

# Rick Miller – Isaiah 38 – Mar. 12, 2023

This morning we're in Isaiah chapter 38, and the title of my sermon today is Hezekiah's Passionate Prayer.

Lord, as we open your word, we thank you that you are faithful to reveal scriptural truth to us. Lord, you said that we're to become as a child, we're to be teachable. Not be know-it-alls, but to humbly let you teach us. Your word says they shall all be taught by God.

We all have a responsibility to hear from you and sometimes you use a preacher, a teacher, or a sermon we hear online or whatever. You'll speak through those things, but ultimately we need to have open hearts to hear what you are saying to each of us, so we pray you'll do that once again as you always do faithfully in Jesus' name. Amen.

So Isaiah chapter 38, this is a story of King Hezekiah crying out to the Lord in his sickness that he was about to die and God had mercy on him and healed him. We actually see references to this story in three different places in the scripture. So before we go through it line by line, I would like to read different versions of the story.

One is in Isaiah 38 that we're in, and then we also have a version of the story in 2nd Kings 20, and 2nd Chronicles 32. I'm going to read Isaiah 38 first. Let's jump into verse one.

*1In 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.' "* *2Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord, 3and said, "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." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. 4And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, 5"Go and tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. 6I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city."*

One comment here real quick is that you'll notice this seems out of order because if you're paying attention, the last chapter was when God delivered Israel from the Assyrian attack. So actually, chronologically, chapter 38 is before 37. At this time though he's given the promise to Hezekiah that he would deliver him from the king of Assyria which happened in chapter 37. He says I will defend this city, verse 7, and this is the sign to you from the Lord that the Lord will do this thing, which he has spoken.

*8“Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward.” So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.*

This next section I'm going to skip for right now. We'll come back to it later. I'm just trying to get an overall feel for the story. This next section is like a psalm that Hezekiah wrote after the Lord had healed him. So I'm going to pick up the story in verse 21.

*21Now Isaiah had said, “Let them take a lump of figs, and apply it as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover.” 22And Hezekiah had said, “What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?”*

Let's jump over to 2nd Kings 20:1 and read an account of the same story.

*1In 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.’ ” 2Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord, saying, 3“Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly. 4And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 5“Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord.*

So we get a little more information in this story as to the timing of the answered prayer. It was actually immediate. As soon as Isaiah had left, giving Hezekiah the word, Hezekiah prayed and then before Isaiah had left the premises, God told him to turn around and tell Hezekiah “I’m going to answer his prayer.”

*6And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David.” ’ ” 7Then Isaiah said, “Take a lump of figs.” So they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. 8And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What is the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the Lord the third day?” 9Then Isaiah said, “This is the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing which He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?” 10And Hezekiah answered, “It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees.” 11So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the Lord, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.*

So then, from one other version of this story, some more details. In 2nd Chronicles 32:24 it says...

*24In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the Lord; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 26Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.*

So that gives us a little fuller picture by reading all three of these stories.

But back to Isaiah 38:1. *1In 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.’ ”*

Quite an ominous word to him. We don't know how long Hezekiah had been sick. It seems like it'd been for a while. It just says in those days he was sick and now it's all kind of coming to a head where we know from the psalm that Hezekiah wrote that there had been this time where he was struggling, pouring out his heart to the Lord concerning his sickness, and now to him it seems like, oh, I guess this is the answer.

God is saying, set your house in order; you shall die. He prayed to the Lord and said remember now, oh 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. And Hezekiah wept bitterly. I love that. Where it says he turned his face to the wall and prayed.

You see a focus of prayer where the sense you get is, look, I don't want to be distracted by anything. I'm turning my face to the wall. I'm focusing on the Lord. I thought of that verse in James 5:16 where it says the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much - that fervency, that effectiveness, that focus.

I think that's important. When we pray, Jesus said don't be like the hypocrites who pray out in public and make a big show about it because they want everybody to see how spiritual they are, how righteous they are. But he says to go into your closet and pray to your father who sees in secret and your father, who sees in secret will reward you openly.

