did everything that He could to prepare. But the Assyrians. They were just round the corner. The Assyrians were ready to attack.

They weren't far away. And He knew the threat wasn't far away. He brought them off once. But He wasn't going to do it a second time. So He built up the defenses.

Strengthened the city. Built up the walls. Increased the army. He did everything that He possibly could. To keep the enemy at bay. He even blocked the watercourses.

So that the enemy wouldn't have water to feed their armies. Hezekiah was on his guard. Are we on our guard? Are we doing everything that we possibly can?

[9 : 25] To keep the devil. Out of our lives. Are we on our guard? Are we watching unto prayer? Are we the people of God that we should be?

Egypt had surrendered. So often we are looking to Egypt for help. Israel had been taken away into captivity. There was only Jerusalem left.

And trouble was on the doorstep. And these guys that came. That wasn't their real names. Tartan. That really meant the supreme commander.

Rabsharis. He was the first commander. First officer you would say. And Rabshika. He was the field commander. It wasn't their real names.

And you know they came and they met with Hezekiah's representatives. And you know the tactics of the devil never change. Down through the years he uses the same things.

[10:31] And yet the surprising thing is. That he is so successful at it. He is so successful at it. They spread fear. They spread discouragement.

He spreads disappointment. And he spreads confusion wherever he goes. And you know that is the way he is. He makes little inwards. And he undermines the confidence.

Of God's people. And he causes them to doubt. That is what he was doing with Hezekiah. What sort of army have you got? Who are they against this great host.

That I come up against you with. He is even quoting scripture out of context. Attacking them. On all their weak points.

And that is what Satan did. Exactly to Jesus. When he was tempted in the wilderness. And those tactics are still being used today.

[11:30] They are still being used today. No wonder the people were afraid. We need to remind ourselves.

In 2016. In the church today. Who is in control. And what our God is able to do.

And the resources that our God has. See this is not a God. That was a figment of men's imaginations. Made of wood or stone. This was the living.

And the true God. Elisha. When he was surrounded by the enemy. At Dothan. And the man that was with him said. What are we going to do?

And Elisha prayed Lord. He says open their eyes. That the young man would see. And he opened his eyes.

[12:27] And he saw the mountains going about with chariots. You see there is more with us. Than there is with them. Our God is able to deliver us.

Our God is able to help us. Jesus. Jesus. Encourages us that as well. You know you shall not tempt the Lord your God.

God is in control. God is able. God. Can do above and beyond. All we can ask our things. God is speaking to us.

In his word today. You know this word. You would really need to spend time. Reading the whole lot. This message. Is three times.

In the scriptures. In first kings. Sorry. Second kings. In the chapter we read. You would read to need 18 and 19. Second chronicles.

[13:28] And Isaiah. It's in these three books. And you know. If God is giving that much space. To something. In his word.

Then it's relevant. It's got something to say to us. It's got something to say to us. Even today. There was that man.

And his army. And he was spreading fear. And he was backed up. By a great host. He was backed up. By a great host.

And he hurled insults. And he hurled taunts. And he was shouting to them. Who are you trusting him? Who are you trusting him?

Is it Egypt. That bruised weed. That broken weed. Or is it the God. That. Hezekiah. Destroyed all his altars.

[14:26] He thought that because. Hezekiah destroyed the altars. That God would be. Would be really angry with him. But he wasn't. God was so pleased with Hezekiah.

When he destroyed all those altars. He cleansed the temple. He restored the worship. God was delighted. God was overjoyed.

That the worship was back. In one place. In the temple. God was delighted. With Hezekiah. And he thought.

That he would be annoyed with him. He couldn't be saying. To Hezekiah. You can't even. Get a proper army together. If I gave you the horses.

Could you put the soldiers on them? No you can't. You haven't even got the riders. And then he says. Where are the gods of. Hamath. And the gods of Arpham.

[15:25] Where are the gods of Seraphim. And the gods of Hena. And the gods of Hivah. All those other countries. That he had conquered. Where are these gods?

Did they help in the day of trouble? No they didn't. He by the way. He says. It was God that called me. To destroy Samaria.

He was saying. It was God that was calling him. To do this. Who is able. To deliver these countries. Out of my hand. Is your God able.

Can you deliver them. Who was going to deliver them. Out of his hand. He is arrogant. This man is arrogant.

And he is taunting. Hezekiah's messengers. And in his pride. He is boasting. Of his own great power.

[16:22] You know. He is one of those people. That you meet. And he is full of it. He is full of it. He is something. Like Goliath of old.

When he came up against David. And he says. Who are you sending out. Against me. You are nothing but a boy. I will destroy you. I will give your body.

To the birds. And the fowls. They will eat you up. As nothing. He was full of himself. He thought he had great power.

He thought that he had great ability. And he underestimated God. He compared the living. And the true God.

