

Hezekiah's Pride

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 April 2012

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Take your Bibles and turn to Isaiah chapter 39. Isaiah chapter 39. We're going to read the entire chapter.

Isaiah 39 verse 1. At that time, Merodach Baladin, son of Baladin, king of Babylon, sent Hezekiah letters and a gift because he had heard of his illness and recovery.

Hezekiah received the envoys gladly and showed them what was in his storehouses, the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine oil, his entire armory, and everything found among his treasures.

There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them. Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, What did those men say and where did they come from?

From a distant land, Hezekiah replied. They came to me from Babylon. The prophet asked, What did they see in your palace? They saw everything in my palace, Hezekiah said.

[1:17] There's nothing among my treasures that I did not show them. Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord Almighty. The time will surely come when everything in your palace and all that your fathers have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon.

Nothing will be left, says the Lord, and some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

The word of the Lord you have spoken is good, Hezekiah replied, for he thought, There will be peace and security in my lifetime.

We come this morning to chapter 39, and we need to learn again the lesson that men are imperfect examples to follow.

Men are imperfect examples to follow. Now, before we launch into this chapter, we need to hear God's summary of King Hezekiah. If this is your first dip into the life of Hezekiah, you might think, What a rascal he was.

[2:29] I want to tell you what God said about him in summary, in 2 Kings 18.5. He said, 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. That's high praise from the Lord for this king.

And we've seen him, haven't we? We've seen this good and godly king trusting in the Lord in his greatest times of need. When the nation was threatened with the extinction of the mighty Assyrian army, who had captured all the fortified cities of Judah and had only one left to go, the capital Jerusalem.

And when his own health was threatened by a terminal illness, in these overwhelming crises, we found Hezekiah to put his trust in the Lord.

And because of it, he received amazing, amazing answers to his prayer. An angel that came and killed 185,000 soldiers in one night.

[3:47] And the healing of his deadly disease and 15 years added to his life and a miraculous sign of the shadow on the sundial given as well.

And so just when we're about to make a hero of men, we're given a loud reminder that the best of men are but men at best.

That they too are flawed and fallible. They're faltering and failing and not those that we need to save us, but those who in themselves are in need of saving and of being forgiven.

So in chapter 39, we find good King Hezekiah proudly parading his wealth rather than giving glory to God. And so we're made to see he's not the long expected Messiah King promised by Isaiah and the earlier prophets.

Hezekiah can't save us. He himself needs saving. Chapter 39 is the last chapter of part one, the major first section of Isaiah's book.

[5:00] We are at the conclusion of this first part of his book. And it leaves us looking elsewhere for help. Not found in any king, whether it be Ahaz or Hezekiah.

Now it was another test of faith for Hezekiah, but one quite different from the other two that we've seen in chapters 37 and 38. And as I told you the last time in chapter 38, chapters 38 and 39 are not in chronological order, but rather happened earlier in the book.

They happened before the Assyrians were banging on the gates of Jerusalem. Before Hezekiah emptied his treasury and the treasury of the temple and stripped the gold off of the doors of the temple to try to buy the peace of Assyria.

Now this happened before that. He still got lots of treasures to show off. And Chronicles tells us that this good king Hezekiah succeeded in everything he undertook and had very great riches.

So these very great riches are still in his possession. And he's just been healed from his terminal illness and given 15 more years to live. Times were good.

[6:27] And therefore dangerous. Because good times are dangerous times. Good times are dangerous times. We've seen Hezekiah in bad times of national calamity and personal sickness.

And we've seen him stand by faith in the Lord. But he's healthy now. And he's wealthy. And he's not under attack from Assyria.

And yet he's never more in need of God's grace. Because he's just about to fall to inward pride. Bad times have killed their thousands. But good times have killed their tens of thousands. And we may deny that. And we may say, no, pastor, you've got it wrong. What really harms me are those difficulties in my life?

Those trials in my life? But we need chapter 39 of Isaiah to remind us otherwise. Bad times often send us running to God.

[7:39] Good times tempt us to forget God. Bad times humble us with our dependence and need of Him.

Good times leave us vulnerable to pride and self-sufficiency. So better is the affliction that keeps me humble and praying than the prosperity that makes me proud and forgetful of God.

That's a different way to look on affliction and prosperity. But we need God to teach us how to think, don't we?

This holy king survived under bad times, but he fell under good times. You remember another king? David? Often harassed by afflictions, and yet he stood by faith.

