

Oct. 15, 1978 P.M. W.R.I.
(Outline)

"DON'T LET ME DIE!"

II Kings 20:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

Hezekiah prayed - "Lord, let me live and not die." This prayer was offered over 2600 years ago, and yet it is as new as today. Thousands of people pray the same prayer daily in our hospitals, in our homes across the land.

You, who are listening to me, have sometime, no doubt prayed it yourself. Perhaps you have prayed this prayer for a loved one. If you have not, you will pray it in the future.

II Kings 18:5 says - he trusted in the Lord God of Israel. So that after him was none like him. Among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. This man has the verdict of a life that is inspiring. Solomon was great in his wisdom. David was great in his genius. But none trusted in the Lord God, and followed him as faithfully as Hezekiah. The great faults that came in the lives of great kings like David, Solomon, were missing in his life. Since he was human - of course, he had human weaknesses. On the whole, his heart was right with God.

His name means, God is might. A Minister told his congregation that there were 739 different sins. He has received 73 requests for the list!
Two men killed Beer both poor eye sight - Pulling by hind legs - entangled in vines - hard for some one passing said lower Dead by Horns - They died - admitted eyes. But some said sin, but we getting further from the car!
He was a great ruler, a great king, organizer, reformer, engineer, and a great lover of literature. He collected the Proverbs of Solomon. And perhaps it is two years later that we have the great knowledge of that book. The greatest thing, a servant of God!

Hezekiah was the son of Ahaz. He was the father of Manasseh. That means, he was

the son of the worst king. And yet he was the father of the next worst.

Now there are several things that we want to consider here in this story. And I do so, under certain words, Perilous, Prophet, Prayer, Postponement.

Perils

I. PERILOUS

During the reign of Hezekiah, he faced all kinds of perils and dangers.

First, he had some great reforms to make. Ahab had sent up an image of the fierce God of Amon - Molock, with the furnace at his feet outside of the wall of Jerusalem. And into that furnace, he had cast his own son.

At the entrance of the temple, were chariots dedicated to the sun - after the manner of the heathen. On the roof of the temple, he had built altars for the worship of the stars and the sun.

Within the temple, he had replaced the altar, and remodeled it - after the heathen temple at Damascus.

Let me say here, in a nation, like a man or woman - starts to go down, they go down rapidly. Israel was at a (low ebb). He was corrupt. Hezekiah lost no time in instituting reforms. And this was perilous for him to undertake, to change people. They had decided to forsake the idols. And he brought them back to rebuild the city of God. Now that was no easy job for him to do.

The temple doors had to be opened again. And the filth had to be carried away. He removed and destroyed the altars that they had.

He lighted the holy lamps again.

He even destroyed the (brazen serpent). The symbol of the deliverance of people during the days of Moses that had been ours, during the tabernacle and the temple - but people were offering incense to the brass. And he declared that this sacred relic was a greater sin and he called for national repentance.

Hezekiah illustrates what a man in high office can do. Civil power and government, placing itself on the side of morality and righteousness. The big question today is, why doesn't the Governor of our State and the men in power, place themselves on the side of morality against gambling. And immorality in this State. Why should it not always be so, that those in high office, they put their hopes on politicians instead of upon God.

²² Another perilous thing was - they were about to be (invaded by the Assyrians). They came right to the walls of Jerusalem. And threatened to enter the city and to destroy it. And of course, Judah would have been truly destroyed at that time. Great issues were at stake here.

In 19:3 - this day is a day of trouble and rebuke, and blasphemy, the king said. And this was a crucial time with him. What were they going to do against this power.

In V. (14) - the king received a letter that had attempted to destroy him - his peace, his happiness, and his confidence in God. But he did what all of us should do with such communications. Spread them before the Lord. Now have the Lord see and read them. Commit thy way unto God, and he shall direct thy paths. So the slanderous thing he dealt with, in a God-honoring way.

V. (20) - We read that Hezekiah was praying in this time - when the prayerless invasion was about to take place. That the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God. He was expecting great things from God. And he was asking great things in God's name for God's glory.

While he prayed, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed unto me, thou hast heard. V. 20. Not only was his prayer heard, but the rage of the enemy had come up before God. V. (27).

Sennacherib had sought to invade time and time again, and he comes with his Army to put a stop to Hezekiah's reform. In fact, he turned the country around the city into a wilderness. He stopped up the fountains and the wells. At first, it looked as though the king would have to pay tribute to this heathen monarch. But he came to God, who was no stranger to him, and he prayed.

