

In God We Trust

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Please take your Bibles and turn to Isaiah chapter 36, verse 1. In the 14th year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

Then the king of Assyria sent his field commander with a large army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. When the commander stopped at the aqueduct of the upper pool on the road to the washerman's field, Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator, Shabna, the secretary, and Joha, the son of Asaph, the recorder, went out to him.

The field commander said to them, Tell Hezekiah, this is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says. On what are you basing this confidence of yours?

You say you have strategy and military strength, but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending that you rebel against me? Look now, you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff which pierces a man's hand and wounds him if he leans on it.

Such is Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all who depend on him. And if you say to me, we are depending on the Lord our God, isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removes, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, You must worship before this altar.

[1:34] Come now, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria. I will give you 2,000 horses if you can put riders on them. How then can you repulse one officer of the least of my master's officials, even though you are depending on Egypt for chariots and horsemen?

Furthermore, have I come to attack and destroy this land without the Lord? The Lord himself told me to march against this country and destroy it. Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joha said to the field commander, Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it.

Don't speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall. But the commander replied, Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who, like you, will have to eat their own filth and drink their own urine?

Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew, Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. This is what the king says. Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you.

Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says, The Lord will surely deliver us. This city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Do not listen to Hezekiah.

[2:52] This is what the king of Assyria says. Make peace with me and come out to me. Then every one of you will eat from his own vine and fig tree and drink water from his own cistern.

Until I come and take you to a land like your own, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Do not let Hezekiah mislead you when he says, The Lord will deliver us.

Has the God of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Severaphaim?

Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? Who of all the gods of these countries have been able to save his land from me? How then can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand?

But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, Do not answer him. Then Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator, Shabna, the secretary, and Johas, son of Asaph, the recorder, went to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him what the field commander had said.

[4:04] Trust and obey. I have a friend who reminds me how much of the Christian life really comes down to those two things.

Trusting God and obeying Him. Which do you find harder? Jerry Bridges in his excellent book, *Trusting God When Life Hurts*, says that he finds it harder to trust God than to obey God.

Trusting God is so critical because it fuels obeying God. When do we disobey God's commands?

Well, it's often when we don't trust that His way is always best. When do we turn away from God to substitute saviors?

Well, it's when we doubt whether God will really help me in my trouble. When we don't believe that we can safely trust our lives into God's hands.

[5:16] Now, to read the Bible is to realize that God understands our struggles with trust. Is it not strange that we who have trusted the Lord to save us from our worst problem, that of judgment and everlasting hell, that we should be the ones who struggle so much with trusting Him with our lesser problems?

Not that they're small problems, but lesser than that. Our eternal destiny? Oh, sure. He's good for that.

But we're not quite so sure about our health problems, or our problems with people in our lives, or finances, or guidance, or the other besetting sins that bother me, the nitty-gritty problems of my life that are threatening me in some way.

Well, God knows our struggle to trust Him. And He knows how critical trust is to the Christian life. So He's loaded the Bible with examples of people, real people, living in the real world with real problems, who trusted in the Lord and experienced His wonderful help.

And that's what we have here in this event in Isaiah 36 and 37. We have seen that for many years Isaiah had been preaching to Judah, trust in the Lord and not in man.

[6:55] Your God can be trusted because of who He is. He's the judge and the king. It is He who will save us. Trust Him. It's He who brings deliverance.

So don't fear man or don't trust in man. Trust in God, who holds all men and their next breath in His hand. Amen. Now a crisis was coming to King Hezekiah and all Judah that would test their faith, their trust in the Lord.

And we are taken in chapter 36 and 37 right into this crisis that we might learn more of God and His ways. All to the end, that our trust in God might be strengthened and that we might meet our troubles with faith that honors God.

Well, here's the crisis. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, is undefeated and is on a roll. Wherever he's gone with his ruthless army, he's chalked up another victory and left behind a trail of devastation. And now he's sweeping down into Judah. Already he's captured all their fortified cities, dozens of them. They've fallen like dominoes.

[8:16] And there's only one fortified city left, the capital city, Jerusalem. And so while King Sennacherib is mopping up things in Lachish, he sends his field commander along with a large army down to Hezekiah, down to Jerusalem.

