

Dealing with Battles and Blessings

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[0 : 0 0] Take your Bible, go with me if you would to 2 Chronicles chapter 32 and verse 25. I love biographies and so I have enjoyed very much the Old Testament. I've enjoyed very much these are called narrative passages because they're stories.

And you want to find what is a God truth, what's he trying to say, what's the message he's trying to communicate. He's not trying, he has communicating, I just got to figure out what it is. There are three major lessons in this chapter that you should get a hold of before you leave.

If we took all of Hezekiah's life, I'm certain Hezekiah didn't even see this happening. But God gives me Hezekiah's life as an example so I'll know and I'll be ready and I can do that.

We're all in different stages of life. I'm probably well into the last third or even fourth of my life. And some of you are still about middle age and some are younger than that. But you're going to go through probably these three stages.

The first one was in the story tonight there was this great trial. He is in big trouble. I'll explain that trouble to you in just a second. But in the middle of this big trouble, God works a miracle.

[1 : 0 6] God does something great in his life and he comes out on the other side. Then the very next thing that happens is God blesses him enormously. He is so blessed.

People are coming from everywhere. Money is everywhere. Things are everywhere. He is at the very top of the heap on prospering in this world. And so how should I deal with problems?

How should I deal with burdens? How should I deal with blessings? And the third lesson that's given here in this passage of Scripture is to know that in every blessing and in every area of your life, God's still testing you.

That's the three things you're going to see tonight. In every area, God's still testing you. Let me give you a brief story and then we'll run through the chapter together and get as far as we can. So Sennacherib has come up and he's ready to attack Hezekiah.

Sennacherib is far more powerful, has a far larger army than Hezekiah. Hezekiah has every reason to be afraid because Assyria has literally been eating country after country.

[2 : 1 3] In modern day times, I think maybe the closest thing to it would be World War II when Hitler was literally marching across Europe, taking one country after another country.

And he has finally arrived at Hezekiah's doorstep and he's ready to take the country. And so he is under great trial and great threat. His kingdom is up in there.

Who knows what's going to happen? How will he deal with this horrendous problem that's facing him? Whenever you're faced with a horrible problem, how do you deal with a horrible problem?

Maybe it's a health problem. Maybe it's an emotional problem. Maybe it's a marital problem. But stuff's happening in your life. How do you deal with it? Do you sit back and just whine and complain and suck your thumb and get in a fetal position and hide under the bed?

Or just how do you deal with horrible tragedy about to befall you? There was a lady in Arequipa. We lived in Peru in the time of civil war, basically.

[3 : 13] The shining path was fighting the government. Fifty thousand people died in about ten years. It was a fight between the police and the army. And then these terrorists as they marched across the country.

And there was a missionary lady there. Her name was Patty. And I'll never forget, every night at dark, if her husband wasn't at home, this grown woman would crawl under her bed, get in the fetal position, and suck her thumb, terrified by what was going to happen.

How do you deal with problems? In this story, we're going to learn how Hezekiah dealt with them. But what's amazing is this. When his people, the first thing Hezekiah does before we get to the Scripture is he goes to work doing what he can do with what he has.

And some of y'all, when you get a problem, you seem to freeze and panic and give up. But old Hezekiah said, hey, if they're coming, I better get my army ready. I better get my bows ready, get more arrows built.

Better build my walls. I better do everything I can. And even though he got all that built and he was doing everything he could, he still knew he couldn't win. So he went out to his people and he said, hey, don't be afraid.

[4 : 15] There are more with us than there are with him. Because we got the God of heaven and he's just got soldiers. And then that old king stepped up and said, hey, you know, I've whipped you.

I've whipped every other country. I've whipped everybody who stood against me. And who do you think your God is? If I can whip everybody else's God, I can whip your God. And the story is, it's not in this particular chapter, but Hezekiah took a letter that old Sennacherib had the nerve to write and walked in the prayer room, laid out the letter and said, God, you see what they're writing.

I don't know what you want to do about it, but I believe it's your problem. And God, in this whole story, God says an angel just kills a whole bunch of them. And then old Sennacherib runs home because he's whipped and embarrassed and ashamed.

