

Introduction

Last month, we saw how the reign of king Jehoshaphat can serve as a pastoral roadmap for our church. We envisioned a church where all the saints return to the Word, make it bear fruit in our lives and experience the Kingdom of God, overcome crises and challenges with praise and worship, and daily walk the journey of sanctification by taking care of our souls and conforming to Christ's holiness... May the grace of God that was given in Jehoshaphat's days be upon our church as well. Today, we will look at king Hezekiah who found favor in God's eyes.

Praise / Prayer**Into the Word****1. The spiritual atmosphere Hezekiah grew up in**

Hezekiah grew up in the days of king Ahaz, one of the evilest kings of Judah. Ahaz went beyond idolatry and first started the child sacrifice to Molech. He brought in the gods of Damascus and further corrupted Judah. Ahaz "destroyed all the vessels in the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem."

Read Isaiah 1:1-4: The proclamation of Isaiah who saw it all in his days.

[Application] Hezekiah grew up pursuing holiness before God in such an evil time. And this is our prayer. To go beyond saying that the world is evil and dream of raising a pure and holy generation in it... We pray to become such a church, such saints, and raise such children.

2. Hezekiah's destruction of idols

Read 2 Kings 18:4-8.

[Question] What are the idols of this age and those of my own that I must tear down? Please reflect and share. And 2 Kings 18:5 says, "He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him." Am I trusting God wholeheartedly with the problem that I'm facing? Hezekiah had a great spiritual leader. His name was Isaiah. He constantly encouraged Hezekiah with the inspired Word of God, strengthened him, and provided an unshakable foundation.

[Share] Who was that spiritual leader/mentor for me in my faith journey? Let us pray for the pastors of the church and the servants of the Word. Let us also pray that our children would find such good shepherds in their lives.

3. Hezekiah in crisis

In BC 722 during Hezekiah's reign, the northern kingdom of Israel falls to the Assyrian empire. Later it marches to besiege and threaten Jerusalem of the southern Judah. Hezekiah escapes the threat by offering Assyria gold that had to be taken and even stripped from the temple of the Lord (2 Kings 18:14). However, in BC 701 Assyria eventually attacks Judah again. Here Hezekiah decides to pray.

4. Hezekiah prays, Isaiah instructs

After receiving a threatening and mocking letter from Assyria Hezekiah loses heart and falls into despair. Isaiah then instructs the king to take heart and not fear their words because the Lord will fight for Israel. Strengthened by such words, Hezekiah decides to pray. Let us read his prayer in 2 Kings 19:14-19. As he prays, God sends another letter through Isaiah (2 Kings 19:20) and grants a miraculous victory to Israel.

[Share] In the face of crisis, do I react as Hezekiah did in his first response (offering gold)? Or do I choose to pray as he did the second time? What is the spiritual challenge that God is giving me through the words of Isaiah?

5. Hezekiah prays for a personal problem

Hezekiah's second prayer came when he suffered a fatal illness. It is a well-known prayer of desperation (he turned his face to the wall and prayed). Read 2 Kings 20:1-5.

[Application] God answered the king's desperate prayer. To whom/where do I bring all my personal problems in life? Hezekiah's prayer is recorded in Isaiah 38. God delights in prayer so much.

6. The human frailty and the king's pitiful last 15 years

Even though God answers Hezekiah's prayer with a 15-year extension of life, he sadly succumbs to pride and becomes corrupt. We turn what God gives us into idols. When we don't give God what is God's it may lead our hearts to greed and become a snare for our souls.

[Application] What are some gracious resources (possessions, time, gifts, church duties), like Hezekiah's 15 years, given to me?

7. But God is still good and faithful

An important event occurs in the span of 15 years. A king named Manasseh is born, maintaining the line of king David. As God extended the king's life, He secured the throne of David. From the redemptive perspective, the 15 years extension served to secure the coming of Christ from the line of David. We might fail and fall daily, but not one day of the God-given life can be considered meaningless.

[Application] Through the life we are given, let us be thankful daily, not turning to pride or idolatry but to a life of worship and of service. And let us hope to prepare the coming of our Lord until our last breath.

Pray Together

- 1. Our children are being raised in a culture as evil as Ahab's time. Let us pray that they would become a godly generation like Hezekiah and find spiritual mentors like Isaiah.**
- 2. Let us pray that we would solely and wholeheartedly depend on God like Hezekiah did in his difficult moments.**
- 3. Let us pray that we would not turn God's blessings into sin and that God would use us to prepare for the coming of our Lord until our last breath.**

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