And with a mighty show of force, he seeks to cower them into surrender. Well, the lookouts in Jerusalem saw them coming and sounded the warning.

People who lived in the surrounding area had all run into the walls of the city of Jerusalem and the large gates were shut and locked. The overpopulation of Jerusalem would cause their resources to be expended more quickly in a siege.

And many of these people scampered up on top of the wall to look and to see what would happen. Assyria's war atrocities were known far and wide.

They skinned people alive. They mutilated and cut them to pieces. And here they come now, like a swarm of locusts covering the land, and they're moving right up to Jerusalem.

[9:36] Verse 2 tells us that the commander stopped at the aqueduct of the upper pool on the road to the washerman's field. Now, I suppose we might read right over those words as if they were unimportant, except for the fact that we've seen them before.

Way back in chapter 7, in verse 3, we read the very same words. This was the very spot where Isaiah had met King Hezekiah's father, King Ahaz, some 24 years earlier.

When he was threatened by the foreign powers to the north who were attacking him, and in that crisis of faith, Isaiah met him at this very spot and told him to trust in the Lord and not be afraid.

If you do not stand firm in your faith, Ahaz, you will not stand at all, he told him. Well, King Ahaz did not trust in the Lord, did he?

He didn't put his trust in God to save him. Instead, he went and sought help from the great nation of Assyria.

[10:53] Assyria, you come and help me against these neighbors to the north. Well, Assyria was only too willing to oblige him and they did come and they did destroy the northern kingdoms that

threatened Judah.

And for a while, it looked like Ahaz's foreign policy was working very well. But then, Assyria, having swept down from the north, just kept on coming right down into Judah.

Like a flood, they covered the land up to the neck. Remember that passage. And now, all the horses of Egypt and all the money of the temple could not keep the Assyrians at bay.

And now, here they are, right outside the gates of Jerusalem, in a show of strength, demanding surrender. Unconditional surrender. This repetition of place is a signal to us about a comparison that we're not to miss.

As Pastor Jason said, there's been a lot of poetry going on. But there was that historical narrative about Ahaz and his crisis of faith. And now we have another historical narrative about another crisis of faith.

[12 : 12] And we're to see they happened at the same spot. Two kings of Judah, Ahaz and now his son Hezekiah, both in a test of faith at a critical turning point in the nation, both threatened with destruction, both feeling their weakness before an enemy too strong for them.

But that's where the similarities all end. Because Ahaz did not trust in the Lord, but put his trust in Assyria, and it led to great disaster.

The deliverer showed up as the destroyer some 24 years later. Hezekiah, on the other hand, does trust in the Lord who delivers Jerusalem.

So there's this contrast going on between these two kings' responses. So Hezekiah sees them pause and sends out a delegation of three to meet the Assyrian commander by the aqueduct of the upper pool on the road to the washerman's field.

And that's where their diplomatic meeting takes place. Three points this morning. Sennacherib's challenge is the first. The field commander has a message for King Hezekiah from his king, Sennacherib.

[13 : 33] My great king wants to know why you haven't surrendered. On what are you basing your confidence? Now this is psychological warfare.

The commander is out to demoralize Jerusalem. To wear down their resistance so that they'll just surrender without a fight or without waiting long at all.

Now we have to hand it to the Assyrian CIA. They had done their homework and uncovered much about this little nation of Judah.

Their commander shows his knowledge of this nation and he has an answer for every possible response that they would make to this call to surrender.

You say that you have strategy and military strength but that's all hot air. That's just empty words he says to them. You're depending on Egypt but that's like leaning on a splintered reed and when a man leans on a splintered reed it shatters and pierces his hand.

[14 : 40] Now that's what Isaiah had been telling the people. Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and yet that's where they were going for help. And it seems that this pagan man this commander knows more about Egypt's folly than the very people of Jerusalem.

That not only will Egypt not help them they will actually harm them like a man is harmed when he leans on a splintered reed. And furthermore if you're depending on the Lord your God well isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed saying to Judah and Jerusalem no you must worship before this altar here in Jerusalem.

Now again their secret intelligence had picked up on the reforms under Hezekiah. He had gone out and destroyed all the high places and altars outside of Jerusalem.

Altars to Jehovah to the Lord. And yet being idolaters as the Assyrians were they assumed that that would have got Judah's God angry.