And when he gets home, his own kids kill him. How do you deal with problems? Well, you got the victory. Just learn to fight with it. Say amen. The second thing, oh, is when you get all the blessings. So all of a sudden, he is blessed beyond measure.

People are bringing him stuff. Money's increasing. He even gets sick and he's supposed to die. And he asks God to let him live and God lets him live. But here's the verse I want you to read as our key verse for tonight's message.

[5 : 23] Look at 2 Chronicles 32, 25. The Bible says, And Hezekiah, but Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him. Boy, I've been thinking about that.

But Hezekiah did not give back to God like God had been good to him. Because he got lifted up in pride. And that made God mad.

Go that verse. You ought to circle that verse. How many of you would say God's been good to you? Say amen. How many of you would say God has helped you when you were in trouble? Your kid was sick, maybe going to die. Your wife was having health problems.

You were in financial situations. Your children were in trouble. Your emotional health was in trouble. Your marriage was in trouble. Your finances were in trouble. You were in trouble. And God heard and answered your prayer.

Boy, he's been good to you. But instead of saying thank you, Jesus. Instead of remembering what he's done. Instead of you would hope that Hezekiah would walk away from there like, God is so good.

[6 : 24] I have never served him like I'm going to serve him now. But instead of that, he got proud. And lifted up in himself. And that angered God. The third thing I'll show you in just a minute was that these ambassadors are going to come see Hezekiah.

And they're going to ask Hezekiah what's going on and what's the secret of his blessing. Hezekiah is going to open his storehouses and treasures and show him how rich he is because he just wants to show off.

He says, I want you to see my muscle cars. I want you to see my motorcycles and my boats. I want you to see all my soldiers. I want you to see everything I got. I want you to see how smart I am, how powerful I am. I'm a big shot king.

I'm a big shot king. Check it out. And the key verse you'll look at in just a minute is this. God said, but I let those ambassadors come to test him and see what he'd do. It's like God saying, I'm the one that's making you big.

I'm the one that's doing things in your life, but you're taking credit for it. And when you take credit for it, you'll have to deal with the consequences of it. So go with me, if you would, through this passage of Scripture.

[7 : 28] Start with me, if you would, in 2 Chronicles chapter 32 and verse 1. And let's look at the trials. I'm not going to read every verse. We'd be here all night. But I am going to hit headlines and headlights.

And so you need to highlight, not headlights. The only time you'll ever laugh is when I do something stupid. But I'm going to hit the highlights. And when I hit the highlights, you ought to mark them in your Bible.

In chapter 32 and verse 1, there's that guy Sennacherib. And that's probably not how you say his name, but he's not here, so it'll be okay. He's the king of Assyria, and he's coming to Judah. And he's camped up against his city's walls.

And he's thinking to win the cities of Judah for himself. And he thought that he could win, and he had purpose to fight. And he is a mighty and a powerful and a wicked enemy.

In chapter 32 and verse 9, he came with all of his power. And when he got there with all of his power, I just need you to understand, he knew how to march an army in to scare you to death.

[8 : 29] He knew how to come marching in with an army. So when you looked out there, and the whole countryside was covered with his soldiers. When he walks up and said, I'm fixing to take your place, you're looking out there saying, they got so many, we can't win.

And in verse 10, he reminded the people of how strong he was. And he said, wherein do you trust that you abide in the siege of Judah? What in the world are you people trusting?

Do you not see my army? I'm fixing to take you out. You'd be smarter if you would just surrender. He said, and don't you guys believe, verse 11, don't you guys be believing Hezekiah?

I know that Wally Fox. I know what he's telling you. He's telling you that your God will deliver you. He's telling you that your God is big enough to take you out of the hand of the Syria.

But let's be honest with you. Hezekiah's done you all a disservice. Because look down at verse 12. What he's done is he's gone through your country, and he's removed all your worship places.

[9 : 30] You used to have places to worship. And now he's torn down all your worship places, and he's taken them at all your altars. And he said, you've got to worship at the one altar he's got, and that's the only one you worship at.

And y'all still think you can stand against me and my gods. He said, my gods are bigger than everybody else's gods. My gods, my gods have whipped all gods. No gods can stand in front of my God.

Look at verse 13. Were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands? Who is there, verse 14? Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed that could help them?

