

Good morning I am Josh Burnham and I'm the lead pastor here at Bethel. For all of our guests, those watching online, and all our covenant members, welcome! Why are days like today so important? Because you are created for community, adopted into a family that together the Lord is using to display His glory.

It is a rare occasion when you truly have insight into the thoughts of another person and their life. Occasionally, throughout history you can find someone's diary that reveals their thoughts, heart, and soul. For instance:

Pliny the Younger in his diary recounted the famous eruption of Mt. Vesuvius which buried the city of Pompeii. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set off to explore the unknown land of western North America. They kept detailed journals, writing down everything from the new animals they discovered like the Woodpecker, to what they had for dinner. Anne Frank, a Jewish girl living in Amsterdam during WWII, wrote about her life hiding from the Nazi's.

Today we have the benefit of reading about the most intimate details of a man's life almost 3,000 years ago. **The moment he hears that he has a terminal illness and only has a short time to live.** Not only do we see how this man receives the news, we have a glimpse into how he responds through his prayer.

"Get Your House in Order" (Isaiah 38:1-8)

In those days: A Wake up call. Wow what a wake up call. At this point, Hezekiah was a young man around the age of 39. How would I react if Isaiah texted me, "*set your house in order because you are about to die; you will not recover.*"

Now you might be asking, what did Hezekiah do to deserve this? Was he extremely sinful? No. Did he live a hard life that necessitated an early death? No. The Word says this: **2 Kgs 18:3 He did what was right in the LORD's sight just as his ancestor David had done.** He was 1/5 good kings of Judah, the southern kingdom. Most likely, when the king becomes ill, the siege against Jerusalem is in full effect. **And his reward?** A life-threatening sickness. It was common practice for the sick to seek an oracle from a prophet, and there was no greater prophet in the land than Isaiah. Get your house in order. Isaiah was not pronouncing judgement, he simply stated a fact. **There is something powerful visceral about a wakeup call, a crisis of faith, and a defining moment.**

The psalmist would say this, Ps 90:12 Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts. The thief on cross, knowing he would die soon, asked this of the Messiah, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom (Luke 23:42)." **These are get your house in order moments so what we develop wisdom in your heart**

What will be your wakeup call? **Do you need a spiritual reset today?** These God moments help put our entire lives into perspective. We need the Spirit to help keep the main things

the main things and the plain things the plain things. **The opposite of a wakeup call is a life wasted.** God wake me up that I may passionately pursue Jesus!

Look into your heart (38:2-3) Hezekiah's first response was to turn his face to the wall. He did not lash out in anger towards the prophet, or ask "what did I do to deserve this?" He did not hide or mask his emotions. For Hezekiah, **his illness was a stimulus for self-examination.** "Search me Oh God." **You must forsake the superficial for self-examination**

It is ok to consider and reveal your heart to God. The **wall** is not the wailing wall of the great Temple, but of the king's personal quarters. In one moment, Hezekiah seeks to shut out all impressions of the outside world and concentrate his thoughts upon Yahweh.

We have a similar phrase in English "Hit the wall." In German, hitting the wall is known as "**der Mann mit dem Hammer**" ("the man with the hammer"); the phenomenon is thus likened to a man with the hammer coming after the athlete, so he can't go anymore. Ever been hit with the hammer? **When you hit the wall, turn towards the wall.** When Hezekiah hit the wall, when he couldn't go any more, the first place he went was to the Lord. This is the heart of covenant.

Wall- great weeping. Isaiah 38 demonstrates that we must give **permission to our hearts** to come to terms with bad news. Isaiah didn't say, "get over it." God has created you unique, and we all grieve in unique ways. Give your heart permission to come to terms with bad news. **God can see what you feel!** House cleaning begins with heart examination

Look to your heavenly Father (38:2). After engaging his heart, Hezekiah turns his face to the Lord and prays, please Lord! Suffering is means to **send the Christian strait** to the throne. Hezekiah pleads based on the kingly mercy of Yahweh. In his great moment of need, Hezekiah did not seek the transcendence of the Creator, he appealed to the immanence of the covenant Father.

