

Be more Hezekiah

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[0 : 00] Be more Hezekiah. Be more Hezekiah is what I want to talk about now just for a few moments.! Just start to the next slide please, Josh. 2 Chronicles 31, 20 and 21, just a couple of verses.

And this is at the end, and I'll give the contest a minute, but this is in the end. 2 Chronicles, oh, we've gone too far. You've just given the story away. You've just given the punchline. The end of the narrative about Hezekiah. This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah, doing what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. In everything he undertook, in the service of God's temple, and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought God and worked wholeheartedly, and he prospered.

Just a few things about that please. Next slide please, Shelley, thanks. So the background, Hezekiah became a king, the king of Judah when he was 25, and he ruled for 29 years, which is actually quite a long time for kings in those days. They tended to have a relatively short shelf life. They tended to get bashed by somebody, but Hezekiah ruled for 29 years.

And what he did was put a lot of things right that had gone wrong under the previous king, a fellow called Ahaz. Now Ahaz was very much fond of building lots of shrines, and doing things in the temple that he shouldn't be doing, and dedicating stones to be sacred stones, or Asherah poles, and false god idols. So Ahaz had done all that, and Hezekiah said, ah ah, we're not having that. We're not doing that because that's not okay. That's not what God has told us to do. And Ahaz knew what God has told them to do because it was written down.

[2 : 10] But the kings that went before him had ignored those rules, has ignored the rules and the commands of God.

And they had done all sorts of stuff, and Hezekiah had to put those right.

Okay, so next slide please. And Hezekiah was a good guy. And God was pleased with him. And Hezekiah was doing all the things that God had asked him to do. He went a bit off towards the end and had to repent, but we'll leave that for the moment. Hezekiah was purifying the temple and cleansing the land. And what he was doing there was making it a godly place to live. And God was pleased with him.

And then this fellow, Sinaribe, turned up. Forgive me if I'm saying that wrong. I've tried to practice all week and I still can't do it. I might call him Dave actually from now on. But anyway, Sinaribe turned up. And he wrote this really nasty letter to Hezekiah. He said, you think you're clever, you think you're clever, but you're not. You think you're doing the right thing, but you're not. You think you're being godly, but you're just being stupid.

And I'm bigger than you, and stronger than you, and I've got more weapons than you, and more chariots than you, and more horses than you, and more swords than you, and more whatever else he had.

[4 : 04] I'm really strong and big, and you're not. And I'm going to come and show you how foolish you're being, because you think that you can rely on God, but you can't. He ridiculed God, and he ridiculed Hezekiah, and he threatened destruction for the people of Judah.

And it says in verse 19, he spoke of God as if he were like the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are works of human hands. God's.

And that was his big mistake. And what we have, and it's something that we have in today's society, is that we find ourselves thinking of something that is quite important sometimes, or important to us, but we turn it into a god.

God. But it's only a god of the work of human hands has no power. And they said, Siddhartha said, and all his followers said, you're just being dopey.

You're just being foolish. You're just believing God, and he's nothing. Now that's really upsetting, isn't it?

[5 : 36] That's upsetting when somebody says, of God, ah, just ignore it. It's all rubbish. Because we know that God's different.

We know that God changes my life. We know that God is with me. We know that God protects me. We know that God is wonderful, and he loves me. And then somebody says, nah, God, you can ignore him.

So Hezekiah was sad. Hezekiah was upset, but he was also quite scared. And he cried out in prayer to heaven about this.

He didn't run around seeing what, how many people could get to be on his side. He just cried out to heaven and said, God, what are you going to do to save me in this situation?

What are you going to do to help me? Because this man is bigger and stronger and better equipped than me. And that's the truth of it. He was, except he had God on his side.

[6 : 55] Hezekiah had God on his side. So he cried out in prayer and the Lord saved him. Very straightforwardly, Scripture says, the Lord saved him.

Next slide, please. And as part of that process, Hezekiah demonstrated some really important personal characteristics.

He was good, he was righteous, and he was faithful. And just some little words there, I looked it up, had a bit of a root around.

Good, pleasant, agreeable, beneficial. Beneficial. It doesn't say, by the way, he never got anything wrong. It says that he was a decent man.

And as we live our lives, whether we're five or 105, we need to think about, are we being decent?

[8 : 02] Are we being pleasant and agreeable? Right. He did the right thing. Straight, upright. He was faithful.

He was true. He was assured in his love of God. Now, these characteristics didn't need a degree. He hadn't got to go to college or university or goodness knows what to be these things. They're not smarty-pants characteristics.

These are things that we can choose to do whatever age we are and whatever we are doing in our lives.

We can choose with God's help and the help of the Holy Spirit within us to be people who follow God, who follow the rules of Jesus and who are good, right and faithful.

[9 : 11] So, let's not get into some sort of complicated argument to say, oh, to be a Christian you've got to be really clever or to be a Christian you've got to do this or do that.

Ask Jesus to make you a nice, decent person. He will change you and you will become good, right and faithful.

Next slide, please. And then he did some very wise things and again these aren't complicated things, these are just things that we need to remember we need to do.

He sought God. He went to try and find out more about God. How do we find out more about God? By reading our Bible. By reading our Bible every day. Every day when I read my Bible I find out more about God. By praying.

[10 : 10] By getting to know God. By talking to God. He sought God. The Bible tells us to find out what pleases God. And that's something that we can do simply by having that relationship and seeking God.

And then he worked wholeheartedly. He worked really hard. He put effort, his effort into being the person that Jesus wanted them to be.

That God wanted them to be. And that's what we need to do as well. It doesn't matter what age we are. It doesn't matter what we do. What we need to do and make sure we do is whatever we're doing we do it really wholeheartedly.

We do it with all of us. We do it with energy and enthusiasm and willingness. And that can be hard sometimes. That can be hard sometimes. And when it's hard we need to seek God to help us be the people that he wants us to be.

Next slide please. Just very briefly Hezekiah didn't go out in battle against Sennacherib. He didn't say right okay if you think you're strong I'm even stronger.

[11 : 25] But he didn't become overwhelmed by the threat either. He didn't say oh I might as well just give up. I might as well write to Sennacherib and say oh come on then.

Come on you have it. Because the threat was very real. He didn't try to outwit or out argue Sennacherib. He simply cried out to God and trusted him to work it through for the benefit of those who love God.

God. So he didn't get into I'll sort this out. He just got into God help me. Next slide please.

And so he prospered. Very straightforward. And he prospered scripture says. He didn't that wasn't about being rich or having lots of material things.

It meant he overcame. We can learn. We will face threats and challenges and difficulties and all manner of frustrations.

[12 : 39] That's what happens in life. We will face those things. But instead of railing against them and trying to work it out for ourselves, the lesson from Hezekiah is very straightforward.

Cry out to God and trust in him alone. Cry out to God and trust in him alone. Next slide please.

Because with God it will always be right. Amen.