No god. No other god could win. No other god could defend their people. And what makes you think your god will be able to deliver you? I've whipped every god there is out there. My gods are whipping all the gods, and your gods no bigger than the other gods, and I'm taking them out.

He said, y'all need to be careful. Hezekiah's lying to you, and he's tricking you. In verse 15, he's deceiving you, and he's trying to persuade you. Because there's no god of any nation or kingdom that's able to save you.

[10 : 34] How much less your god. How much less. You underline that in verse 15. How much less your god. No other god could do it. What makes you think your god can do it?

Everybody's agreeing. In verse 16, the servants spake against the Lord even more. And against his servant. Everybody's talking bad about Hezekiah.

Everybody agrees. There's no hope. There's no way to handle this. People are writing letters to mock God. In verse 17, to rail on the Lord God of Israel.

And they say, the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people, and your god will not do so either. Their goal was to cause the people to lose courage.

Lose their heart. And not be able to handle things. ¿Qué es lo que yo quiero? ¿Qué es lo que yo quiero? Segunda crónica, straight.

[11 : 29] Sorry. I said go check on the kid I see playing out in the hallway in Spanish. I should have just said it in English. They cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech.

So they did it on purpose. This is the verse you need to mark. They cried out, and they talked to everybody, and they said, You're just trying to scare them and to trouble them. Because they knew if they could make the people doubt their god, the people would lose.

Look at what it says. To affright them and to trouble them that they might take their city. They just wanted to cause fear. You know God's not the God of fear. God's not the God of confusion.

No matter how much junk is going on around you, he wants you to know he is God, and he is God Almighty, and he is powerful, and he'll take care of you. He wanted them to be in distress. His mistake was he spoke against the great God of heaven like he was some other puny little idol made by men's hands.

Look at verse 19. He spake against the God of Jerusalem as against the gods, little g, of the people of the earth. And those other gods he spoke against, they were little idols made by men's hands.

[12 : 39] So what did Hezekiah do? That's the trouble he's in. All I've described to you so far is the trouble he's in. You've got to admit he's in big trouble. I don't know if you can imagine this. If you can imagine the armies are camped all the way around.

They've attacked Pearl Harbor already. Canada has already been taken over. Mexico is taken over. The Caribbean island is taken over. The Cuban Missile Crisis is in place. And everything in the world is going wrong in the country.

And letters are being written. And they're saying, we're going to take you out. It's a scary time to be alive. So what did Hezekiah do? First thing I wish I could get you to understand, I'm going to talk to you about practical application in a minute.

But he went to work. He went to work. Look, the fear that the devil strikes in your heart because you believe lies causes you to freeze up, to panic, to get in a fetal position, and to give up.

But in the Bible story that God tells us, look what Hezekiah does in verse 3. He takes counsel. I didn't have time to show you this. But three times so far in his life he's taken counsel. He's not some guy that just goes around by himself.

[13 : 40] He found some other good men and said, help me know what to do right here. He took counsel with his princes and they stopped the waters of the fountains. Here's what he said. He said, well, they're coming and I know they're coming and there's nothing I can do to stop them from coming.

But I've already fixed us up. We've got our own aqueduct bringing water into the city underground. So let's stop all the water outside so when they get out there at least they'll be thirsty. And we'll just keep on drinking right there in front of them.

So he went to work. In verse 4 he said, why should the king of Assyria come and find much water? Chapter 32 in verse 30. This says the guy stopped the water in the upper course.

And Hezekiah prospered in all of his works. And then he prepared his military. He prepared what he had. You can only work with what you got. But in chapter 32 in verse 5 he strengthened himself. He built up the wall.

He raised up the towers. He fixed another wall. He repaired Milo. And he built darts or spears and arrows and shields in abundance. And he sent captains over them.

[14 : 38] And he spoke to them and said, now guys, we're getting everything ready. Now watch what he said to them. Now I just want you to understand. Here's the story so far. He's got it bad. I don't care how bad you got it.

In all honesty, in this Bible story, Hezekiah and his people are in worse shape. They got it really bad. They're about to be destroyed. Hezekiah doesn't run somewhere and hide. He doesn't sneak out of the city.