Something changes within a person when you realize the Lord is **near** and that He is **with** you. If you are in Christ, He is in you. "Nearness to God brings likeness to God. The more you see God the more of God will be seen in you." –Spurgeon **Is God near to you today?**

Look at your life (38:3) Hezekiah came to the Lord with an appeal to his good record and tears. The king petitions Yahweh based on his integrity of heart. Can you appeal to your life as a demonstration of faithfulness to the Lord?

Hezekiah boldly prayed concerning his whole heart. This is the power of a life completely devoted to God. Hezekiah's service was not half-hearted. Whole. **We are not called to clean out our closet but set your whole house in order.**

Look at God's promises (38:3) Then... we are told in 2 Kgs 20 that the word of the Lord comes to Isaiah before he exits the inner courtyard. Listen, the Lord was not slow to answer the tearful prayer of the king. What if the Lord is ready and willing to answer your prayer today, He is simply waiting for you to ask. Matt. 7:7 "Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you."

When Hezekiah prayed, the Lord heart and he added (38:4) Did God change his mind?

The ground on which prayer is answered is not human faithfulness but the faithfulness of your father David (38:5). God answered the king not because Hezekiah's faithfulness twisted the divine arm. The Lord mercifully answered Hezekiah because Yahweh is faithful. By revealing only part of what was to occur (you are about to die) the Lord causes Hezekiah to turn to Him completely. And the same is true in your life. **Yahweh allows you an incomplete picture so that you will completely trust in Him.** How much do you really trust? *Would you give the Lord a key to your house?*

Look to God's promises. What promise (38:5)? It is quite possible that Hezekiah at this time had no heir. An heir was a necessary requirement for the lineage of David to continue as promised by Yahweh. Manasseh would not be born for another three years. Hezekiah could well be facing the same temptation that came to Abraham when he was commanded to offer up his son (Gen. 22:1). Do you trust? Do you trust what the Lord has promised? One promise Eph. 1:13 In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory. Look to the promises of the Faithful One.

I have heard... I have seen. I cannot think of any more comforting Scripture in all of the Bible. We do not worship a God who idly sits in heaven. "[God] is like an eternal, unending fountain. The more it pours forth and overflows, the more it continues to give. God desires nothing more seriously from us than that we ask Him for much and great things." –Luther.
What if "get your house in order" was a promise not a judgment?

Set your house in order (38:1) The Lord's answer to Hezekiah was that he would have 15 more years of life and that Jerusalem was delivered. Wow what a powerful demonstration of grace. But one thing remained true, Hezekiah's house was now in order. What would Hezekiah say to you and me? Isa 38: 17 Indeed, it was for my own well-being that I had such intense bitterness; but your love has delivered me from the Pit of destruction, for you have thrown all my sins behind your back. What room will you clean out first? What conversations will you have?

If the Lord commanded you to set your house in order today, where would you begin? Bucket list? Call everyone you loved? I believe Hezekiah would tell us:

Truth # 1 Leave a legacy of faith. A man leaves his house in order, not only when his wills, testaments, and life insurance have been executed, but when he has instructed his **family in the ways of the Lord.**

Truth #2 Live with urgency There is no time to waste. Keep the main things the main things. Seek the Lord and unashamedly follow him.

Truth #3: have those conversations you are putting off. Tell someone you are sorry. Forgive those who you are holding grudge.

Truth #4: Run to Yahweh.

Truth #5 Never be scared to pour out your heart before the Lord. He sees what you feel.

Our Response

This narrative often will have one of two impacts on our lives.

I heard a story about a man, eating figs. He picked an entire basket of figs brought them to his house and sat down to eat. First fig, had a worm. Second fig, had a worm. Third fig, worm. So this man had an idea. He walked over to the wall, turned out the light, and finished the rest of his figs.