That Judah would have been angry because his altars were destroyed. I mean to them the gods ought to be happy with the more altars the better right? They didn't realize that the God of Judah had commanded to be worshipped at one altar only the altar in the temple at Jerusalem.

[16 : 14] So they had information but they didn't understand it. They think Jehovah will be angry at them for having killed for having destroyed his altars. But the taunting continues even if we gave you 2,000 horses you wouldn't be able to find men enough to ride on them.

He's down to trash talking Jerusalem now. How then could you stand up against the least of our commanders?

Besides the Lord himself told me to march out against this country and destroy it. No that was a lying tactic that Assyria used against many of their enemies.
Your God told me to destroy you. You see how he plays on their greatest fears that their God had turned on them. And God's not for you. He's against you.
He's on our side. Just perhaps their intelligence had picked up on Isaiah's earlier preaching when Isaiah prophesied of a day when Assyria would come to destroy Judah.
[17 : 26] These taunts had teeth in them and Judah's three officials got very nervous at this point. You see up to now the commander has been speaking Hebrew and the Hebrew men on the wall could understand everything that he was saying.

So Judah's officials asked him please please speak in Aramaic so that the folks on the wall won't understand what King Sennacherib says. But the commander says these things are as much for them on the wall as they are for you and your king.
For they too will have to suffer the horrors of the siege if you refuse to surrender when they will eat and drink things that are unthinkable because they will be starving to death.
So the commander turns up the volume and speaks goes on speaking in Hebrew to the people sitting on the walls.
He gives them the words from his great king. Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says the Lord will surely deliver us.
[18 : 47] This city will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria. Again their intelligence had picked up what's Hezekiah telling the people he's telling them to trust in the Lord.

Now that was the very message Isaiah had been preaching to the people trust in the Lord and he will deliver you.! And now at last King Hezekiah was giving the same message to his people.
But the commander tells them if you listen to your king you'll be eating your own filth. If you listen to my king you will be blessed.

You will be eating figs and grapes from your own vine and trees and drinking water from your own cistern and wine and bread and then after a while I will come back and take you away into a land just as prosperous as your own.

So there there's your choice of diet. Your own filth or water wine grapes grain figs.

[19 : 58] You feel something of the strength of his argument and how he's playing on their fears. Surrender and all will be well because my king will do you good.

Now this propaganda then paints their king Hezekiah as their enemy and Sennacherib as their friend. And that's always the way it is with temptation.
It turns things upside down. Hezekiah is saying trust in the Lord. That's the friend. Not surrender. To us as the Assyrian king is saying.
God and his servants are painted as enemies. The devil and his crew are painted as friends who have a true interest in the people. You can trace that same tactic to the serpent in the garden tempting Eve.

He confused her as to who was her real friend and who was her real enemy. But now comes the strongest argument yet. Verse 18. Hezekiah is out to mislead you when he says the Lord will deliver us.

[21 : 09] Has the God of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? And the answer would be no. No. No one has ever done so.

Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Well, they would be destroyed. Have they rescued Samaria from my hand?

No. Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? None. How then can Yahweh, your God, deliver Jerusalem from my hand?

And with that, he cries, checkmate. Gotcha. As if there's no other alternative than for Jerusalem to surrender.

Indeed, to human eyes, that looks like the only sane thing to do at this point. Can you see how this speech challenged everything that Isaiah has been preaching for years to these people?

[22 : 17] Trust in the Lord and he will deliver you. He is enough. He's all you need. Trust in him and he'll save you. And King Sennacherib says, oh, that's a lying message.

Don't be deceived by it. Lean on me, the king of Assyria and I'll do you good. Surrender. Assyria. And so in this critical moment in history, what will Hezekiah and Judah do? Will they trust in the Lord or will they succumb to their own unbelief and surrender to Assyria?

Well, the people on the wall remain quiet. That's to their praise. And Judah's three-man delegation then went to their king with their clothes torn to tell him what the commander has said from King Sennacherib.

Let me pause for one application and then we'll go on. Don't let the world tell you what your God can and cannot do. In your troubles, there will be many voices coming to you to tell you why you can't trust God in this trouble.