There was the giant, Goliath. What an affliction! There was King Saul tracking him down like a rabbit in the wilderness, and yet his faith in God enabled him to stand.

[8:53] Oh, but now times are good, and he's at ease at home in the palace, and he falls, and he falls hard with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah.

If these two kings found it so, don't think for a moment that you and I are not in danger to the bewitching good times. They lull us to sleep.

They make us feel self-secure, unmindful of our danger. So Paul says, if you think you stand, take heed lest you fall. No times are safe, least of which are the good times.

So how did it happen? How did it happen for Hezekiah? Well, this Babylonian Merodach Belodin heard about Hezekiah's illness and recovery.

He also heard about and knew about the miraculous sign about the shadow going backwards, ten steps, that was in conjunction with Hezekiah's healing.

[9:56] And so he sent ambassadors with letters and a gift to congratulate him. And it all seems innocent enough, doesn't it? But he had something up his sleeve, as we say.

Merodach Belodin was a pain in the neck to the Assyrians. Assyria was learning what many world empires have learned, that it's easier to conquer the world than it is to control it once you've conquered it.

You now have such a vast area to police and often not the resources to do so. And so here is this rebel king, Merodach Belodin from Babylon.

And he had gained power in Babylon and successfully rebelled against their usurper, Assyria, and threw off their yoke and defeated them in battle and reigned independently for a while, only to be squelched again by the Assyrians, but then later to recover and to again rebel against Assyria.

So here is this rebel king from Babylon sending envoys to King Hezekiah of Judah. He's got more in mind than a friendly graduation for getting well.

[11:20] He's hoping to establish political ties with Judah to have another ally in the revolt against Assyria. In this respect, Merodach Belodan is operating like a magician.

All good magicians are good deceivers, aren't they? A magician draws your attention over here so that you're not seeing what he's doing over here.

He holds your attention one place to do something hidden in another or like a pickpocket team and one stumbles and falls to get your attention while the other one gets your wallet.

So it is with this king of Babylon. He comes with gifts and flattery to get Hezekiah's attention. But his real aim is to get an ally in the cause of rebellion against Assyria.

And so, they come very impressed that Hezekiah beat the odds and survived his deadly disease.

And they inquired about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land.

[12:33] You can read that in Chronicles account. Do you mean that this supernatural event was all because of you, O king of Judah? It was heady praise from powerful Babylon.

The very fact that the mighty Babylonians would come and visit this little out-of-the-way country of Judah and give honor and attention.

It was all too much for Hezekiah. They're impressed with me. And their flattery fed his pride and sense of self-importance.

And he swallowed the bait and fell for the trick. His better judgment was clouded by his pride. And so, intoxicated with his pride, he was only too willing to open up his doors and show them everything that he had.

Verse 2 tells us, He received the envoys gladly. He rejoiced over them. He was happy to show them what he had. And he showed them what was in his storehouses, the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine oil, his entire armory, his defense systems, and everything found among his treasures.

[13:51] There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them. Now, here's a great opportunity for this king to glorify the Lord who had just lately healed him.

and to do so before these pagans, the Babylonians, who worshipped idols. But instead, he's showing off everything he's got.

So he goes from room to room of his storehouse. Look at this. Look at this. Showing off not only all his wealth, but his entire armor, armory, his military might.

You see, he's wanting them to know that he's a partner worth having in this alliance. Look what I've got here in the way of wealth and in the way of defense. And they follow him from room to room, politely acting impressed and making mental notes of all that's here to be had to report back to their king in Babylon.

Hezekiah, who stood before the mighty Assyrian army, could not stand before flattery and pride. The wise men, Solomon's, put it this way, the crucible for silver, the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.

[15:19] Why do you put silver or gold into a furnace? To see what it is, what it's made of. Are there any impurities in it? Under the heat of the furnace, the impurities come to the top.

The furnace for man is praise that he receives. And that's turning up the heat. And when a man is praised, you're going to see what's on the inside.

Is it the scum and impurity of pride? Yes, aren't I something? Or is it the humility that is born of God that says, what does a man have that he's not received?

And if I've received it, why should I boast as if I didn't receive it? A man is tested by the praise he received. Hezekiah didn't know it, but he was undergoing a test.

The Chronicles report it this way, when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon to ask him about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land, God left him to test him to know everything that was in his heart.