He doesn't get in a fetal position and say, oh, I can't do anything about it. I just have to give up my finances. I'll just quit my health, my children, my problems. I don't care. They don't know what he does.

He does everything he could possibly do. But I like this mostly. In verse 6, he spoke comfortably to them. You need to underline that. You see, Hezekiah had gone alone with God.

And he was ready to talk to the people he led. And this is what he said in verse 7. Oh, come on. You've got to like it. If you can't say amen on this part right here, I'm just quitting and walking off the stage. Look at verse 7. He said, be strong and courageous.

[15 : 35] Be not afraid nor dismayed. For the king of Assyria nor all the multitude, yeah, he's got a big crowd with him. But there is more with us than with him.

With him is the arm of flesh. But with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles. Men, you've got to underline this. The people rested.

You don't see the importance there. Everybody's scared to death. All the women are running around saying, we're all dying. We're all dying. All the guys are running around saying, I can't act like it. But we're all dying.

I'm scared to death. Everybody's terrified. And Hezekiah stands up and says, hold it. Hold it. You don't let what you see scare you. You don't let what you hear scare you. We serve God.

And he's going to help us. He's going to get us through this. And all of a sudden, the people said, let's go take a nap. I'm confident. I'm relaxed. They rested. That's what your Bible says.

[16 : 33] Is that what your Bible says? And they rested on the words of Hezekiah, King of Judah. I got the words of Moses and the words of Joshua. And I got the words of the prophets. And I got the words of the guys that wrote the news.

I got the word of God on it. I can rest. The economy may crash. North Korea may come. And cancer may come.

But we can trust God. People made it through worse than what we're facing. We're going to be all right. I like this. Next thing Hezekiah does, he prays.

Verse 20. And for this cause, Hezekiah the king and the prophet Isaiah, that's the old guy who wrote that book, prayed. And they cried to heaven. And he believed God. Okay.

Big trouble. Believe in God. Big trouble. Believe in, hope in when there's no hope. Trust in when there's no reason to trust except God. And so what happens?

[17 : 30] Look if you would at verse 21. Now, you might not believe the Bible, but I do. And this is what happened. The Lord sent an angel. Underline that.

The Lord sent an angel. Now, they got a gazillion soldiers out there. And God sends an angel. Man, I don't know how big that guy must have been.

I have no idea how big his sword was. But check out what he does. Which cut off all the mighty men of valor, the leaders and the captains. In the camp of the king of Assyria.

One angel. One angel. And this great big captain wakes up. I do not know what happens. He walks outside and, hey, bring the captains.

They're all dead. Bring the mighty men. They died too. Well, who's here? We can help you get home. That's what the book says.

[18 : 25] So he went home with his tail between his legs. That's Tennessee hillbilly version. Look at it. He returned with shame of face. Japanese people lose face. He didn't lose face.

He had shame of face. He returned home with shame of face to his own land. And when he got home, he went to the house of his little G God. Not big enough to stand against the real God. Because there is no God big enough to stand against the real God.

And when he got home, the ones that came out of his bowels. That's an old-fashioned way of saying his kids. They killed him. Run your big mouth.

Sennacherib. Because ain't a rib going to be left when it's over. Now, I'll ask you before we go to the next point. I got 12 minutes and five more points, four more points. But let me ask you a question.

What are you facing? What kind of trials are you facing? I know you're going through junk. I know life is hard. Are you doing, is it financial problems? Is it your health? Is it family or emotional?

[19 : 23] You do not have the same problem, but you got the same story. What are you going to do? Please remember this. Let's suppose you're scared to death.

Let's suppose that the enemy that's marching against you is so great, they have surrounded your city. And there's no hope for you. Don't lay in the bed. Don't whine.

Don't pout. Don't focus on it. Get up and cut off the water supply for the enemy. Do what you can do. Go to work. Go see a doctor.

Get some counseling. Do everything in your power, whatever you need to do. But don't you sit around moping and wondering why you're hurting. That's what he did. I mean, Hezekiah, I don't see a hotline to Egypt.

Could you come help me? I don't see him saying, you know what he's saying? Hey, we better fix the walls out there. Let's get the soldiers ready. Let's build some more. Hey, I need the spear makers to get to work making spears and the arrow makers and the crossbow arrow makers.