To the gods of wood. And the gods of stone. That were impotent. That weren't able to do nothing. In comparison. To the God of Israel.

[17:21] And the God of Judah. After all that abuse. What could they do. What could they say. If you faced such an attack.

Or an assault. Today. What would you do. What would be your response. Where would you go. Hezekiah says to them.

Hold your peace. Don't say a word. Don't listen to him. You know. He even went out.

And instead of speaking. In their own language. They spoke. In the language that. The Jews would understand.

To make it even. More frightening. And there is a time. For silence. There is a time.

[18:23] For silence. Jesus. When he was being tried. They were asking him. The questions. And he answered them.

Not a word. He never said a thing. He didn't. He didn't defend himself. He kept quiet. He said nothing.

Moses. When he was confronted. By the Egyptians. Behind him. And the sea. Before him. He just said.

Stand still. And see the salvation. Of the Lord. There is a time. For silence. Be still.

He says. And know that. I am God. And you know. Contrary. To popular opinion. That we have today. Going throughout.

[19:24] Our land. God is still. On the throne. Some people. Are putting Shakespeare. And all such. Of things. Onto the throne.

But. Do not doubt it. God. Is still. On the throne. He is on the throne. In Stornway. He is on the throne. In Point. He is on the throne. In Syria.

Iraq. And Iran. And he is reigning. And he is working. All things together. For his own glory. And people may deny it. And deny the existence of God.

As some sort of myth. But he is there. And he is on the throne. And he is ruling. And he is reigning. And he is. What did God's people do?

They held their silence. And then they went into the temple. You read there. Elikim. Shebna. And Joah. They rent their clothes.

[20:23] They took off their clothes. And they humbled themselves. And they went to Hezekiah the prophet. They went to Hezekiah the prophet. To the place. Where God was.

To God's man. And they took everything there. You know. When the enemy. Will come in like a flood. God is going to raise a standard against him.

And defend his cause. And they went to God's house. To pray. They went to God's house. To pray. And to meet. With God there.

You know. That's been the age old question. Why are the wicked prospering? Why are the wicked prospering? Asaph the psalmist asked it in his own day. Why were the wicked prospering?

And there he was doing his best. Doing good. And he couldn't understand it. It perplexed him. Until he went into the presence of God. Until he went into God's house.

[21 : 24] And God met with him there. And listen to what it says. They're on a slippery slope. On the edge of destruction. As in a moment.

They are utterly consumed. Terrors. Consumed with terrors. God's enemies. Are in a desperate situation. And they can't see it. Saint Achrib and his army.

Was in a desperate situation. And he couldn't see it. Because they're full of themselves. And they're full of pride. In their own abilities.

And their own strength. But friends today. There's power in prayer. God is the hearer. And God is the answerer. Of prayer. The arm of flesh will fail you.

But God. Hears prayer. God hears prayer. God answers.

[22 : 46] God hears. God answers. God will do above and beyond anything that we can even ask or think so often we put prayer as the last option when it should really be the first option so often we are going everywhere for advice and for help everything we are going to doctors, everything, all sorts of places the last thing we do when our backs are up against the wall that's when we come to God in prayer prayer should be a priority in all of our lives because God hears and God answers prayers and not only that He loves to hear the prayers of His people they went to God's man they went to Isaiah the prophet and together if you read it

I think it's in the Chronicles account they cried to God together they cried to God they made supplication to God with tears and they pleaded with God you know when was the last time that you really pleaded with God that you went before God on your knees with the tears streaming down your eyes and wept your heart before Him for the lost in your family for the lost in our country when we really went to God in prayer and said God we are in a mess and we need your help we are at our wood saying there is nothing we can do but we need you and you know Hezekiah read the letter not wonderful he read it and then he saw that was in it he saw everything and he took it and he spread it out before the Lord and he says

Lord he says you know you know listen to what he says back into chapter into verse 15 Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said O Lord God of history and the one who dwells between the cherubims you are God you are Lord of all the kingdoms of the earth you are made the heaven and the earth incline your ear O Lord and hear open your eyes O Lord and see and hear the words of Sennacher with which he has sent to reproach the living God truly Lord through the king of Assyria has laid waste the nations and their lands and they have cast their gods into the fire for there were no gods at all but they were the works of men's hand they were wood and they were stone they were impotent therefore they destroyed them now therefore

O Lord our God I pray you save us from their hand save us Lord from their hand the enemy was there at the gates and he was they were pleading with him to save them from their hand you see Hezekiah had a crisis and he didn't know what to do but he went in and did the one thing that he knew how to do he went to pray can you be dependent among to pray in a crisis can I when our backs are up against the wall you see Hezekiah was a man of prayer not only was he a man of prayer he was a man of faith and he had a right understanding of who God was listen to what he says the one living God the God of Israel the only God the God there was no God beside him you are Lord alone are God there was none beside him the God who was over all the earth the God who was in control of everything the God who sees everything the God who hears everything the God who knows everything you know isn't it funny how often we forget when we're talking in amongst ourselves and we're saying things how often we forget that God is hearing