That focus of prayer where we have to have that time alone with the Lord where we're focused and we just deal with the distractions and say, no, I can't take that call, I can't focus on that notification. I need to focus on the Lord. So he turns his face to the wall.

He prays, and then notice what he says in his prayer. Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you in truth and a loyal heart and have done what is good in your sight, and he wept bitterly. You can see the passion.

When we as Christians, who've been taught about the grace of God, have grown and are maturing, we're not usually praying like that.

We don't say, oh Lord, answer my prayer because I've been such a good boy. Or answer my prayer Lord because you know how loyal I am and how faithful I am. But you know, there actually is something to that, in the sense that God sees our heart, right? Hezekiah was not saying, Lord, I've been perfect so you should answer my prayer. Hezekiah's saying, Lord, I have tried to live for you

and I want to continue to live for you, so I'm asking you for more time. And I think that's a legitimate prayer. Lord, you see my heart, you know my heart, and you know my whole life is directed toward you.

Now, Hezekiah could easily compare himself to previous kings who were wicked. As you read through Kings you see that king was good, that one was bad, the next one's good. By the way, Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, who was born in these extra 15 years that God gave him, was one of the worst kings ever born and ever to reign in Judea.

But the Lord had mercy on even Manasseh when he got to the end of his life and he cried out. But Hezekiah had a legitimate case before the Lord to say, you know Lord, I have walked before you. I have a loyal heart and I've tried to do what is good in your sight. And I hope we can all say that. I hope we can all say, well, yeah Lord, I stumble and I sin all the time, but you know, I have prioritized my life to where, yeah, I'm going to be in church. I'm going to serve the Lord. I'm going to live for the Lord. I'm going to have daily devotions. Lord, I'm trying to hear your voice and live for you and follow you.

God sees our heart and that should encourage you because the enemy's going to come and whisper and accuse like, God just saw that thought you had, and look how you mess up all the time. The enemy's going to try to discourage you and try to push you down. We have to remember, no, God sees our heart.

It also makes me think about how Paul talked in Philippians, how he was torn between two ways of thinking. How he wanted to go and be with the Lord, for that would be better. But he also knew God wanted him to stay here and minister for a while longer.

So I think Hezekiah's heart, in wanting to stay and still bear fruit for the kingdom of God and still serve God, I think that was a legitimate prayer. I think all of us have experienced that kind of tension where we're like, Lord, just take me home. I'm ready to go home. I'm ready for heaven.

But at the same time, isn't there something in you that says, but no, there's more to do? I want to build up rewards for eternity. Like, Lord, you've done so much in my life in the past, and you've done so much in my character and brought me so far, it's kind of a waste to just take me home now. I feel like I'm ready to be used more than ever now, Lord.

I don't know if you ever think that way but I think that way a lot. Of course we'd rather be with the Lord, but there's also that tension of, yeah, but look what all

God's done, and I want to be used by God. I think you could see Hezekiah's heart in that. You look at these characteristics that Hezekiah's stating - truth, loyalty, goodness - and of course Jesus Christ was the only one who perfectly walked in all those things, right?

Perfectly loyal to his father, perfectly good. Not only did he walk in truth, the Bible says he is the truth. He's the way, the truth and the life. I thought of that verse in Matthew 5:18 where it says blessed are the pure in heart. So again, that doesn't mean blessed are those who are perfectly pure because none of us are.

God looks at your heart. When you can stand before God and say I really want to live for you, I want to be obedient to you, whatever you have for me, it's like Isaiah said earlier in the book of Isaiah, Lord here am I, send me. I want to go; I want to be used by you. That's a purity of heart where God sees that you've dealt with the love of the world.

The Bible says if you love the world that's not a good place for your heart to be. So we have to check our hearts and say, Lord, is there love for this world? What is there in my heart that's impure in terms of my commitment to you? Again, none of us are perfect. We're going to stumble. But when God sees your heart is directed toward him, he's pleased with that.