Too often, we push these wake-up moments aside, turn off the lights, and eat the worm. Or we can wake up and run to Jesus.

Is your house in order? The wages of sin is death. My uncle's funeral, "all he had to do was die." His house was in order.

Isa 38:19 The living, only the living can thank you, as I do today; a father will make your faithfulness known to children.

Notes

How often do you find the diary of someone when they are getting their house in order? Is chapter 38 Hezekiah's bucket list?

When Hezekiah becomes ill, the siege is in full effect.

One of the five major periods of flourishing in Judah (David, Solomon, Uzziah, Hezekiah, Josiah)

Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20, 2 Chronicles 29-32)

1. Rebelled against Assyria
2. Defeated the Philistines (2 Kg. 18:8)
3. God saved him from Sennacherib (2 Kg. 19:35)
4. Rebuilt Jerusalem (2 Kg. 20:20)

Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king (2 Kings 18:2)

He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord just as his ancestor David (2 Kings 18:3)

Hezekiah relied on the Lord God of Israel; not one of the kings of Judah was like him, either before him or after him. He remained faithful to the Lord and did not turn from following him but kept the commands the Lord had commanded Moses (18:5-6).

When Hezekiah was 29, Assyria (Sargon II) marched against Samaria and captured it within three years. During this time all Israelites were deported to Assyria (18:11).

When Hezekiah was thirty-nine Assyria's King Sennacherib attacked Judah and captured its cities. In an effort to make peace (most likely during Sargon's reign), Hezekiah paid tribute to Assyria with the silver

found in the Lord's temple, even stripping the gold from the doors of the Lord's sanctuary and from the door posts (18:16).

Eventually, Judah rebels against Assyria and combines with Egypt to stay off the colossal empire. After withholding promised tribute to Sennacherib, the mighty king descended upon Judah.

701 **Sennacherib** attacks Philistine (Eltekeh, Ekron) and Israelite Shephelah (Timnah, Lachish, et al) fortresses, they lays siege to Jerusalem

- Jerusalem delivered from destruction by the Lord (Isa 36-37, 2Kgs 18-19)
- Sennacherib records extensively (98ft murals) of victory over Lachish on walls of palace in Nineveh
- According to Sennacherib chronicles, Hezekiah paid tribute to Assyria
- Judah remained under Assyrian suzerainty through the reign of Manasseh
- Sennacherib dies c.681 (cf.2K19:37) at hand of his nephew(?)

For a more dramatic and detailed description see 2 Kings 20.

Is. 38:1 In those days Hezekiah became terminally ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Set your house in order, for you are about to die; you will not recover.'"

On dating, the envoys of Sennacherib would have arrived sometime in 702, or earlier part of the year of his illness.

Prophet

It was common practice for the sick to seek an oracle from the deity whether they were going to recover or die.

Isaiah's appearance is also an indication that God has not forsaken the king.

Terminally ill

A similar phrase is used in the NT: John 11:4 When Jesus heard it, he said, "This sickness will not end in death but is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Set your house

Hezekiah is to give those orders that will result in the affairs of his house being set in order (Young, 508).

The thought is that the king must leave his financial and business affairs in order, so that undue burdens will not devolve upon his heirs' but he must also see that his house itself will receive instruction in the way in which they should walk (Young, 508).

A man leaves his house in order, not only when the prophet wills and testaments have been executed, but when he has instructed his family in the ways of the Lord (Young, 509).

You will not recover

This is not a word of judgment; it is simply a fact (Oswalt, 427).

The last part intensifies the first statement. It is as though the prophet had said, “You are going to die, and there is no hope of your living again after this sickness” (Young, 509).

Biblical prophecies of doom were conditional in character and given with a view to inducing a change in the attitude of those to whom they were delivered, whether nations or individuals (Mackay, 801).

What was stated was the inevitable outcome if nothing else altered.

Thus Hezekiah must learn how fully his life lay in God’s hands.