We need to mark out that path to God's altar today. And when the day of trouble comes, it will be easy and natural for you to find your way to God for his help. There are few, if any, passages that equal this. God will put his hook in his nose and drag him back to Nineveh.

See how God answers prayer in V. (35) The angel of the Lord went out and smothered the Assyrians. And in the morning, these enemies were found to be dead - 185,000 soldiers.

When they said peace and safety - then sudden destruction came upon them. Who shall be able to stand when God is going to appear with the flaming sword of judgement in his hand. Thus the prayer, of the man of God proved more powerful than the enemy and God answered his prayer.

The perilous things that Hezekiah faced was the choice of revival, turning the people back, and then secondly, there was the perilous things of the invasion that was happening among the people. And of course, there was the peril of prosperity - V. 15 - Chapter 20.

Hezekiah had the great treasures and these were seen by the enemies.

^{4th} But the fourth and final peril was that of death. And this is the message that Hezekiah faced death. So the perils.

Prophet

II. PROPHET - V. (1)

At the height of his power and influence, in the midst of his days, he had brought revival to the nation. It seemed that he had been delivered from the enemies. He had great plans and projects for the future. When suddenly, the prophet Isaiah approaches the king.

11 // Set Thine house in order. For thou shalt die and not live. The Lord said, there is no need to call another specialist. There is no need for a second opinion - the ultimate authority has spoken. You will die. And heed his words.

The prophet told him, thou shalt die and not live. That is a very severe announcement. It was abrupt. It was very disturbing. It was unconditional. There was no word of comfort. The Lord hath spoken. The verdict had authority with it.

(Set) thine house in order. This issued that (your) household, he says, you must make preparations and get ready - you are (going to die) at this early age, but get ready, all of your (affairs) must be put in order.

How many times those same words have been used to remind individuals that there is a limited amount of space, relative to time, and they need to get their earthly affairs lined up.

Birth carries with it, the announcement of death. All life, is but a sentence to death. The natural thing for us is that we shall live. And yet, death is just as natural.

Few people get the warning, that the king received. For most people, death comes without warning. It disrupts the normal pattern of life. It comes as a thief in the night. It comes at an hour when we think not.

If you had this warning, how would you react. What kind of preparations would you make. Would it paralyze you. Or would you curse God. Would you question - why me Lord, why me?

In a sense, we have all been warned. The Bible says, it is appointed unto man - once to die and after that, the judgement. Now knowing this, why do we run the risk of saying - not I, Lord, not I.

What is your reaction to the life that you have now. And yet some of you are (procrastinating) about everything that wisdom dictates. You are so half-hearted about the things of God and living a Christian life, and worshipping God, and on we could go.

The sudden solemn declaration startled this man. Here was great prosperity - but it was no guarantee of long life. Some of the most brilliant lives have been short ones. He was at the most urgent kind of business. And yet he was to put his house and his heart in order.

At this time, he did not have a son to succeed him. It is not enough for us to live and die. There are responsibilities that are resting upon each of us to see that our deeds are not buried with our bones.

The perils, the prophets.

III. PRAYER - V. 2-3

V2
11 He turned his face to the wall and prayed unto the Lord. At the height of his power and his influence, Isaiah comes with this blunt message. And he turns his face to the wall and prays for prolonged life.

10.
What a blank outlook on the future that this man had.

He is utterly prostrate - he bursts forth in tears. The darkness of the grave was before him. The light of the day was away from him. He looked at the blank wall in his chamber. He recognized that Isaiah was a man of God. And God himself had spoken and he did not question the judgement. He knew that if God sent the preacher to deliver the message, the message was true.

So he turned to God in the time of trouble. And he prayed for himself.

Many of you in time of trouble blame God. We turn to our leisure activities to get our minds off of our problems. People turn to drink, they turn away, or they are rather embittered. And this man turned to God in a moment of despair.

The king wanted to live. There were many many reasons why he wanted to live.

1st
First, he was too young to die. He probably was no more than 39 years of age.

Assyria was threatening to attack and his nation might be surrounded again at any moment and they needed him as their leader.

- 2nd Another reason, the (religious revival) was taking on new fervor. He had begun to reform and he needed to complete it.

- 3rd Another reason, he had (no heir) - no son to replace him on the throne.

V.3 (He gave none) of these reasons for wanting to live. We might say, that he gave a selfish reason, as he prayed. He said, (Lord) I've done the best I could and I have walked in truth. I have done good in your sight. All that I possibly could. He might have said, I don't deserve to die.¹¹

He did not want to die. And how true - my friends, what a difference the knowledge of Christ can make in your life and my life when we come to die. We can be encouraged by the king's experience. When we see that through a variety of motives, that we pray. And Hezekiah asked God if he might live.