Then ultimately we know as believers when we talk about living a righteous life as Hezekiah is listing here, you know, truth, loyalty, goodness, we know ultimately that it's faith that God's looking for. The righteous shall live by faith. We shall go from faith to faith. Without faith it's impossible.

So don't be discouraged when you look at your life and you say, oh, I fall short, I don't have what it takes to be a successful Christian. No, you do, because it always falls back on faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I love that about my Christian life, where every lack I see in my life I look to Jesus and say, Lord, you're my hope in doing better in that area of my life.

I need to feed on your righteousness and your strength. My prayer life is lacking, Lord; pour your prayer life into me, Jesus. You have the perfect prayer life. Whatever it is, we can receive from Christ.

Then verses 4 through 6, we see after Hezekiah's prayer, this really quick response, as we read in the account in Kings, where as soon as Isaiah walked out into the courthouse, right away God told him, turn around and go back and tell Hezekiah that I've heard his prayer. So verse 4 says ...

*4And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, 5“Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years.’”*

So that immediate answer to prayer, sometimes that happens, doesn't it? Other times, a lot of times it doesn't, where we just have to wait on the Lord for his timing. You're praying for someone you love, someone you're concerned about, and often I'll try to encourage people like, okay, you're praying for that prodigal.

What did the father do with his prodigal son? Did he chase him down the road and hover over him? No, he just let him go and trusted him into the Lord's hands. And then the Lord knows how to work in that prodigal to let them come to the end of themselves where they're in that pigpen, and they've lost everything.

This is what I pray for people. Lord, just let the party be over for them. They're living this illusion of a party life or living for pleasure instead of living for the Lord, and Lord, just take that away from them to where they'll see the reality; they need the Lord.

My point is often the prayers we pray for that prodigal, it takes time. So don't think as soon as that father started praying for his prodigal, the prodigal turns around. Sometimes that happens. Sometimes we see that immediate answer to prayer or you're praying about something and then God gives you wisdom.

He gives you an answer right away. And this is beautiful. This is encouraging where we know that Isaiah turned around right away, came back in, and gave him this answer to prayer. Again James 5:16 says “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man...” We saw that with Hezekiah, that focus, turned his face to the wall, fervency, passion and prayer.

Then here we see it. It avails much. Prayer can be difficult because you're not always seeing immediate answers. But we have to remember fervent, effective, passionate prayer avails much, and we'll only know when we get to heaven, truly how much it did produce. Also, you'll notice in the promises that God says, I have heard your prayer. I have seen your tears. I will add 15 years.

I will deliver you, I will defend the city. Prayer is asking God to do something. God, we're weak. I mean, look at the weakness that Hezekiah was in this state, this prolonged sickness came to a head where, he says, you're going to die.

He's in this state of weakness, and yet he's now going to be delivered from that and come into strength. And yet it was God's work, right? Often we have this great weakness in our life and we're so discouraged by it, and yet you're right on the verge of resurrection. That's really what this is a picture of.

We see this near death experience and then we see this reference to three days later; he would go to the temple. I think there is definitely a picture of the death and resurrection that we often see through the Old Testament pointing to the work of Christ that's coming. But it's God's work. And this is what we have to remember.

We're praying, we're trusting that God's going to do things that we could never do. He's going to give life where there was death and sickness. He's going to deliver from the king of Assyria and he's going to defend the city. So, notice all these promises. Now, we know later in the story Hezekiah is asking for a sign, how do I know all this is going to happen?

So his faith kind of waivers there a bit, but God still gives him a sign, gives him encouragement. The promises that we have in prayer are amazing. John 15:7 says, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you." You know that if God would open our eyes to the power of these promises that we would pray more effectively, we would pray more often.