[23 : 36] Your problem is too big. He's not able to deliver you from this. Or God doesn't do that kind of help. He doesn't really care about those kinds of things in your life.

So you're on your own in this one. You heard those voices? Voices of unbelief. There's the devil who inserts unworthy thoughts of God into your mind.

Doubts and fears unbelieving thoughts. Then there's the world's propaganda that says it's all up to you. If you're going to be helped, you've got to help yourself.

And then there's your own unbelieving thoughts of your own flesh. Doubt God. And they all unite in unison in giving you reasons why you can't trust God with this problem, your present situation.

And unbelief always sneers at faith in God as being empty words without any reality behind them. It's mere God talk. It's just religious gobbledygook.

[24 : 45] That's all it is. Faith always looks a bit foolish in the eyes of the world. foolish in the world.

Noah building an ark where there's no bodies of water near it to float it in, or whether it's trusting in the Lord for deliverance in your present trouble.

Faith always looks a bit strange, a bit foolish in the eyes of the world. In fact, if no one thinks we're a bit crazy for taking God at his word, are we really living by faith?

We live in a world that lives by sight and what you see and they trust in the things that are here and now and in things that will help them that they can see. And we're trusting in who?

Where? Are you kidding? You're living for a world you can't see, a God you cannot see, and you're expecting him to do what?

[25 : 49] And faith must repudiate all the unbelieving voices coming at us in our times of trouble. Don't let the world tell you what your God can and cannot do.

They don't know your God. Though the eye of sinful man, your glory may not see. We sang that. They don't see the glory of your God.

Of course they'll tell you he's not able to deliver you. And Sennacherib's fatal assumption was that Judah's God was just one more God like all the other gods of the other nations.

And that's the world we live in. They got all the gods and all the religions all lumped together. Boy, was he mistaken. And that fatal mistake will be his undoing.

For in fact, Judah's God is called the holy one. That means he's set apart from all others.

[26 : 53] Here's all the other gods of the nations and here is the holy one. He's not just one of the many. He's not even the best of the many.

He's in an altogether different class than the others. He is other than everything else. The eternal, infinite, unchangeable God has no equal.

And part of his glory is the fact that there's none to compare him to. To whom will you compare me? He asks. Who is my equal? There's none to even compare him with.

And so Sennacherib is bit off a bit more than he can chew this time. He's gone too far. He's overplayed his hand. He's sealed his own fate.

His words have not just been a challenge to Judah, but to Judah's God. So whoever you've been beating up on, Sennacherib, you're going to find I'm a different kind of opponent.

[28 : 05] It's like cage fighting. And I'm not saying that's something you ought to watch. I just know there's something as nastiest cage fighting that goes on. And let's say a guy has been beating up on kindergartners.

Not a one of them has stood up to him. He's boasting about that. Nobody can, I can handle everyone. Which one has been able to stop me, to defeat me?

Not one. And the next opponent in the cage is a lion. And he finds that this is a different kind of being.

This is a different enemy than what I've met so far. That's your God. That's your God. There's none like him. Keep him exalted in your heart and in your mind, especially when you're going through severe crises of faith and troubles.

Everybody would try to bring him down. Your own heart would think of him as less than he is. Keep him exalted. Sing holy, holy, holy in your downtimes.

[29 : 12] Go to the Psalms. See him exalted. Well, that's Sennacherib's challenge. Very briefly then, Hezekiah's response is point two.

And here we go into chapter 37, the first four verses. So these bearers of doom have come with their clothes torn and they brought their sad tale to King Hezekiah.

this is what the mighty king of Assyria has said. Well, verse one tells us when King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the Lord.

He went to his God in prayer. He went to have a little talk with Jesus about his problem.

Now, this is huge. It doesn't seem like much to the world. But angels watching must have started celebrating already. They know what happens when men pray.

[30 : 18] They know that prayer calls God into the field of battle and when he steps on the battlefield, it's over. The first response to trouble is to pray.

To pray. This is what trusting God looks like in problems. We're talking about trusting in the Lord. What does that look like?

It looks like a man at prayer with his God. That's the first thing it looks like. So let your first response to trouble be prayer.

Trials have accomplished much of their purpose if they've brought you to the Lord in prayer. Billy Bray was a Cornish miner who was converted from a very ungodly life.

