

Isaiah 38 – Hezekiah’s Illness, Prayer, and Deliverance

Facing Death (Isaiah 38:1)

“In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.”’”

This was a sobering message. Imagine hearing directly from God’s prophet: *“Prepare yourself—you are about to die.”* Hezekiah, though a godly king, was reminded that earthly life has an end. Before death, we must be certain our lives are “in order.” The most important matter is not our finances, our reputation, or our possessions—but our relationship with God.

We too need to live with readiness, because none of us knows when our final day will come (James 4:14).

Hezekiah’s Prayer and God’s Response (Isaiah 38:2–8)

Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, wept, and prayed sincerely:

“Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what is good in Your sight.” (Isaiah 38:3)

God answered. He extended Hezekiah’s life by fifteen years, promising also to deliver Jerusalem from Assyria. As a sign, God turned the shadow of the sundial back ten degrees.

This miracle was a visible reminder that the God who created time itself has full control over it. For the skeptic, such miracles seem impossible, but for those who believe in the God who “created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), nothing is too difficult.

Lessons in Prayer and God’s Will

Some wonder, *“Does prayer really change God’s mind?”* Scripture affirms that God does not change in His character or nature (Malachi 3:6). Yet, prayer is not meant to bend God to our will—it is meant to align us with His. At times, however, God permits what is less than His perfect plan when people persist in their requests (Numbers 22:12–22).

Hezekiah’s extension of life, though merciful, eventually led to the birth of Manasseh, Judah’s most wicked king. This reminds us: insisting on our way rather than submitting to God’s will often brings sorrow. The wisest prayer is always, *“Not my will, but Yours be done”* (Luke 22:42).

Hezekiah’s Reflection (Isaiah 38:9–20)

Hezekiah wrote a psalm describing his despair and God’s mercy:

- He lamented, thinking death would cut him off from seeing God’s work in the land of the living (verses 10–12).
- He felt as weak as a broken tent or a torn garment (verse 12).
- Yet, after God’s healing, he declared with gratitude:

“But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back.” (Isaiah 38:17)

This is a powerful statement. Hezekiah not only received healing, but also a deeper understanding of forgiveness. God casts our sins behind His back—never again to be held against us.

He concluded with praise:

“The living, the living man, he shall praise You, as I do this day.” (Isaiah 38:19)

Life is a gift meant for worship and testimony. Hezekiah recognized that while death silences earthly voices, the living have the privilege to proclaim God’s truth to future generations.

God’s Simple Means of Healing (Isaiah 38:21–22)

Isaiah instructed them to apply a lump of figs as a poultice to Hezekiah’s boil. The healing came not through the figs themselves, but through God’s command. Sometimes the Lord uses simple, ordinary means to accomplish extraordinary results. Our task is obedience, not questioning.

Practical Applications

1. **Live Ready** – None of us knows when God will call us home. Set your “house in order” today. Be right with Him and with others.
2. **Pray Honestly** – Hezekiah turned to the wall and wept. God listens to the cries of His children. Bring Him your raw honesty—He is not offended by your tears.
3. **Trust God’s Will Above Yours** – Though God answered Hezekiah’s request, the outcome shows that our way is not always best. Rest in God’s wisdom; His will is perfect.
4. **Celebrate Forgiveness** – Hezekiah rejoiced that God cast his sins behind His back. If you have trusted Christ, you too can rejoice that your sins are remembered no more (Hebrews 8:12).
5. **Use Your Life Well** – If God has given you today, then today is a gift to glorify Him, to praise Him, and to pass His truth to others.

Invitation to Respond

Hezekiah’s story reminds us that life is fragile, death is certain, and only God can give life—both physically and eternally. You and I cannot control the length of our days, but we can decide what we will do with them.

The greatest preparation you can make is to repent of your sins and place your trust in Jesus Christ. He died for you, rose again, and promises eternal life to all who believe. He alone can forgive your sins and cast them behind His back forever.

Will you set your heart in order today? Don’t wait for a deathbed prayer. Come to Jesus now. Pray sincerely: *“Lord Jesus, I turn from my sin and trust You as my Savior and Lord. Take my life, and let me live each day for You.”*

And for those who already know Him: let every day be lived in thankful praise, trusting His will, and walking in His strength.

“The living, the living man, he shall praise You, as I do this day.” (Isaiah 38:19)