[16:28] Prosperity and praise in good times will test your faith as much as adversity in the bad times. Now, besides his pride, there's also the issue of trust in this test.

Who or what will be the trust of Hezekiah and Judah for their salvation? There is this threatening power of Assyria breathing upon the world.

Will Hezekiah trust in human strategies of self-rescue, leaning on his own understanding, leaning on Babylon as an ally, or leaning on the promises of God's care and protection of his own?

Will he trust in God or man? Will he live by faith or by works? This was the main point of the whole first 39 chapters of Isaiah.

Stop trusting in man who has but a breath in his nostrils. Trust in the Lord. He's faithful. He will not disappoint you. And it's not surprising that we find pride holding hands with trusting in men because our pride tends to set us up to trust in man, to trust in our own strategies.

[17:51] Notice Hezekiah. Remember every other test that came to him that we've read about? What was his first response? To the temple, to pray, or to turn aside to the wall and to seek the face of God in some privacy.

We don't read anything of prayer here, do we? The test comes. He doesn't sense his helplessness that drove him to God in prayer before.

Pride leaves him without a sense of need for God. He's so drunk with self-importance he doesn't even think to consult with God about this matter. If you're praying less in your good times, pride has already done its set-up work for a full fall.

If you're praying less in good times, pride has already done its set-up work for a fall. The battle is more than half lost, brother or sister.

Well, that was how it happened. In Isaiah, God's prophet, God's mouthpiece to speak for God is sent to rebuke his proud king.

[19:03] So verse 3, Isaiah comes to King Hezekiah and he asks two questions. What did those men say? And second, where did they come from? It's interesting that Hezekiah never answers the first question about what they said, their concealed agenda about an alliance that was only uncovered once they had him in their snare.

No, he doesn't say anything about that. He just answers the second question. From a distant land, he replied. They came to me from Babylon. Almost boasting.

Can you believe it? They came all this way to see me. And Isaiah is not so easily dismissed. He continues. And what did they see in your palace?

Well, they saw everything in my palace. There's nothing among my treasures that I did not show them. Perhaps posing as just being hospitable to these important visitors from Babylon.

And then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, hear the word of the Lord Almighty. I do not now speak to you as a man to man. I now speak to you the word from the Lord of hosts.

[20:22] Quote, the time will surely come when everything in your palace and all that your fathers have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord.

And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you will be taken away and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

If it's Babylon you want, it's Babylon you shall have. But not as you wished. Not as an ally to deliver you.

There's the one who will turn and destroy you. For that which we place our trust in instead of God will one day turn and destroy us.

The third lesson we need to notice from this chapter is that what we show off is often carried off by the Lord's instruments. One day all you showed them will be theirs, Isaiah says.

[21:29] Well, what did he show them? He showed them everything, therefore everything would be carried off. There was nothing he did not show them, therefore there would be nothing left.

There's that emphasis.

Everything, everything. Nothing, nothing. What we take pride in, we invite God to take away from us. I once heard a preacher say that, and he had known some amount of success in the gospel ministry, and he said, you know, every time I started taking pride in one of my converts, it seems like they fell away.

the Lord would not let me boast in my converts. Because there's only one Savior, and it isn't me. It's him. And so he deserves all the praise. What we boast in, we invite God to take from us. Those who walk in pride, God is able to humble.

And so here's that man so proud of his body. Or this woman so proud of her beauty. This man so proud of his wealth and his job.

[22:43] This student so proud of her intellect. And what we show off, God often carries off.

And it's a just judgment. Some of Hezekiah's own descendants, his own flesh and blood, would be taken away to become emasculated men set apart to serve in the palace of the king of Babylon.

His great pride in his great kingdom would be dealt a humbling blow in that his own descendants would be eunuchs in the palace of another king, the king of Babylon.

Now, notice the seriousness of the punishment. One of the things about God is that He's a perfect judge and so the punishment always fits the crime.

We're not always so wise and just. That's why only God can be judged in the end. But notice the punishment here. the seriousness of the punishment reveals the seriousness of the sin.

[24 : 00] God sees evil in the deeds in which men see nothing wrong. I mean, He just showed them His possessions. What's the big deal here? And if that's our response, we simply show that we judge according to outward appearances, but God looks on the heart.

And what God found on the heart was worthy of this severe judgment. The big deal is what God saw in his heart.

First of all, pride. Hezekiah, 2 Chronicles 32 says, Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him. Therefore, God's wrath was on him and on Judah and on Jerusalem.