And thereafter whenever he was faced with some problem he was heard to say, I must talk with my father about this. Of course he meant his heavenly father.

[31 : 16] Joseph Scriven was born in Dublin, Ireland. He graduated from college, he was engaged to his sweetheart. And on the night before their wedding, his fiancée was drowned.

What does a man do when overwhelmed with trials? How does he pick up and go on? Where does he turn? Well, he never married, but later in life, writing to comfort his mother in her trials, we find the answer to those questions.

When he wrote, have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged.

Take it to the Lord in prayer. That's what Hezekiah did. He went into the temple to pray. He's surrounded, he's trapped like a bird in a cage, and when all other helpers had failed, he turned to the Lord and found that he was all he ever needed in the first place.

Why are we so slow then to come to him? Don't be anxious about anything, but pray about everything. Now, you can read this account, not only here in Isaiah, but you can go back to 2 Kings 18 and read it there in the historical account of the kings.

[32 : 48] And there we're told that Hezekiah was a good king, doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord. We read in verse 5, there Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel.

There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. And the Lord was with him and he was successful in whatever he undertook. Here, might I posit, is the key to his success.

He trusted in the Lord. And in his troubles, he went to the Lord in prayer. prayer. And though he was a king, he comes before the Lord as a beggar.

Matthew Henry says, the greatest of men must turn beggars when they have to do with Christ.

When you come before that throne, I don't care who you are, you become a beggar. And that's how Hezekiah comes.

[33 : 52] He's not there to claim his due. He's not there to say, now give me what I've got coming. He's well aware that everything that he takes away from the throne of grace will be grace.

Unmerited favor.

Unearned love. He knows what he deserves. That's why he's wearing sackcloth. That's the clothing of mourning and repentance. That's why the king of Nineveh ordered under the preaching of Jonah, the wearing of sackcloth and he himself wore it to repent.

It's repentance. So we see this is first of all a prayer of repentance that King Hezekiah is praying. Repentance for what?

Well, for their foolish trust in going down to Egypt for help. Let's start there. Oh, God, that ever I should have sought help from anyone else but you. And so we too must confess our sins as we come to the Holy, Holy, Holy One of Israel.

And he not only prays himself in the temple, but he sends a delegation to ask Isaiah to pray as well. Now, that's Isaiah, the very one whose message had been ridiculed by the nation.

[35 : 13] And they said, tell us pleasant things. Get off this path. Quit confronting us with the Holy One of Israel. Give us something pleasant. Now, the nation in trouble, where do they send for help?

Isaiah, would you please pray for the remnant of Judah? And it's here in the words that they bring from Hezekiah to Isaiah that we see more of the heart behind Hezekiah's prayer.

It was a prayer of repentance because he says in verse 3, this delegation to Isaiah says, this is what Hezekiah says, this day is a day of distress, rebuke, and disgrace.

In other words, Hezekiah is saying, you know, this is what we've been able to accomplish on our own without the Lord. All our efforts have only brought about distress, rebuke, and disgrace.

It's our fault that we find both us and our God being disgraced in this hour. There's an admission of guilt here. We're deserving of this rebuke is what King Hezekiah is saying.

[36 : 33] It's a prayer of repentance. Secondly, it's a prayer of utter dependence. And here we find an admission of helplessness. I don't know what pictures you have in your mind of utter helplessness.

The one that Isaiah picks is a pregnant woman who's had some complication, a breach birth or something, and she's been in labor for a long time, so much so that her strength is gone.

She's totally exhausted, and yet the baby has not yet been born. That's trouble. It was especially trouble in that day. And it could mean the death of one or the other, or possibly both.

And that's the picture that Hezekiah paints as he comes before the Lord. We're like a woman who has no more strength to bring forth her child.

And if it doesn't happen, there will be death. That's how helpless we are. God, you are our only hope.

[37 : 43] We're not asking you for just a little boost here. We're not asking you to lend us a helping hand as if we still have plenty to contribute ourselves. No, we're bankrupt.

We're spent. We're on empty. no strength, no wisdom, no resources, helpless. We look to thee for grace.

We're at the end of our rope, and if you don't help us, we're goners. Now, remember, this is the king publicly appearing in sackcloth. When's the last time you've seen any president, or for that matter, any politician saying, I don't have the answers.