One pastor said the problem with prayer is not unanswered prayer, it's unoffered prayer. We often aren't praying about everything and God wants us to pray and to be encouraged. Jesus said, abide in me. Live in my strength and meditate on my words.

Then when you pray, you'll be praying God's will. It's an open-ended promise. I want to be involved in your life. I want to answer your prayers as a disciple of mine. Then John 16:23 says, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

Incredible encouragements for prayer. We need to take God up on those promises. Then Isaiah 38:7, "*And this is the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing which He has spoken: 'Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward.' So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.*"



We know from this 2nd Kings account that Hezekiah had asked for a sign and then he was presented with, “Do you want the shadow to move down or back up?” Well of course the the miraculous would be if it moved back up and God did it.

I think that's a picture of God saying, look, I'll move heaven and earth to answer your prayers. Your prayers are important to me. Jesus used symbolism like moving mountains, Mark 11:22. “So Jesus answered and said to them ‘Have faith in God. For assuredly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain ‘Be removed and cast in the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe you receive them, and you shall have them.’”

Incredible open-ended promises to move mountains in our life, in prayer.

I mean, obviously think of, okay, what happened here? How did he move the shadow back up? Did he reverse the rotation of the Earth? Was it just a vision or something? Or did people all around the world see it happen, oh what's going on here, the shadow's moving back! We're not given all those details, but obviously for God he could have done it any way he wanted. He could have moved the earth and the sun at the same time.

God spoke the world into existence and if he can do that there's no miracle that's too hard for him. I think it's an encouragement to us that God hears us; God will answer. God will move heaven and earth to answer our prayers.

He sees our heart, he hears our prayers, he sees our tears. Then this next section, verses 9 through 20, is really Hezekiah's psalm of praise. So we see in verses 9 through 14 where Hezekiah is pouring out his heart. He's really showing us what he was going through during this sickness, pouring out his heart to God in verses 9 through 14. Then in verses 15 through 20, we see him rejoicing as the answered prayer came. Let's look at this first section where he's pouring out his heart in Isaiah 38:9-14. He says ...

*9This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness: 10 I said, “In the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol; (which is hell) I am deprived of the remainder of my years.”*

Now, it doesn't mean that he felt like he was going to go to hell. It was really an Old Testament view of death. You have to remember when you're reading through this, he's looking at it from more of an earthly perspective that his body

is going to go to the grave. He's not going to have any more influence in this earth and can't be used by the Lord in this earth anymore.

It's not that he doesn't believe in heaven or he is necessarily afraid of death. It's just that Old Testament revelation was limited and not as expansive as our New Testament revelation. They say he was probably around 39 years old at this time.

*10 I said,*

*“In the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol;*

*I am deprived of the remainder of my years.” 11 I said,*

*“I shall not see Yah, The Lord in the land of the living;*

*I shall observe man no more among the inhabitants of the world.*

*12 My life span is gone, Taken from me like a shepherd's tent;*

*I have cut off my life like a weaver. He cuts me off from the loom;*

*From day until night You make an end of me. 13 I have considered until*

*morning— Like a lion, So He breaks all my bones;*

*From day until night You make an end of me.*

*14 Like a crane or a swallow, so I chattered; I mourned like a dove; My eyes fail from looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; Undertake for me!”*

So I love this pouring out of your heart in your sorrow, in your difficulty, in your sickness, in your depression. You see that often in the Psalms, don't you? Where there is, I think, an emotional release, a spiritual release in every way, just pouring out your heart, telling God what you think. Now you can do that with another person, right? You can go to a therapist and pour out your heart and you know there's some help they can give you.

But when you pour your heart out to God that is something else. I've just experienced the comfort, first of all, that he gives you. Paul talks about that in 2nd Corinthians. The comfort, that in his suffering that God has given him, and then he's able to comfort others with the comfort that he's been comforted with.

The things that we go through, that are difficult, we don't want to say why would God ever allow me to go through this? And you get kind of angry at God

rather than just say, you know, my life is in God's hands. He works all things together for good, but I don't want to be in this situation.