He had only (reigned) 15 years now, and he felt yet that he was unprepared to submit willingly to this command of God.

I want you to (notice) - he put his (face to the wall). He turned his (back) to (all human help). And cast himself at the very feet of his Lord.

~~He~~ - There he pleads in the name of God. Here he pleads in his own name, I have walked before Thee in truth with a perfect heart. I imagine he groans as he struggles with this prayer.

Tonight, if you had to plead your own case, for more days - would you include
in that prayer. Oh Lord, I have walked before thee with a perfect heart. I have
sought to go before Thee in truth. And I have done which is good and perfect, in thy
sight.

Hezekiah wept. It means that there was great weeping.

IV. POULTICE - V. 4-11

V. 4
Now the king had prayed besetting his past goodness. And God based his
answer on Hezekiah's prayer and tears. Note how quickly the answer came. Isaiah
left the room and God spoke to him. And told him - he just got outside of the
Royal Court when the answer came. And the word said to the Lord, come again, and
tell the king - the captain of my people that I have heard thy prayer, I have seen
V. 5 thy tears, I will heal Thee, and on the third day, thou shalt go up to the house
of the Lord. And furthermore, I will add unto thy days - 15 years. And I will
deliver thee, and defend this city.

V. 7
V. 7 And Isaiah said, take a lump of figs, and they took and layed it upon
the boil. And he recovered.

Now the miracle was the work of God. And God said to Isaiah, you put a lump
of figs on the boil, and the poultice healed the sore. And with the healing came
the assurance.

That here was the God who had been with the other leaders - the God of David,

was the same yesterday, as is today, and forever.

There are three things - God sees, God hears, and God acts. And with him all things are possible. The question always comes up - is anything too hard for the Lord.

Do we believe that God can do all things. Intellectually, we understand that nothing is too hard for God. But emotionally, we kind of doubt that God has the ability to even change lives.

Look here, God uses human beings - he doesn't work alone always. Now this answer to the prayer required a poultice. He asked for faith and figs in order to deliver a miracle.

The prophet, became the physician when you want to raise a sick man up from the bed. Does he need a doctor? Could God not have healed Hezekiah without a word. Or without the figs. Certainly, I think that he could have done so. But God worked as he wills and chooses to work.

Notice this was a case of faith healing. But faith healing was common sense with science - as it was available that day.

Now the figs seem to be a very natural remedy - but they would have been futile without the divine blessing. You know, in God's hands are the issues of life. And the Lord works these miracles.

V. PROLONGED - V. 6

And I will add unto thy days, 15 years.

V. 6
I think men who confront, or who are confronted by death often have a greater understanding of life. I feel myself, to better understand life, as did the king Hezekiah. According to Isaiah, he celebrated his recovery by composing a Psalm. In it, he spoke about the things by which men live.

Pennington - First Day Break

When a man faces death, whether it is real or imaginary, he learns what is really important to him. He discovers the priorities.

P. T. Barnum of Barnum & Bailey Circus, lay on his death bed. His last words were -- what were the day's receipts.

Now, every person lives by something - his convictions, his theories, his ideas, govern his life. It is these things that either comfort or inspire. Some of us seek comfort in material, and find satisfaction in emotional thrills. A few pleasures that come for a moment are intellectual fulfillment. That fills our heads instead of our hearts.

What are your comforts - what principles do you live by. Are you ready to face death now. Only when you are ready to die, will you be ready to live.

A young woman prayed for her uncle's conversion. She finally persuaded him to go to church. And she was very upset - the preacher that day preached from Gen. 5.

He talked about genealogy. They left the church and she was disappointed. She had hoped that the preacher would just settle down on her uncle and his sins, and talk about salvation. She even wept.

But that evening that uncle accepted Christ. He had heard the phrase and (he died) repeating 8 times in the Scripture passage. And the words haunted him. And he came face to face with the reality of death - and he turned to Christ as his Saviour.

God prolonged the days of Hezekiah.

9-10
He gave him a sign. And here he was - he had watched from his bed day after day. He knew he was dying. The sun dial of Ahaz. And the prophet said unto him, shall we ask that the dial go foreward, 10° - or backwards. To which the king said, in himself, it would be easier for the shadow to go forward. And so he requested that the sign be given to send it back on its course. And God who made the sun brought it to pass.

