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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? [Heb 10:23](#) Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. [24](#) And let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works, This is what God's people do, we gather. We gather to strengthen our grip on the truth and majesty of Jesus.

We are continuing a series we are calling, “**because you asked,**” where we answer some of life’s most pressing questions from the Holy Scriptures. Today’s big idea: what do you do in times of crisis?

When its 100 degrees outside and the AC quits, you call an HVAC specialist  
When the car dies, you call the mechanic  
When your knee gives out you call the orthopedist  
When your tooth aches, you call the dentist  
When the dog is sick you go to the vet  
Where do you go when your life falls apart?

**What do you do in a time of crisis? 2 Kings 19:1-7**

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Today we read about one of the five major kings of Judah who led God’s covenant community during a period of immense spiritual and economic flourishing. 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 (Shalmaneser) marched against Samaria and captured it within three years. During this time all Israelites were deported to Assyria (18:11). Eventually, Judah rebels against Assyria and combines with Egypt to stay off the colossal empire. After giving and then withholding promised tribute to Sennacharib, the mighty king descended upon Judah. Here we find the royal **spokesman for Assyria shouting in Hebrew**, “Hear the word of the great king (18:28).”

**Crisis are common to every person (18:5)** The King was amid a personal and national emergency. This crisis did not occur because of Hezekiah’s sin. It occurred because of his broken world. According to God’s Holy Scriptures, Hezekiah relied upon the Lord and remained faithful. Wow what a beautiful epithet.

Hezekiah's catastrophe reminds us that every person in the world is either in a difficult situation, coming out of a disaster, or about to walk into a catastrophe. The Christian worldview reminds us all that we live in a broken world that cries out for restoration! If you are **carrying guilt** today because you think trouble is because of a lack of faith, what if your trial is given to build your faith? If you are watching someone in tragedy, don't try to convince **Hezekiah he is not faithful, convince him to remain faithful! It's always better to lend a hand than point fingers.** Crisis are common to every person, and his grace is sufficient.

**Your character matters (19:1) What do you do when the heat on the stove goes from med-high to hot?**

When Hezekiah heard the report, that the world's greatest army surrounded the kingdom and death was imminent, he tore his clothes, covered himself, and went into the Temple. These actions were signs of anguish, repentance, and lament. Hezekiah's Godly character led to his righteous response.

One commentator remarked, "*His actions **do not seem out of character**, given the fact that he has been a reforming king for many years, but this dependence on God is a striking contrast to Ahaz's embracing of Assyrian gods when he was in trouble.*"

George Washington and Benedict Arnold, both were dynamic men of action with unquestioned personal courage; both were driven by passionate ambition from an early age; both were capable of inspiring the men they commanded to acts of extraordinary sacrifice and endurance. Yet, despite all of these superficial similarities, one of them ended up a traitor, the other Father of His Country.

Arnold helped drive the British out of Boston in the early part of the War. He also took the offensive against the British in twin battles that ended in the surrender of an entire British army at Saratoga. But Arnold also had a consistent pattern of insubordination, excessive drinking, and lavish overspending. Ultimately, it was Benedict Arnold's lack of personal integrity that led to his treason and his planned surrender to the British during the American Revolutionary war. What was the difference? Character

**Day of crisis is the magnifying glass to your soul.** If you are waiting for a major event to forge your character, it will be too late. You will never "rise to the occasion." Hezekiah's example amplifies that we always fall back to our habits, character, and spiritual formation. What have you done today to grow your character in Christ Jesus? What will you do tomorrow to rely upon the Lord, and remain faithful. Your character matters!

**Your posture will determine your response (19:1)** When the day of trouble hit, Hezekiah did not act in hubris but humility. Your posture will determine your response in the darkest of night. Posture displays your dependence on the Lord.

Football season is back! Can I get an amen? On the O-Line, one of the greatest indicators of success on any given snap is position. The lowest person, the best leverage, almost always wins. You will never win the battle of the trenches if you refuse to take the lowest posture.

**The same is true when we encounter our worst days.** A second-time messengers from Assyria spew venom against the King of Judah, this time via letter. When Hezekiah reads the report he spread it out (19:14) **I can imagine that the king was on his face.** This is what the psalmist describes in 51:17 The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled

heart, God. **A prostrate heart and bended knee will always be lifted up.** Get on your face before Yahweh and watch Him turn His face toward you.

**Presence is everything (19:1)** Hezekiah, heard their report, he tore his clothes (character) covered himself with sackcloth (posture) and went into the Lord's Temple. It's as if Hezekiah believed that the greatest place in his moment of need was in the presence of the Lord.