He was proud. God. We little know how ugly our pride is in the eyes of God. It's no little matter to God.

It's one of those things that God hates, of which he says they're an abomination to him. Nothing is more offensive to God than a man strutting in his presence.

[25 : 11] And that's what we do when we are proud of anything. We strut in the presence of the one who deserves the praise. And so you know what he does?

He says, I will oppose the proud. I will resist. I'll stand in your way and I'll be your enemy. If you're going to be proud, you'll find you've got me to deal with as a foe.

He hates pride. Rather, walking humbly with your God is what he requires of man. Knowing who he is and what we are and just living accordingly.

That's it. Humility is not something we put on. It's just knowing who God is, knowing who I am, and living in the light of that. That's humility. And we ask, what happened to Hezekiah's determination to use the 15 more years of his life to walk humbly with God?

That's what he said back in chapter 38 verse 15, that in gratitude for the 15 additional years, he determined I will walk humbly this anguish of my soul that you've delivered me out of.

[26 : 18] And we say, that was a good goal, it was only right for him to have it, but here we see that he found, as we do, that we have far more pride inside of us than we ever thought we did.

it. I once saw a program on bamboo, and has an unbelievable root system that just fills the forest jungles where it grows, just intertwined system underneath the soil, and it keeps shooting up sprouts all over, it's a tangled mess.

Can you imagine trying to pull the root out of a bamboo field? Pride is that way. It's deeply rooted in our nature, our sin nature, and it's so deeply entrenched that though it be weakened, it survives all attacks made upon it, and it will take a sight of the glory of Jesus Christ to finally extinguish it.

For we will see him as he is, and then we'll be made like him, and then pride will just go like straw in a bonfire.

it will be gone. God saw pride in Hezekiah's heart. Something else that he saw was trust in man. Instead of turning to the Lord for salvation, he's now looking again to aid from some other nation.

[27 : 47] Now to Babylon. Trusting in man as if man were more reliable than God. You see then why God finds unbelief so offensive.

Oh, so Merodach Aladdin is more reliable than me? Well, you shall have him then. And we too have far more unbelief than we realize.

And it pops its head up over and over in our worries and our anxieties and our fears and our disobedience to his commands and our misplaced priorities and our failures to take God at his word and cast our cares upon him, trusting that he cares for us.

Wretched unbelief, trust that is not placed in God himself. And so how we see in Hezekiah just how unsteady our faith is.

So strong at one moment that it can stare down the Assyrian army. So weak at another moment. We're leaky buckets, as one brother put it.

[29 : 06] Leaky buckets, constantly needing fresh grace from heaven. Every day, every single day, I need the Lord as much as I ever needed him before.

Hezekiah needed to meet every day, be my strength every morning. I need thee, oh, I need thee, every hour I need thee.

Keep me till noon, Lord. Thank you, Lord, for keeping me this morning. Oh, keep me till suppertime. Lord, come and be my strength until I pillow my head tonight.

thank you, Lord, for your mercies of the day. Awaken me with a fresh sense of my dependence upon you.

Oh, but child of God, know that when your faith is weak, his love is strong. You can rest upon that. He saw pride in Hezekiah. He saw trust in man, and lastly, he saw self-centeredness.

[30 : 08] And we see this most clearly in his response to the punishment announced from God. Everything's going to be carried off into Babylon, nothing left, all that his fathers had saved up, even some of his own descendants made eunuchs in Babylon's courts.

This time will surely come. Oh, it's future. Oh, it's in the time of my descendants that it will happen. something that would actually be over a hundred years in the future.

And upon hearing this future judgment that is to fall, Hezekiah's response is given in verse 8. The word of the Lord you have spoken is good, Hezekiah replied, for he thought there will be peace and security in my lifetime.

His problem was not in what he said, but in what he was thinking. And remember, God sees and hears both. It was what he thought.

And what he thought was all about me. You see that? When he hears of the demise of future generations, oh, at least it's going to go well for me.

[31 : 30] That's a different response than when he heard about his own impending death, isn't it? Remember what he did? Remember how he cried? Oh, but I'll go to my bed, my deathbed, in peace and security.

Ah, it's a good word. It's a good word. As one commentator expresses Hezekiah's response here, it's, Isaiah, you had me worried there for a minute with your talk of Babylonian invasion and the ruin of the kingdom of God and the plundering of everything.