Frequently when we are ill, we wonder what we have done to deserve this. So illness should be a stimulus to self-examination, and if we can find no disobedience to God, it should be an opportunity for deepening our trust in him and our dependence on him for resources to triumph through the illness (Oswalt, 431).

Is. 38:2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD. **3** He said, “Please, LORD, remember how I have walked before you faithfully and wholeheartedly, and have done what pleases you.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

If this prayer occurred in the 14th year of his reign, he would have been only 39 years of age! (Young, 510).

Prayer and tears. Hezekiah came to the Lord with prayer, an appeal to his good record and tears. When the Lord replied he alluded only to the prayer and the years (Motyer, 291).

Hezekiah pleads on the basis of his integrity of heart; an indication too of the kingly mercy of the Lord (Motyer, 291).

Wept bitterly= lit. wept a great weeping.

It is quite possible that Hezekiah at this time had no heir. An heir was a necessary requirement for the lineage of David to continue as promised by Yahweh. Manasseh would not be born for another three years. Hezekiah could well be facing the same temptation that came to Abraham when he was commanded to offer up his son (Gen. 22:1).

Wall

The wall is not that of the Temple, but of Hezekiah’s own room; the text pictures a man seeking to shut out all impressions of the outside world and to concentrate his thoughts upon God alone (Young, 510).

Possibly it indicated a desire to be alone with his thoughts, uninterrupted by his courtiers or the prophet (Mackay, 802).

Suffering is meant to send the Christian to God.

“Hit the wall.” In German, hitting the wall is known as "*der Mann mit dem Hammer*" ("the man with the hammer"); the phenomenon is thus likened to a man with the hammer coming after the athlete, catching up, and eventually hitting the athlete, causing a sudden drop in performance.

Jer 23:29 “Is not my word like fire”—this is the LORD’s declaration—“and like a hammer that pulverizes rock?”

See Isaiah 38:17.

Wholeheartedly

A whole heart that in its completeness is devoted to God. Hezekiah’s service to God is not half-hearted.

Is. 38:4 Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: **5** “Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘This is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Look, I am going to add fifteen years to your life. **6** And I will rescue you and this city from the grasp of the king of Assyria; I will defend this city.’”

God can see what you feel

The word of the Lord comes to Isaiah before he exits the inner courtyard (2 Kgs 20). The Lord was not slow to answer the tearful prayer.

The ground on which prayer is answered is not human faithfulness but the faithfulness of the God of your father David (Motyer, 291).

It is important to note that no conditions are attached (Motyer, 291).

I have heard

“according to natural causes he would have to die, unless with His aid God should intervene beyond the ordinary’ God, however, had decided not to intervene, unless at the supplication of the king and the trials of his faith and hope (Young, 509).

The prayer does not move God to change his purposes, for He is the unchangeable one; but God now reveals to Hezekiah what His purposes were. By revealing to the king only a part of what was to occur, God causes Hezekiah to turn to Him completely, seeking aid only from Him and so acknowledging that only in Yahweh, are deliverance and help to be found (Young, 512).

7 This is the sign to you from the LORD that he will do what he has promised: 8 I am going to make the sun's shadow that goes down on the stairway of Ahaz go back by ten steps.” So the sun's shadow went back the ten steps it had descended.

In the parallel account in 2 Kgs 29:9-10, Hezekiah is given a choice of signs, either having the shade going down ten more steps in response to the natural movement of the sun, or having the shade quite abnormally go back ten steps, and Hezekiah chooses the more miraculous sign (Roberts, 478).

Medical care?

Illustrations

Love your fellowmen, and cry about them if you cannot bring them to Christ. If you cannot save them, you can weep over them. If you cannot give them a drop of cold water in hell, you can give them your heart's tears while they are still in this body. –Spurgeon

He grieves truly that weeps without a witness. – George Swinnoek

I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless;
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness,
In souls as countries, lieth silent-bare
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy dead in silence like to death—
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
Touch it; the marble eyelids are not wet:
If it could weep, it could arise and go. –Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Application