I'm crying out to you for deliverance. Then, Lord, if you decide not to deliver me, then give me grace to overcome and, you know, all those kinds of prayers and interactions we have with God. But this is just a good example of a man who's doing that. He wants his life to continue. You know what's sad, and I've seen many cases of this, where someone's life is cut short because of sin.

Now it doesn't mean they're necessarily going to go to hell. In fact often they've abused and disobeyed God so much in their life that it's broken their body down and it's actually brought them to a place of humility where they cry out to the Lord and then the Lord is willing to take them into heaven because of their repentance and their faith in Christ.

But there are still consequences, right? It's a tragedy when someone's life is cut short unnecessarily. So again, for us to say, Lord, I want my life to have meaning. I want the remainder of my years to have eternal value. What's that saying: one life that soon will pass, only what's done for Christ will last?

Life is so short. It goes so quickly that we want to look at every day and say, Lord, I want my life to count for you. But yeah, in the multitude of trials that we have, don't get bitter. Learn to cry out to the Lord like we see Hezekiah did.

So, let's go then into the next section, 15 through 20 where we see Hezekiah answered and his rejoicing.

15 *“What shall I say?*

*He has both spoken to me,*

*And He Himself has done it.*

*I shall walk carefully all my years*

*In the bitterness of my soul.”*

That's a little hard to understand, that verse, but I think in the context, it's clear. Basically saying, wow, you've answered my prayer. What can I say? God, you're so gracious. I thank you. You have spoken to me through Isaiah and you've done it. As we read in the previous verse, God said, I will, I will, I will do it. And then God gets all the glory. And it's grace, what can you say?

Hezekiah can't say, well God, I had this coming because I've been so good. No, he just says, what can I say? God, you're so gracious. Then, the end of verse 15, "I shall walk carefully all my years in the bitterness of my soul." I get a sense from that he's saying, look Lord, I thank you for what you have done here and I want to be careful the way I live my life. In the remaining years that you're giving me I want to walk before you in fear and holiness.

So many of the kings, what did they do? They would fall into foreign gods, foreign wives, get caught up in riches. Hezekiah didn't want to do that. They would get caught up in pride. In fact, didn't we read that's what happened to Hezekiah in 2nd Chronicles?

Now he's making this promise, God, I really want to walk before you. A lot of times, you know, we'll bargain with God. Like, Lord, if you'll just answer this prayer I'll serve you with all my heart. I remember before I was saved my dad was having an operation. It was back in the early seventies when heart surgery was pretty new.

He was getting bypass done and they couldn't get him off the heart machine. His heart just wouldn't start. And I remember me and my brother, we were teenagers, we had been drinking and stuff even while my dad was going through this.

And we went to the hospital and I remember meeting my dad's pastor in the elevator. We were kind of stuck with him in the elevator, and I always tried to avoid him at all costs. I have stories about that I can tell you because of a conviction of my sin. He was a great man.

But anyway, he said "Hey guys, your dad is in a really bad place. They can't get his heart started. And I would suggest you guys go to the chapel, the hospital chapel and pray." And so, me and my brother went in the chapel and I remember saying to God, and I never really prayed, you know, it was before I was a Christian, and I said, God, I promise you I'll serve you if you heal my dad.

That's how a lot of times unbelievers pray. We don't understand that you don't bargain with God. Well, the Lord did heal my dad. Actually, my dad had some kind of vision of heaven when he was in that state. He had already come to the Lord a few months before that, but the Lord did heal him. I just went right back to my old life, you know, forgot about it. Then I got saved like a year or two later. But yeah, often we can kind of, you know, bargain with God.

But Hezekiah's praising the Lord, and you know, in his excitement to answered prayer, he's making a commitment to God, which is valid. Lord, I want to walk with you all the years of my life in the fear of the Lord.