My descendants is as servile boot lickers in Babylon. Ah, but what what a relief. It's all okay because I'll die peacefully in my bed.

There will be peace and security in my lifetime. Do you smell the stench of pitiful self-interest, self-centeredness?

What happens to the next generation does not seem to affect him just as long as things are fine in my lifetime. That's all that matters to me. He's willing to sell off the gains of his fathers and the future of his children.

[32 : 49] And so what we find is that self-centeredness is joined at the hip with pride. These are Siamese twins. Self-centeredness and pride.

When pride replaces humility, self-concern replaces concern for others. Francis Schaeffer pointed out the popular idols of his own day calling them personal peace and affluence.

I don't know where he came up with that. I have an idea. He was reading Isaiah 39 when he thought that. I don't care about anything or anybody else just as long as I have personal peace and affluence, peace and security in my lifetime.

God. Oh, we can think of our own nation in this light, can't we? Every politician with eyeballs can see that we are spending gobs more money than we have to spend.

But no one wants their benefits to be reduced. There have been riots throughout Europe when such measures and cuts have been taken. So we spend on expecting our children and our grandchildren to pick up the tab, willing to sell down the drain all that our fathers stored up in this nation, not only in money, but in biblical principles and true wealth, and selling the future of our children and the following generations.

[34 : 28] Why? For our own ease, our own security, in our lifetime. And we can sit back and complain about it all, but I'm afraid that we all are far more self-centered than we realize.

That there's a part of us that judges all events by what it means for me. That's how we live. That's how we measure good and bad. What does it mean for me?

And if it's good for me, it's good. It's bad for me. Whatever else it may do to others, it's bad. It's bad. Self-preoccupation runs deeper than we know.

I find with Luther that by nature, I am helplessly curved in upon myself. Or with C.S. Lewis, who said, I never had a selfless thought since I was born.

I am mercenary and self-seeking through and through. I want God, you, all friends, merely to serve my turn.

[35 : 48] Oh, how different from the King of Glory, who did not come to seek his own interest, but sacrificed his own interest on behalf of others good, who came not to be served, but to serve, not to get, but to give his life a ransom for many.

And folks, it's only he who can make us to differ from what we are by nature. It's only he who can save us from this preoccupation with me and plant in our hearts a genuine interest in the well-being of others.

We're forgetful of ourselves. We seek the good of others and we're so caught up in the good of others that we even do it at great expense to ourselves.

That's the Lord Jesus and that's what he stamps in the hearts of his people. There's something more important than our own well-being. And one of the applications that flows out of this is surely that we today must seek the future good of our families.

We must be thinking of our children and their future good. We must be thinking of the future good of our nation. But especially we must be thinking of the future good of God's kingdom, of this church, willing to spend and be spent so that the following generations that come behind might know the blessings of the gospel of King Jesus.

[37 : 28] Well, God saw a lot in Hezekiah's heart. And Hezekiah later repented, we're told, in 2 Chronicles. And we got to see him in chapter 37, which happened after this, when under the threat of the Assyrians, he does turn to God in prayer and casts all of his hope in the Lord.

But the damage was done. The damage was done. And Hezekiah's unguarded pride and openness to the Babylonians led to captivity in Babylon some 100 years later.

It wasn't just because of his sin, yes, that is stated, but it was also because his sin was the sin of the nations, of the nation of Judah. They all had turned away from seeking the Lord and were going their own way.

They did not love his word. They lived for self rather than God and others. They were proud and unbelief marked them.

And so the time did come. Just as the Lord announced verses 5 and 6, hear the word of the Lord Almighty, the time will surely come when all this will happen.

[38 : 44] And around 100 years later into Babylon, they went along with their treasures for the word of the Lord determines history. That's the fourth lesson.

The word of the Lord determines history. Everything you read about in tomorrow's newspaper will happen because the Lord decreed it in eternity past. Whatever the Lord decrees will happen.

Liberal scholars read chapter 39 and they conclude that this chapter had to be written 100 years later because no man is able to tell the future 100 years in advance with such precision.

In other words, to the liberal scholar there with his whole naturalistic presupposition, there's no such thing as predictive prophecy. But Peter reminds us, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of events.

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. And he knows the end from the beginning. And what he says happens.

[39 : 58] So just as Hezekiah's death was postponed for 15 years, so when God saved Jerusalem from Sennacherib's army in chapter 37, Judah's destruction salvation was only postponed for a hundred years when Babylon would be the one to come and destroy them and take them away into captivity.