You will notice that this was a miraculous work. On the dial of Ahaz - and if there was any doubting in his heart, he could now have the assurance that it would come to pass.

There are several things that I wish we had time to consider.

God heard, he had seen, he healed, and then on the 3rd day he got up out of

his bed and he went to worship in the temple.

Why did God add 15 years. And suppose God would add 15 years to your life? He is now in the 15th year of his reign - now God would add an equal period to what he had already enjoyed. Thus stood mid-way between the beginning and the end of his reign.

Sometimes people have years added - and they do not respond as the king. A mother prayed once to save her son who was dying at any cost. The son lived, but the mother had the unspeakable anguish of seeing her son hanged as a criminal.

Not want disappointed God - A preacher & his wife met a woman on the st - The woman kissed him as she greeted him & the preacher cooperated! Later the wife asked the preacher who was that? - I don't know, but I did not want to disappoint her!

Now some of you have been spared, and God has added onto your life some years, are they profitable for God.

Hezekiah was a man who called his people to repentance - away from sin. And he called first of all for a sin offering. And they brought a beast - and layed his hands upon that beast and confessed his sins. And the people followed in the steps of the king. After such confession of sins, the beast was slain. This act was a foreshadow of the cross. My faith would lay her hand on that dear head of thine, while as a penitent I stand, and there confess my sin.

Then he called for a burnt offering. And the burnt offering in the Bible means the dedication of life. This is what Paul said. Rom. 12:1 I beseech you brethren, present your bodies a living sacrifice. Dedication of life. The sin offering and the burnt offering, and it is said - in the Old Testament, the song of

the Lord began, with the offering of the burnt offering. And when hearts were lifted and shadows fled and triumph came, that is a lesson so plain that where life is dedicated to the cause of Christ - the cause will go forward.

Carlisle says, give me a man who sings at his work.

Are there people tonight who are praying, don't let me die? A boy who lost his arms in a mill, refused to be defeated. He had some artificial arms - and now he can write, play, and work as other men.

Are there some skeletons in the closet. Who need to be lifted. Charles Lamb a brilliant man, was bereaved by his sister, Mary. Who had her dark seasons of mental madness. The famous brother, was the only person who could quiet her in those awful hours. And often he walked with her early in the morning, trying to rescue her from insanity. He had a sympathetic spirit. And he carried these home trials.

Now what about you who are getting old. Hezekiah was really not an old man, but death was on the way. There is no more glorious sight than men and women in older years. The Bible says of Moses - he was 120 years old when he died. His eyes were not dim - nor his natural force abated. He had three secrets -- he chose God to control his life. Second, he linked his life with a worthy cause. And third, he included the long future in his hands. He had learned to live.

Like the king, we'll have to take the limitations of life. And make the best of it - for our light affliction is but a moment. Worketh for us an exceeding weight

of glory.

How solemn and how searching were the words of the prophet - and yet the New Testament says to us - they overcame him by the blood of the lamb. And by the word of their testimony. And they loved not their lives - even unto death.

The vital question tonight is your life dedicated to Christ. Have you chosen that he may have his way with you. Are you obediently following him. There are enough men and women listening this hour - if their lives were faithfully dedicated to Christ, could change the city of Chesapeake. Should we not make this dedication this very hour. Just one chance do we have at the earthly life. It hurries rapidly away.

The tragedy is to miss the true meaning of life.

Christ may have our lives and direct us. The duty of some neglected Christian tonight needs to be changed and anchor all in Christ. Where the whole realm of nature mind, that were a present far too small, love so amazing, so divine - demands my soul, my life, my all.

Now in conclusion - the periless hazzards of Hezekiah, were heightened by the prophet's blunt message - thou shalt die. Prayer followed then with the application of a poultice and his life was prolonged for 15 years.

The question is tonight - do you have some preparations to make. 7

A very good New Testament text, that would help on this James 5:13-18.

1) Is any among you afflicted - let him pray. Is any merry, let him sing songs.
Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick. And the Lord shall raise him up. And if we have committed sins, they shall be forgiven. Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another, and ye may be healed. The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. And he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the Heavens gave rain. And the earth brought forth her fruit. "

John A. Alshe Story riding on plane - Vietnam, Media

Told of job -

1st friend help ones who can recover!

Leave physically wounded & move to person can help -

the media training "tell us Never look into eyes of a dying man"

"if we do, we will never be able to leave him" +

Death rejects a Bribe

Dutch Schultz - gangster - arrived hospital

Pushed a roll of Bills #725 into clerk's hand -

"Take good care of me"