May not a single moment of my life be spent outside the light, love and joy of God's presence and not a moment without the entire surrender of myself as a vessel for Him to fill full of His Spirit and His love. –Andrew Murray

Jesus modeled the presence of the Father. In his greatest night of need, the Messiah Luke 22:41 withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and began to pray, 42 **“Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”** The presence of the Lord is everything! The presence of the Lord is promised to those who know him, who love him, and who are called according to His purposes.

Never under estimate the power of presence:

Being in the presence of the **Savior**

Being **in** the presence of others

Being **the** presence for others. Ill never forget the men who came and sat during my dad's stomach cancer surgery. I cant tell you a word they said, but there presence continues to be felt today.

**Matt. 11:28** “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. The presence of Yahweh in your life is everything.

**Pray specifically (Read 19:1-4, 19)** Hezekiah, knew nowhere else to turn but to Yahweh and His prophet Isaiah. Hezekiah's behavior is extraordinary compared to the previous kings of Judah and Israel. In the past, the prophets Elijah and Elisha sought the king, only to find rebuke. **Now, the king wants a prophetic word.**

Hezekiah, knew where to turn and knew what to say. His prayer in 19:15 magnifies the immense necessity of prayer and word in the life of the king. Hezekiah did not want a generic word, he wanted a specific answer from Yahweh. Do we pray in such a way that we would know God answered our prayers?

It is as natural to Him to answer prayer as it is for us to ask. How He delights to hear our petitions, and how He loves to answer them! –the kneeling Christian

God will either give you what you ask, or something far better. –Robert Murray McCheyne

**In Christ, we don't worship a generic God. Pray specifically and watch the Lord answer.**

**Hand the Crisis off (19:14)** Hezekiah, literally takes the letter from the hands of the messenger, read it, went into the Lord's temple, and spread it out before the Lord. It was as if the king, the greatest leader in the

land, takes his darkest night of the soul and gives it over to Yahweh. Hezekiah shows us an invaluable lesson, **he trusted Adonai with his crisis more than he trusted himself. Instead of white knuckling his dilemma, he open-handed the problem.**

If you have ever watched a football game you realize that all 11 players on the defensive side of the ball are trying to tackle and take the ball away from the offense. One linebacker I heard yesterday said his goal was to break the arm of the ball carrier to cause a fumble. I can only imagine how daunting it is to be the QB and realize that 11 guys want to kill you. Now what happens when the QB hands the ball off to the running back? The focus of the opposing forces now turns to the running back.

This is exactly what Hezekiah does, hand the crisis off to the Lord. Spread the letter out before your heavenly Father! Let him carry the weight, the burden. Know that the battle is not yours, it is the Lord's!

How does it all end? 2Kings 19:35 That night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down one hundred eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! 36 So King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and left. He returned home and lived in Nineveh.

**Response** It was once said that you are either coming out of a storm, going through a storm, or walking into one. Some today know the fear of hearing the doctor use the word cancer, of holding your spouse's hand when they passed away, of losing a child, losing a job, and walking a devastating road.

Hear the answer from the Lord: 2Kings 19:20 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "The LORD, the God of Israel says, 'I have heard your prayer to me about King Sennacherib of Assyria.'

There are no more beautiful words in the word than to know that Jesus hears and Jesus is near.

**What if today the Lord is not giving you an answer to why, instead he is giving you His presence?**

**2Cor. 4:7** Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us. **8** We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; **9** we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed.

**10** We always carry the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be displayed in our body. **11** For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus's sake, so that Jesus's life may also be displayed in our mortal flesh.



# Notes

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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 lay 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(?)

2Kings 19:1 When King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the LORD's temple. 2 He sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, and the leading priests, who were wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 3 They said to him, "This is what Hezekiah says: 'Today is a day of distress, rebuke, and disgrace, for children have come to the point of birth, but there is no strength to deliver them. 4 Perhaps the LORD your God will hear all the words of the royal spokesman, whom his master the king of Assyria sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke him for the words that the LORD your God has heard. Therefore, offer a prayer for the surviving remnant.'"

The Assyrian monuments give evidence of a custom that illustrates the haughty language of this verse. It was the practice of Assyrian conquerors to take the idols that they found in the temples of the people whom they subdued and carry them to Assyria, and put them in Assyrian temples as captive gods. Thus Sennacherib spoke to the Israelites by his ambassador and informed them that the Assyrian deity was so powerful that no other god could cope with him. The gods of all other people against whom the Assyrians had fought had been captured, and it was foolish for the Israelites to expect their God to save them.