We're in over our heads here. We're helpless. We're absolutely dependent upon God. If he doesn't come and help work, we're gone. That was the, you see, he's not trying to keep up an appearance. I'm the king. You can trust in me. No, all of that's shattered. There's soldiers outside that will skin him alive if they capture him. God, you're our only hope.

[38 : 52] in your troubles. Bring God your emptiness. You're empty. It's only empty hands that can receive from God what he comes to give you, what he comes to do for you.

Bring him your emptiness. And all true prayer owns our helplessness and our desperate dependence upon the Lord. It was a prayer of repentance. It was a prayer of utter dependence. And thirdly, it was a prayer for God's glory.

With no claim on God, he says that this is the message of Hezekiah to Isaiah in verse 4. It may be, it may be that the Lord your God will hear the words of the field commander whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God and that he will rebuke him for the words the Lord your God has heard.

Therefore, pray for the remnant that still survives. I suggest here we're at the very core of Hezekiah's true greatness.

Why it was that there was never a king before him or after him that measured up to him. He had a heart that beaded for God's glory.

[40 : 13] The greatest crime in all of this is that God's name is being ridiculed by men. The greatest crime is not what is about to happen to me or us, but what is happening to our God.

That the living God is being thought of, spoken of, treated like the lifeless gods of the nations. That is the greatest scandal of this day.

That's what bothered Hezekiah most in this whole situation. God's name was being trampled on and drug through the mud. Oh God, will you not do something for the sake of your name?

Hallow your name. Make others to see that you are holy. Come and do something for your name's sake. Pray Isaiah, who knows, but that the Lord will come and correct the situation for his name has

been ridiculed.

You know, that was the thing that David had before Goliath, wasn't it? Why did he go out and fight Goliath?

[41 : 23] It wasn't because he'd get to marry the king's daughter and his family would be exempted from taxes. He's defying the armies of the living God and we're standing here as if that's okay.

what's the deepest desire you have in your troubles? Does it have anything to do with God's glory? Anything to do with his name? Does it bother us to see the sad state of the church that bears the name of Jesus Christ?

May the Lord work in us repentance, utter dependence upon God and a passion for his name being lifted high.

These words sent to Isaiah reveal the heart of Hezekiah's prayer to God in the temple and such a prayer was not to be ignored. God doesn't say what's that?

[42 : 29] No, God's all ears to this prayer. Repentance, dependence, dependence, his own glory. God sends his answer through Isaiah back to King Hezekiah.

We have thirdly God's answer. Verse 6, Isaiah said to Hezekiah's officials, tell your master, this is what the Lord says.

Now, the commander of the Assyrian army had said to Hezekiah, this is what the great king, the king of Assyria says. And Isaiah counters, this is what Yahweh says.

The king of kings says. You see, there's a war here of words. Which one will win? You want to talk about empty words?

It's the words of that king. Do not be afraid of what you have heard. those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

[43 : 40] The words of that commander. You don't have to be afraid of him. The words that his great king sent, that great overblown ego. You don't have to be afraid of his words because of what my words have determined.

Listen, verse 7, I'm going to put a spirit in him so that when he hears a certain report, he'll return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.

Period. End of answer to prayer from the Lord. In other words, God heard what was being said about him, and he took it very personally.

He picked up the challenge that was thrown down to him to prove that he's different from the other gods. He will do something for the sake of his name. So we learn that the Lord judges men and nations for their thoughts and words about him.

But it's the ease with which he disposes of this pompous king that is emphasized. The ease with which the Lord takes care of this threat to Judah. God has access to the very dispositions of the king's heart.

[44 : 51] That's what Proverbs tells us. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, and he turns it wherever he wants. And that's what he's claiming here. I'm the king of kings, and this pompous man, Sennacherib, I have access to his heart.

And I'm going to put such a disposition in him that when he hears a report about someone attacking back in his homeland, he's going to skedaddle back home, withdraw from you, and when he gets there, I'll have some men prepared to kill him with the sword.

End of story. End of problem. Those who trust in the Lord are helped. Easy work for the Lord. That's the answer to Hezekiah's prayer, to spare the remnant for the Lord's own glory.