[20 : 22] I need y'all to make me some more shields. Get that wall built. Get everybody to work. God, we need to eat for trouble here. I'm doing everything I can, but just to be blunt honest, I think we're still in trouble.

Hey, people, don't y'all worry about a thing. I know God. That's the story. That's the story. Think of what you are not to do.

What are you not supposed to do? Don't listen to the lies of the enemy. Did you know that the enemy from Sadenacharyu's camp came? They didn't speak their language. They learned how to speak the Israelite language so they could speak in Hebrew so everybody would hear them.

And they were standing there saying, your God can't do it. Your God can't do it. Our God's beating all gods. And everybody's up on the wall saying, we all didn't whip that. Yeah, we whipped that country too. And the next thing you know, they listen to enough CNN and Fox News and every other group.

And they're like, oh, no. No, don't listen. Don't listen. Don't listen to lies. Don't listen to that. Focus on the Lord. Don't listen to your heart. Don't complain.

[21 : 25] Don't gripe. Don't pout. Find the will of God from the scriptures. And pray to God. You need to go find the scripture. Search the scripture. God's going to work out things.

Mr. Carrier's right. God's going to work it out in your life. He's got a plan. He's got a purpose. Believe that God's going to only do good. When Jim Elliott died, at less than the age of 30, what seemed like a tragedy turned out to be a boon for world evangelism.

Trust God. Thank God when you pray. We are to be a thanking, praising people. We're to be a thanking, praising people.

1 Thessalonians 5.18 says, give thanks. That's the will of God. Philippians 4.6 says, don't y'all worry about anything but with prayer and supplication and thanksgiving and the peace of God will rule.

Trust God. And he won. That's the whole message. And he won. And he came out on the other side. And the great Sennacherib was whipped. And it doesn't appear they had to use any of the spears they prepared.

[22 : 36] Well, that takes us to verse 22. Now everything's going great. Because sometimes you get through that big battle. And you have victory.

And things are going well. And you forget where you were. And you forget what you were doing. And you forget what was happening. 2 Chronicles 32.22.

Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants from the hand of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. From the hand of all, in the hand of all other. And he guided them on every side.

I wish you'd underline this. The Lord saved. It wasn't because Hezekiah got enough darts ready. You need to get an amen in there. It wasn't because he got enough walls built.

It wasn't because he came up with a good plan. It's because he trusted God. So the blessings of God began to pour in on him. In verse 23. Many gifts unto the Lord and unto Hezekiah.

[23 : 34] And he was magnified in the sight of all nations. God made him rich. In verse 27. Exceeding much rich in honor. Made him treasures. Everything he had increased.

In verse 28. God was giving him everything. God is literally backing up semi-loads and just dumping it on him. Look at verse 29.

Moreover, he provided him cities and possessions of flocks and herds and abundance. For God had given him substance very much. Then he got sick. I mean, God's being good to him.

God's being good to him. And he got sick. And verse 24. He got sick and he prayed. And the Lord said, all right, I'm going to let you live 15 more years. That's from another part of the Bible. And that brings us to verse 25.

I want you to look at it. I need you to think about verse 25. I thought a lot about verse 25. I am.

[24 : 30] I grew up with an outhouse. I grew up. My daddy bought an automatic washing machine. But we didn't have running water.

That's a dumb thing to buy. So my mom would plug that thing in. And when it started calling for water, it made the sound where water's supposed to come in. I was dumping it. I used to think, Lord.

Nowadays, we got an automatic washing machine. You don't have to run and get water for it. It just comes in there. You got bathrooms at work. I got married to a beautiful woman. I had beautiful children, beautiful grandchildren.

I pastor a beautiful church. Oh, he's been so good. I had kidney cancer like six years ago. I could have easily been dead if it had been 75 years before that.

He's been good. I don't think I'm the only one in this room. I think you've been blessed. But have you rendered? Have you given back?

[25 : 31] Hezekiah didn't give back according to the benefit. He became a taker. I'm afraid that's what we do with the things of God. We become takers.

I could stop right there. I'm not going to. Don't be a taker. Even when he saved you. Look where he saved you from. But it's been so many years you've forgotten who you were before him.