God is hearing every word that we can say he saw this tyrant he knew what this tyrant was capable he knew what he was doing and all that he had to say about himself but he also knew where the tyrant stayed he knew where he lived he knew when he got up he knew when he got sat down and even as the psalmist say so long ago he knew his thoughts even afar off before he thought he knew what was in his mind and he knew all the insults all the taunts all the abuse that he had hurled at the living God he knew everything nothing friends nothing goes past this God although sometimes we like to wink at it and ignore it nothing and Hezekiah knew this God he knew this God personally as the hearer and the answerer of prayer with God there is hope with God there is help with God there is deliverance in spite of the circumstances do you believe that today do you believe that today we might not be seeing deliverance in the same way but people on the other side of the world who have been persecuted because they love Jesus are seeing marvelous deliverances are seeing

[29 : 07] God working in wonderful ways in their lives in spite of their circumstances in spite of the opposition in spite of the difficulties God is still in control and God is there for us in the day that I cry

to you He says you answered me in the day that I cry to you you answered me and strengthen my soul though the mountains He says be cast into the sea we don't need to be afraid though troubles come and everything is destroyed God is still there we need as a people as a church to encourage ourselves in God the same way as

David did at the time when Siglag was attacked and everyone went against him we read there that he encouraged himself in God we need to encourage ourselves in God in our own day the gospel is facing growing opposition across our land all you can hear now is that we don't do God God isn't relevant in our circumstances God isn't relevant today God is a myth we don't need him we've got beyond that you know you can even hear them say in the great assemblies of our church that the Bible is a fairy tale that it's not relevant in our day and generation but he is and he's hearing and he's listening you know that's our problem so often we think we know better than God but God is still in control and God knows everything because he is the same yesterday today and forever and the

God who gives the ability to conquer other lands is the God who is able to take Sennacherib down just as quickly and you know what Jeremiah's prophet says call on me he says in a day of trouble and I will show you great and mighty things which you know not he has plans to prosper us he has plans to encourage us you know the Lord wasn't slow to answer the prayer of Hezekiah or Isaiah listen to what he says the virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and laughed you to scorn the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you when you approached and when you blasphemed when Sennacherib came to

Jerusalem Jerusalem laughed in his face even at the taunts and the blasphemes against who did you raise your voice and lifted up your eyes it was against me he says the living God God against the Holy One of Israel that's who you're shouting against that's the opposition the audacity of the man the absolute audacity of the man to say that against the living God you see he had totally underestimated the God of Israel he thought he was like all the other gods of wooden stone he didn't realise that he was the God who had put him in power and he was now the God who was going to take that power from and listen to what he says to him he says

I'm going to take a little hook and I'm going to put it in your nose and I'm going to put a bit in your mouth and I'm going to take you back the very way that you came like a man would just take a little dog and lead him behind him he was going to put him back where he came and God did that and God delivered his people he delivered them supernaturally miraculously overnight 185,000 of that Assyrian army was destroyed was destroyed how we don't know we just know that God did it and they went back the way that they came they retreated and you know when he had got back to his own country went down to his temple of his gods to worship and his sons killed him his sons killed him his reign had ended with them was the arm of flesh but with us is the living and the true God with us is the living and the true God

[34 : 56] God if God is with us who can be against us you see it's not by might nor by power but by my spirit says the Lord and you know God has conquered sin death and the grave magnificently for us they're celebrating it in the church up the road and you know the prophet says is it nothing to you all ye that pass by I have given my son for you I have given heaven's best to deliver you from the shackles and the hole that sin had on your lives is it nothing to you you know there was a man and he was in charge of a railway crossing over in

America and the bridge was up Gifford was his name Mr. Gifford and he had a young boy not probably not even as old as these two that's sitting in front of us there and he heard the whistle coming as he was having his lunch and he looked down and he saw in the cogs of the gears of the bridge that his son had fallen and he looked behind him and he saw the train coming and he thought within himself you know that's my son down there and God looked down from heaven and he said that's my son on the cross and he looked back and he saw the train with over 400 I don't know how many hundred of people would have been on but there was hundreds and he closed his eyes he caught the lever and he pushed it down and the bridge went back down and the sun was there the sun was there and that's not a made up story his son was there and he saw them passing by and they took no notice all the people in the carriage waste everything and he says is it nothing to you is it nothing to you and Jesus is saying is it nothing to us is it nothing to us that he gave his son for us prayer went up for us trouble came our way prayer came up went up deliverance came that's basically what God in Christ has done for us he delivered us through the giving of his own son she he she she she she the

Ann she named a ver and she is