



"Faith & Foolishness" (Isaiah 38-39)
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Intro: Joke about 3 guys on 75th floor of hotel...he had come so far, but made a terrible mistake. Hezekiah is one of the good kings of Israel, and he had come so far, but later in life he made a mistake, and God has recorded his story for our benefit...see file "Mistakes"

I. THE TEXT

38:1a We are not exactly sure of the chronology of these events, but we know that Hezekiah's illness was before God delivered them from the Assyrian threat (chapters 36-37).

38:1b-2 What if you knew you had little time left, what would you do?

38:2-3 He does not want to die, and he is surprised that the Lord tells him it's his time, because he has been devoted to the Lord.

38:4-6 The parallel account in II Kings 20 tells us that before Isaiah had left the middle court, the Lord gave this message for Hezekiah. It also tells us that Hezekiah asked for a sign to confirm the Word Isaiah had spoken (note: 38:22). The Lord then gives Hezekiah a choice of two signs, the first that the sun go forward ten steps on the stairway of Ahaz, or that the sun go back ten steps. The stairway of Ahaz (Hezekiah's deceased father) was probably used for telling time (like a sun dial). Hezekiah chooses for the sun to go back ten steps.

38:9-22 Read all, then go back and point out (below)

38:16-17 Hezekiah realizes the benefit in his illness, and one of the main benefits is that it humbled him. As a result, he makes a commitment to the Lord (see 38:15b).

39:1 This is a test for Hezekiah. Remember what Hezekiah did when he received threatening letters from the king of Assyria? He prayed. But here the king of Babylon is not threatening Hezekiah, but seeking to befriend him. Does anyone smell a rat?

39:2 What would motivate Hezekiah do such a thing? PRIDE

II. LESSONS

A. Healing

* Hezekiah's healing was a combination of prayer, medicine, and God's divine hand...

B. The Benefits Of Affliction

1. Humility

2 Discipline

- Psalm 119: 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

- I Cor. 11:28-30

3 Divine Power

- II Corinthians 12: 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

C. Death

* We know so much more about death for the believer because of the NT.

* II Cor. 5:1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling,

* Phil.1: 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

D. Hezekiah's Failure

* He was humbled by his affliction, but after he recovered, his pride caused him to make a foolish mistake.

* Guy from The Bridge who was so humble when he first came to CC. He came up to me after a service and told me about his desire to see a Bible study started at The Bridge. So I appointed one of our leaders to check it out...when this guy got out of The Bridge, he worked construction on Phase I of CC. Someone gave him an old truck, and he was so thankful. He was growing in the Lord. But over time, we saw signs of pride. I had not seen him for awhile, then one day he came up to me after a service. I had heard he was driving a nice car now, and as he approached me, what he was wearing caught my attention. He had some pretty nice clothes, and his shoes were the style for the hip hop culture that he had come from, and now had obviously gone back to. His walk was literally different. He had that cool swagger, and proud look. He walked away from me that day, disappeared from the church, and about a year later I got news that he had been killed in a motorcycle accident. My heart grieved, and I could not help but think that God had taken him home before he could do any more damage to himself, or to others.

* Uzziah started out very humble, but after being blessed by God, allowed pride to be his downfall (II Chron.26).

* Josiah (II Chronicles 34:1-4a, 14-15, 29-31; 35:1, 18, 20-24)

* Asa's illness later in life, and his attitude against the Lord (II Chron.15, summary; 16:1-10, 12-13).

* Demas

- Philemon 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. 24 And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

- Col.4: 14 Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

- II Tim.4: 10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica.

* Noah getting drunk (Gen.9:20-23)

* Abraham going to Egypt, twice (Gen.12:10-20; 20:1-18)

* Moses striking the rock (Num.20:11)

CONCLUSION

* How much time do you have left?

* We want to make sure our time left is spent praising the Lord, serving the Lord, guarding our hearts against pride & foolish mistakes.

* I Cor.10: 6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did...11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

ADDENDUM

Remember how some teachers would make a student write on the board a phrase over and over again as punishment? The phrase had to do with their offense, and writing it over and over was intended to help them not make that mistake again.

Deut.17: 18 When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. 19 It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees.

I have an assignment for all of us tonight as we close. I've chosen several Scriptures that I want us to read out loud together. Now, if I see you not at least moving your mouth, I'm going to call you up here to help me lead everyone!

Prov.29: 23 A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.

Prov.11: 2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Prov.16: 18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Psalms 101: 3 I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me. 4 Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil.

I Cor.9:27 I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Psalms 119: 105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Psalm 104: 33 I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Psalm 86: 11 Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. 12 I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.

I need to humble myself daily, discipline what my eyes see and my body does, saturate my life with the Word of God and make praise & worship a regular part of my life.