You can't remember the B.C. part of your life before Christ's part. And so you get to being haughty and mighty and thinking you're somebody. You get to thinking you're smart and you're education and you're hard work.

So God had to humble him in verse 26. So often blessings cause us to be proud and self-sufficient. It's almost like the battle was better than the blessing.

In the battle, can you not see him? That man's so calm compared to what he's facing. And he's going, hey, trust God. But when he got blessed, he's going, look at me.

[26 : 39] Check me out. God's work miracles. How you been dealing with your blessings? Last thing. 2 Chronicles 32, 31.

This is another shocker verse in the chapter that made. And we're going to leave my buddy Hezekiah who I think I could stay with this guy for a long time. The Bible says, You need to underline this.

God left him to try him. That he might know all that was in his heart. That's amazing. God let.

Hey, Hezekiah, have you understood I did it? Have you understood I whipped Sennacherib? Have you understood I made you rich? Have you understood I'm God and I'm blessing you?

And it's all my money and my power and my ability? And so some ambassadors came to see him. You got to understand, he's a Tennessee hillbilly.

[27 : 48] He grew up with an outhouse. And now he's living in a mansion. And people are coming just to see where he lives. And to see the food he eats. And to see the army he has. And to see all of his stuff.

And what he doesn't know is, God let those ambassadors come just to see what he'd say. God knew what he was going to say, didn't he? He needed to be able to prove a point. When those ambassadors come to see Hezekiah, Hezekiah walks in there and says, Check out my house.

Check out my army. Check out my treasuries. Check out my bank accounts. Check out all my stuff. I mean, just to be honest, I'm the blessed man.

I'm the man. Check out my income. Check out how people love me. Check out how people respect me. Check out what's happened. In fact, you know what old snackery came and nobody could stop him.

But I did. I did. And by the way, I'm rich. Yes, I am. I'm rich. And I'm powerful. In fact, as I was sick, I just asked God to give me more life.

[28 : 49] He gave me 15 more years. I'm the man. He blew the test. That's a sad thing. He blew the test.

He blew the test. And the verse is so clear. He left him to try. I wonder if what's happening in your heart has got you lifted up.

We live in Alpharetta. I'm not picking on you. I'm rich. I'm not picking on you. I'm blessed. I'm not picking on you. I'm living the best I've ever lived. But did I do it?

Or did he do it? Am I using it for him? Or am I using it for me? Am I bragging about my stuff? Or am I bragging on Jesus?

I know you're successful. Well, you're smart. You built a great company. You're doing a lot of great stuff. Are you rendering to him like he rendered to you? Are you giving to him like he's giving to you?

[29 : 53] I don't have time for the other things I want to say. He's going to die. He's one of the best kings ever had. Gets buried the best way. Gets honors poured out on him. How are you dealing with your battles?

Some of you are in a battle right now and it's time to call on God. You're listening to lies. The devil's telling you God doesn't love you. The devil's telling you that God can't give you victory. The devil's telling you that you're a loser.

The devil's telling you all kind of junk and you're believing it. Well, you ought to stop believing it. Start talking to your heart and telling your heart to believe what God says. Some of you have been through the battle and come out on the other side of the battle and you're in the middle of blessings.

And just to be honest with you, he's being too good to you. I know he's being too good to me. He just keeps blessing us. I mean, you would think that's enough blessing. You could stop right there. I like my father-in-law.

My father-in-law was in Colombia when he was a young man. This had been 70 years ago, 80 years ago. And he had learned just enough Spanish to be dangerous. And so the word for enough is basta.

[30 : 53] And the word for a bunch is bastante. And so when they served his plate, he wanted to say, that's enough, basta. But he kept going, bastante. And so they'd throw a bunch on his plate.

And he'd eat that and he'd come back to serve him more and he'd go, no, no, no, bastante. And they'd throw more on his plate. He'd say he couldn't figure out what was going on there. Isn't that about what you're doing? It's just too much? Time to say basta?

We don't say thank you. You used to read your Bible. You used to have time for family altar. When you had troubles, you used to call on God. We don't have time for that anymore.

I've got too much money to make. I've got such good health, I need to go enjoy what I can do with my good health. Who's God? Who's God?

We get in trouble, we'll call on him. I think that's what he said to me in the passage. Has he spoken to you? zu- I I