So that great deliverance that we saw in chapter 37 is no permanent salvation. It was the relief was only temporary and it leaves us at the end of this first part of Isaiah looking for relief and salvation elsewhere.

And let's not miss the lesson number five. What we do with the gift of life is more important than the length of it. So many today seem to be so taken up with living longer, living longer.

And yes, we are because of the sixth commandment to take care of our lives and the lives of others. But it's almost become a God to live longer as if the ultimate is to live longer.

But some things are more important than living longer, like walking humbly with your God, however long you live. Yes, Hezekiah has given 15 more years of life, but better to die young honoring God than to live long for yourself and to dishonor God.

[41:29] There are men in the Bible I could have wished had died earlier before they dishonored their God. I think of King Solomon for one.

Perhaps Hezekiah was another. But what are you doing with the life that God has given you? What are you doing right now with today?

That's all you've got. What are you doing with it? You living for self or for God? for your own pleasures, your own glory, or the good of God's kingdom, the good of others, the glory of His name. What we do with the gift of life is more important than the length of it. And that means that some of us, if not all of us, ought to be praying often, Oh Lord, help me to finish well.

Help me to finish well. Don't let me dishonor you at the end of my life or at the middle of my life.

[42:34] Let me live that I may praise you, as David said, or as Bernard of Clairvaux said, Lord, let me never, never outlive my love for you.

I don't want to live that long. If my love runs out, I want my life ending right then. I don't want to outlive my love for you. Oh, would that Hezekiah had guarded himself with such prayers.

So as we come to the end of the first major section of the book, chapters 1 through 39, we see why these last two chapters are out of chronological order, why they're put at the end.

Because when chapter 40 opens, the next time we come to it, we're going to find the Lord addressing the people of Judah down in Babylon in captivity.

That's over a hundred years leap. And so Isaiah comes to chapter 39 and he's preparing us for that leap that we'll find in chapter 40.

[43:48] He tells us, why is it that the next chapter will be addressing Israel in Babylon? Well, I'll tell you why, because of what happened here in the life of Hezekiah when he fell to his pride and flattery.

So Isaiah is making a point. He's telling this story in such a way that makes us look beyond any man for the answer to Judah's problems and for the answer of our greatest problem as well.

And it's this, where is salvation from sin and its consequences to be found? Who can save us from our pride? Who can pull up that root? Who will save us from unbelief and trust in man?

Who will save us from our preoccupation with self? Where is ultimate peace and security to be realized? And the answer at the end of this first act is not in Hezekiah, not in any king.

These men are flawed and sinful. We'll have to look elsewhere for the promised king of righteousness who will bring salvation to his people. If the best of God's people fail, where is our hope?

[45:03] That's how this first section ends. And it's not in more good kings or more good presidents or more good congressmen or more good judges as if they could fix what's wrong in the world.

No, the only hope of the world is bound up in God's coming Messiah, who Isaiah portrays in the next part of his book from chapter 40 to the end in 66 as the perfect servant of the Lord, the suffering servant of the Lord.

And Isaiah is pointing away from men and telling us, fix your eyes on Jesus, this coming Savior. He alone brings full and complete salvation.

So trust in him, dear sinner friend. Put your hope in him. He has a perfect righteousness to give you. His blood can cover all your guilt and sins forever and his saving power can remake you and set you free from self and sin and trust in him, dear brothers and sisters, because we need the same Savior from the very same sins.

And he is able to save completely all that come unto God through him because he always lives to make intercession for us.

[46:26] Our Father, you are holy and we have just called ourselves wretches and that is not a word too strong for those who are proud, self-centered and trusting in man.

And we thank you for the selfless love that we find in the Father, in your heart, oh Father, in giving up your Son for us.

We thank you, Lord Jesus, for the selflessness that we find, the humility that we find, and your stooping down to become a man, that you might become sin for us and die for us.

Oh, give us to look, to behold the Father's selfless love, the Son's selfless love, and please dry up at the roots these sins of pride and self-centeredness in us.

And please deepen in our hearts that confidence in God, that with him we need none other. He's our Father in heaven, it's our elder brother who died for us.

[47 : 35] So help us to chase away every fear and doubt. Bring sinners to trust in this wonderful Savior, set them free from the very same sins that plague us, and receive our thanks for being such a gracious God to us in Jesus Christ.

We pray in his name, amen.