But then we read from 2nd Chronicles that he did not repay according to the favor shown him, for his heart was lifted up, therefore, wrath was looming over him and Judah and Jerusalem. So that's just human nature, right? We make the promise to God, but we can't maintain it in our own strength and our heart gets proud and lifted up.

But then it says in 2nd Chronicles 32:26, Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, so he did humble himself ultimately, which is great. But isn't that the battle we have? God says, look, I answered your prayer and you're just blown away - Lord, thank you for answering my prayer.

But then your pride comes back up or you fall into some kind of sin and you feel like, how could I do that after God has done this gracious thing to me. I'm still struggling with sin. Well, look, that's the Christian life, you know, it's the righteous man who falls seven times. He gets back up seven times.

You know, you don't give up. You don't say, well, God must be so disappointed in me. We do what Hezekiah did. Humble yourself again after you've fallen, after you've gotten off track. Verse 16, *"O Lord, by these things men live; And in all these things is the life of my spirit; So You will restore me and make me live."*

I think he's saying here that he's acknowledging it's by the hand of the Lord that we live and recognizing that God's working in our life, that it's life to our spirit. We keep looking to the Lord for life. We keep calling upon him.

This whole experience that Hezekiah is having here, I believe is yet another picture of that battle we have as Christians daily to not live by the flesh, but live in the spirit. The scripture talks about in Romans 8 how if you live by the flesh, you will die. If you live in the spirit, you will live.

So if we're going to be led by the strength of our own flesh and follow our own flesh, there's spiritual death we experience. It doesn't mean you're going to hell, it doesn't mean you're separated from God. It's just you're not living that abundant life in the spirit, in the power of the spirit.

So there are many parallels I think in this story to our daily battle of walking in the spirit. But he says you will restore me and make me live. And that's where

we are always looking back to the power of the spirit to restore us, to build us up. That we walk in that life of the spirit.

Verse 17, *“Indeed it was for my own peace that I had great bitterness; but You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back.”*

So, there's a sense with Isaiah that he understood that God allowed him to go through this sickness for a reason. He wasn't blaming God. He just understood it was part of God's plan in his life. And yet God delivered him and forgave his sins. Verse 18, *“For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.”*

And again, it's that idea that, Lord, if I'm not here on the earth, I'm limited, where I'm unable to do any work for you anymore. I want my life to count for you, to remain in you, to commit my struggles to you, Lord, cry to you for deliverance. And Lord that I wouldn't become bitter at you or misunderstand why trials come.

Lord, you said that we're not to be surprised at the fiery ordeal that comes among us for our testing as though some strange thing were happening, but that our faith is being tested.

We're to commit those things to you. Sometimes these are prayers that we're waiting for an answer over many years. Some may not even be answered till heaven. Others have an immediate answer. But in any case, Lord, we need to have faith that you see us, Lord, you see our hearts, Lord, you see our heart is committed to you and we want to serve you and live for you.

Lord, where there is impurity in that regard, where our priorities are out of whack or we're compromising, Lord, that you would deal with that, that you would speak to it Lord. You always speak with grace and tenderness and even if it's a correction, you always have an answer for us. To ask forgiveness and then give us power to overcome the sin, overcome the apathy in our hearts, Lord, and as we were singing during worship today, Lord, just that fire of the Spirit would be in our hearts and we would cry out to you for that, Lord. We wouldn't settle for less. And certainly Lord, we know you want to pour out that joy and the Holy Spirit into our lives.

So Lord, as we go today, that you would remind us of these truths, Lord. This could be a day of decision that I'm going to change the path I've been going on.

I'm going to cry out to God for all of my problems and trust him for the timing of answers.

Then Lord, as we see you answer, a rejoicing and a worshiping and a singing unto you, Lord, that we go from glory to glory, go from strength to strength, from grace to grace. So again, give strength for the battle, Lord; give us that fighting spirit, to fight for what's ours spiritually, Lord. And we commit this day to you in Jesus name. Amen.