Well, as we leave this scene this morning, we have to remember Sennacherib's army is still outside the walls of Jerusalem. They're still there. And Sennacherib is very much alive and well.

The circumstances haven't changed at all. The only thing different now is that God's word has been announced.

[46 : 05] God has said what's going to happen. That's all that's happened. But that's enough. That is enough to bring comfort to Hezekiah and all in Jerusalem who trust in a God who by his spirit performs whatever his word decrees.

There's a pillow on which to lay your head tonight and to sleep upon. Do you have a word from God? It will happen. How firm a foundation you saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent word.

What more could he say than to you he's already said to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled. Don't miss this. the issue for Hezekiah.

We'll have to wait till next time to see how all this was fulfilled. But the word had already gone out and there was the answer to Hezekiah. Don't miss this. The issue for Hezekiah was not what will he do with Sennacherib and his armies.

No, the critical issue for Hezekiah was what will he do with God? What will he do with his God? Will he trust in him for salvation?

[47 : 26] Or will he not? Will he turn away to other help? Or wallow in despair? And that's always the critical issue brethren in our crises of faith.

In our troubles. It's not what am I going to do about my finances? About this guidance question? About this problem? That person? It's never about that so much as it is about what am I going to do with God in this situation?

Am I going to run first and tell him about it? Am I going to trust in him? Am I going to believe that he loves me and is for me in this trouble? And all of his power and wisdom stands behind him?

Those who seek him find him and find him to be all that they ever needed. And aren't you glad that our God is not like the gods of the nations powerless in the face of disaster.

What would it be to have such a God? Put yourself a moment in these other nations when the Assyrians are coming after you and all you've got is a God in name, a God who only exists in your imagination, a God who doesn't have eyes to see, ears to hear, a hand to help, a heart to love.

[48 : 45] Do we understand the privilege that is ours to have the one true and living God as our God through faith in Jesus Christ? To know that in all my problems he is for me.

All that he is is for me. To be able to rest my case upon him, to trust in the Lord with all my heart because of who he is.

Do you realize what a privileged people we are? To have that living God as our God, the God who stands watch over Zion, his people, day and night, never slumbering or sleeping.

Then let us trust him as such a God in all of our troubles. Let him be the first one we run to. And I ask you, my friend, is this God your God?

You know, the pictures of salvation in the Old Testament are pictures of that great redemption and salvation that we have in Christ. There is a more impossible situation than what we read of this morning.

[49 : 53] Jerusalem surrounded by it's you surrounded by God's wrath for your sin. How are you going to escape? Well, there is one way, and that is if you will trust entirely, come with repentance for the way you've been living and repent of the way you've been living and put all your dependence upon Jesus, the Savior, his death on the cross, his perfect life to work out a righteousness to give to every believing sinner.

Come in independence, throw yourself upon him, and he will save you, and you will find him to be for you, and on the day of judgment you will stand accepted in the Lord Jesus.

But how will you escape if you neglect so great a salvation? Oh, turn to this God, turn to him this morning. Even while we're singing our closing hymn, you cry out to him, God, be merciful to me, a sinner, for Jesus' sake, and he'll meet you.

He'll meet you and he'll save you. Let's pray. We thank you, Father, for this picture of a weak man turning in his helplessness to you, the Almighty, the Holy One, and finding help in his time of need. Forgive us, Lord, that we turn so slowly to you. Thank you for this picture again of who you are, your greatness and glory, that just with a word you speak and your enemies are gone.

[51 : 36] we thank you that when we were in the greatest of problems with our sin and hell before us, and we looked and cried in our repentance and our humble helplessness, you answered us and you saved us for Jesus' sake.

Oh, forgive us, Lord, having received such a great deliverance that we're still slow to trust you in our problems of life. Teach us this faith that leans on the Lord Jesus Christ, that looks often to him and lives by faith in the Son of God.

Lord, for others who are going through great troubles right now, lift up their hearts to see their God as he really is and pour out this spirit of faith in their hearts.

And for those that are still not right with you, show them their great problem, show them they have an enemy to deal with such as they've never dealt with before, bring them to see their need for a Savior who's willing and able to save.

Thank you, then, for your word this morning. Work it deep within us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.