

PURPOSEFUL EMPOWERED PRAYER AND FASTING

Isaiah 36-37

Prayer and Fasting

Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions. **Ezra 8:21**

Fasting is a divine corrective to the pride of the human heart. It is a discipline of body with a tendency to humble the soul. **Arthur Wallis**

Fasting without prayer is starvation.
Author Unknown

I find it a good thing to fast. I do not lay down rules for anyone in this matter, but I know it has been a good thing for me to go without meals to get time for prayer. So many say they have not sufficient time to pray. We think nothing of spending an hour or two in taking our meals. **D.E. Hoste**

Fasting is calculated to bring a note of urgency and importance into our

- **Isaiah 36**
- King Hezekiah and all of Judah are in big trouble...the king of Assyria sent out a huge army and seized 46 significant cities...this of course, was an act of war.
- The King of Assyria, Sennacherib, sends his servant soldier Rabshakeh as his spokesman to Hezekiah.
 - Hezekiah gets mocked and shamed for trying to lean on Egypt for military help, even though he is not present.

praying, and to give force to our pleading in the court of heaven. The man who prays with fasting is giving heaven notice that he is truly in earnest. **Arther Wallis**

Fasting is the voluntary denial of a normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity. **Richard Foster**

Prayer is one hand with which we grasp the invisible; fasting the other, with which we let loose and cast away the visible. **Andrew Murray**

Our prayers must mean something to us if they are to mean anything to God.
M.D. Babcock

Prayer is the very natural breath of faith. **Wm Gurnall**

Between the humble and contrite heart and the majesty of heaven there are no barriers. The only password is prayer. **H Ballou**

- Then all of Hezekiah’s team and all the people of Judah are scorned for any idea they have about trusting in God.
- They are being told that God can’t care about them, that He is not for them and that Rabshakeh actually was commissioned by God to come and destroy them if they don’t join up with Sennacherib’s government and army.
- He chides God’s people, declares that Hezekiah is trying to deceive them into trusting God which will be their complete downfall. He claims that God can’t defeat the powerful gods that Sennacherib serves...no one has defeated him yet, all the kings and gods they have fought they have been victorious against.
- The threat is “Join up with us or die.”
- **Chapter 37**
- King Hezekiah hears what has happened to 46 of his cities, what the threat and command to him and all of Judah is, “This is not good.”
 - The king tears his clothes, puts ashes on his body and goes into the house of the Lord. He then sends messengers and representatives to speak with Isaiah the Prophet.
 - The king’s team finds Isaiah and gives him the disastrous news.

⁵So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. ⁶Isaiah said to them, “Thus you shall say to your master, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. ⁷Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.” **Isaiah 37:5-7 NASB**

- The tide begins to turn

⁸Then Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he had heard that the king had left Lachish. ⁹When he heard *them* say concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, “He has come out to fight against you,” and when he heard *it* he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰“Thus you shall say to Hezekiah king of Judah, ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.” ¹¹Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, destroying them completely. So will you be spared? ¹²Did the gods of those nations which my fathers

have destroyed deliver them, *even* Gozan and Haran and Rezep and the sons of Eden who *were* in Telassar? ¹³Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, *and of* Hena and Ivah?’ **Isaiah 37:8-13 NASB**

- Hezekiah’s prayer:

¹⁴Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. ¹⁵Hezekiah prayed to the Lord saying, ¹⁶“O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, who is enthroned *above* the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ¹⁷Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and listen to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent *them* to reproach the living God. ¹⁸Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have devastated all the countries and their lands, ¹⁹and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. ²⁰Now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, Lord, are God.” **Isaiah 37:14-20 NASB**

- God responds to Hezekiah’s prayer through Isaiah.

²¹Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent *word* to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, **Isaiah 37:21 NASB**

Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib...(things will happen!)

- God tells Hezekiah through Isaiah about how Sennacherib’s arrogance, idolatry, cruelty, and scoffing were going to be his demise.

“But I know your sitting down and your going out and your coming in and your raging against Me. ²⁹“Because of your raging against Me and because your arrogance has come up to My ears, therefore I will put My hook in your nose and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way which you came. **Isaiah 37:28-29 NASB**

- Now Isaiah tells Hezekiah about the ‘move of God that is now coming.’

³⁰“Then this shall be the sign for you: you will eat this year what grows of itself, in the second year what springs from the same, and in the third year sow, reap, plant

vineyards and eat their fruit. ³¹The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward. ³²For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” **Isaiah 37:30-32 NASB**

- Back to God’s treatment of King Sennacherib

³³“Therefore, thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, ‘He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with a shield, or throw up a siege ramp against it. ³⁴By the way that he came, by the same he will return, and he will not come to this city,’ declares the LORD. ³⁵‘For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.’” **Isaiah 37:33-35 NASB**

- The final outcome of Hezekiah’s prayer

³⁶Then the angel of the Lord went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead. ³⁷So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned *home* and lived at Nineveh. ³⁸It came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons killed him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place. **Isaiah 37:36-38 NASB**

¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. ^cThe effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. **James 5:17-18 and 16b**

- Hezekiah got a lot more than he prayed for.
 - What was God’s response?

Because you prayed to Me about _____,

here is My response:

You fill in the blank...we are human just like Hezekiah and Elijah but with a better covenant and better promises.