**19:1–4** Though it is not exactly clear what Hezekiah expects to hear from his officials, the news he receives distresses him. No doubt he hoped that the payment would satisfy Sennacherib, and now the money is gone and the enemy demands surrender, threatening to invade. As an act of humility, mourning, and supplication, Hezekiah puts on sackcloth and goes to the temple. His actions do not seem out of character, given the fact that he has been a reforming king for many years, but this dependence on God is a striking contrast to Ahaz's embracing of Assyrian gods when *he* was in trouble.

Hezekiah knows he needs a word from the Lord, so he sends Eliakim, Shebna, and some priests to the prophet Isaiah. Again, the king's behavior is extraordinary in light of past kings. Before, the prophets sought the kings, only to be rebuked. Now, the king actually *wants* a prophetic word. He is not simply acting out of desperation (Ahaz took quite another route when he was desperate. Hezekiah acts out his personal convictions).

The king's request focuses on the theological matter of how the Assyrians have ridiculed "the living God." He apparently concedes the point that he cannot field an army that can drive Assyria back home. What he rejects is the notion that the Lord is unable to do so. Therefore, he asks Isaiah to "pray for the remnant that still survives," clinging to the belief that hope has not disappeared permanently. Still, only the Lord can save them now.

2Kings 19:5 So the servants of King Hezekiah went to Isaiah, 6 who said to them, "Tell your master, 'The LORD says this: Don't be afraid because of the words you have heard, with which the king of Assyria's attendants have blasphemed me. 7 I am about to put a spirit in him, and he will hear a rumor and return to his own land, where I will cause him to fall by the sword.'"

**19:5–7** Isaiah's response to the envoys' visit is clear, concise, confident, and comforting. He, too, reflects on the military and religious issues at hand, with the primary emphasis on the spiritual matters, which he in turn believes will decide the military concerns. Hezekiah need not fear, for the Lord will make himself known to the Assyrian king who has blasphemed him. Isaiah offers very specific promises, ones that will prove he is either a true prophet or a liar. His words also take Hezekiah one step further in his quest to serve the Lord. He knows now that the Lord promises to help him, yet he must believe this new promise, just as he

has believed in the past.

**2Kings 19:14** Hezekiah took the letter from the messengers' hands, read it, then went up to the LORD's temple, and spread it out before the LORD. **15** Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD:

LORD God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you are God—you alone—of all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the heavens and the earth. **16** Listen closely, LORD, and hear; open your eyes, LORD, and see. Hear the words that Sennacherib has sent to mock the living God. **17** LORD, it is true that the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands. **18** They have thrown their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but made by human hands—wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. **19** Now, LORD our God, please save us from his power so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, LORD, are God—you alone.

**19:14–19** When Hezekiah receives Sennacherib's message he again turns to the Lord. His prayer consists of three parts, which Hubbard notes follow "a format typical of the most common kind of psalm, an 'individual complaint' (see Pss 6; 13; 102) to meet a personal need." First, Hezekiah recognizes the Lord's greatness. He notes that the Lord is "enthroned between the cherubim," a reference to the ark of the covenant, the ancient symbol of the covenant between Israel and their God. Hezekiah furthers the image beyond Israel, though, by stating that the Lord is "God over all the kingdoms of the earth" because he has "made heaven and earth." If the Lord is creator and ruler of all nations, then Hezekiah can hope for deliverance in this seemingly impossible situation.

Second, Hezekiah explains his problem to the Lord. Again he speaks first about Assyria's insults against Yahweh, and only then addresses his military dilemma. He admits that Assyria has conquered the nations already mentioned, but he separates his God from those nations' deities on the grounds that they are not real. So how could they help their worshipers? Yahweh, on the other hand is not "fashioned by men's hands" and can therefore aid those who pray to him.

Third, Hezekiah asks directly for God's assistance against the Assyrians. Even in this direct petition, though, the king bases his request on a concern for God's honor, for he wants God to be worshiped because of the proposed great deliverance. Clearly, Hezekiah wants freedom for himself and for his people, yet he never loses sight of Israel's responsibility to bring recognition and glory to their Lord. Having prayed, he must wait to see what God will do, though he may expect the prophetic word already given to come true.

# Illustrations

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## Crisis

When its 100 degrees outside and the AC quits, you call an HVAC specialist  
When the car dies, you call the mechanic  
When your knee gives out you call the orthopedist  
When your tooth aches you call the dentist  
When the dog is sick you go to the vet  
Where do you go when your life falls apart?

## Football Analogy

When the QB has the call the entire defense tries to sack him. Once he hands the ball off, the entire focus of the opponent changes. Hand the ball off to Christ

# Application

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Character matters in times of crisis.

You will never “rise to the occasion,” but always fall back on your training and habits

Never underestimate the power of presence

Being in the presence of the Savior  
Being in the presence of others  
Being the presence for others