

Rick Miller – Isaiah 37 - Feb 26 2023

All right, let's open up our Bibles to Isaiah 37.

Lord, as we open your word, give us ears to hear what the spirit says. Lord, there's a lot to take in through this chapter and just great lessons about spiritual warfare and prayer and surrendering things to you and our thought life. We pray that we could truly apply these things that make the difference between victory and defeat in our lives.

We lay this at your feet and pray you speak powerfully in Jesus' name. Amen.

Before we get into Isaiah 37 let's just do a quick review of chapter 36 because 37 is the continuation of the story that we started in chapter 36. The context here is the Assyrian Empire has been defeating one nation after another. And of course, this has been the threat hanging over Judah for many years now. The Northern Kingdom had already been defeated and taken captive by the Assyrian empire, so this was a real threat hanging over them.

A pressure like many of us have pressures in our lives, right? That just don't go away for a long time. Then sometimes there's that deliverance that comes. So we're going to talk about that today, why God allows these kinds of things in our lives. Because, of course, these were God's chosen people, the southern kingdom of Judah.

The Messiah would come through this nation. So God's preserving them for a purpose. God's working with them for a purpose. And so why would he allow these kinds of pressures to come upon them? Just like, in our life, we're his chosen. Why does he allow these hard things in our life?

We see now in chapter 36, the Assyrian army, it's not a threat anymore. Now they're literally at the border with a great army, it says, ready to come and attack Jerusalem. And they'd already taken many of the cities in Judah. And so the main city where King Hezekiah and the leaders are, they're kind of trying to protect themselves in the city of Jerusalem, and this army now has gathered at the border.

What Assyria wants to do, rather than just attack with loss of life on both sides, they're trying to negotiate a surrender. They're sending the leaders of the Assyrian Army, and the leaders of Judah are meeting together, and basically the

Assyrian leadership is throwing threats and confusion at the leaders of Judah trying to get them to give up.

You know why? Basically saying, why would you rebel against me? The king of Assyria saying, why would you trust in other nations to come and help you? It's not going to help you. We're too powerful. We've conquered every other nation. It's not reasonable for you to even rebel. You ought to just give up.

So not only was the king discouraging them from trusting other nations like Egypt, they were directly saying don't even trust the Lord. The Lord God Almighty can't even help you. We're more powerful and really saying blasphemous things against the Lord.

There was a lot of confusion they're trying to throw at the leadership of Judah. Then they were also just mocking Hezekiah's army, their weakness. It was almost like they were just throwing everything they could to see what would stick. Throwing everything at them and trying to find a way to get them to give up.

They were threatening; they prolonged the siege against the city. On the more positive side they would say, look, just give up and you'll be able to eat your own produce from your farms and you'll be blessed instead of us starving you out.

And then we're going to take you off to a land flowing with milk and honey. It's like the false promise. You know, it's going to be fine, you know, we're just going to take your homes away, take you to another country, trying to put a positive spin on it. But they're like, no. Actually what the leaders did when they heard all of these threats, it says they held their peace.

They didn't even answer the Assyrians which Hezekiah, the King of Judah, had directed them to do. Don't even answer them. Just go hear what they have to say. So of course there are a lot of lessons in that chapter about how the enemy attacks us, right? He tries to throw everything he can at us to get us to try to give up, to get us off track from following the Lord.

We have to be wise enough to be seeing those lies. Of course it's in our thought life, right? He comes with those fiery darts of lies to try to discourage us or make false promises. Candy coated sin, right? He's good at doing that where you think, oh, that sin is going to be great, and you find out, no, it's going to destroy you.

So now coming out of chapter 36 and Hezekiah getting this message from his leadership, so let's pick up in verse 1 of chapter 37.

“And so it was when King Hezekiah heard it that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sack cloth and went into the house of the Lord.” So here we see a very important principle of Hezekiah, humbling himself and looking to the Lord.

Now notice he didn't call for a meeting of all the military leaders, guys, what are we going to do, or you know, try to call Egypt to come and help them. No, he did the right thing. And as you study through the scriptures, you see King Hezekiah, for the most part, was one of the good kings, a God-fearing man.

Here we see he reacted correctly and if we want to learn to interact with the Lord, we have to learn these principles of humility and faith. And of course, as we've gone through Isaiah, we keep seeing this subject come up again and again - humility and God's speaking against pride.

A lot of times we read these stories and we're pointing at the character in the Bible, 'Oh, what a fool, what a proud person.' And it's like God's saying, look at the pride in your heart. That's what I'm interested in changing. Often we can be blinded to our own pride where it's trusting in ourselves, trusting in our own abilities, looking down on others.

That would be a symbol of pride. And so, it can be very subtle. I believe it's such an important place of walking with the Lord and having power with the Lord, this dealing with the pride in our lives, being humble, dependent on the Lord, and then faith. And that's exactly what we see in this passage.

He heard it. He didn't try to answer it. He just tore his clothes, covered himself in sackcloth, which is like a symbol of mourning, a symbol of poverty. You know you think of someone dressed in sackcloth, they're in poverty and that reminds me of the sermon that Jesus gave. Basically it's his first sermon we see in the first book of the New Testament, Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount.

He starts that sermon out saying blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And I think that's very significant. Sometimes the first words that the Lord says in the first sermon, in the first book, he's trying to make a point. He's saying this is really important. I want to get this out there, right up front.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And then the next verse, blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. So you see both of those - your poor, your mourning, blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

You notice they are all positions of humility, of need. Basically what Jesus is saying is if you're the kind of person who sees and understands your own need, your spiritual need, the whole kingdom of heaven will open up to you. That's why he's so excited about it. So blessed are you. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Just that one verse, meditate on that. We call that the beatitudes, right? So I come before the Lord and I say, Lord, I have nothing in and of myself. When it says poor, they say in the original language it's like a picture of a person who's a street beggar. He has nothing.

He has nothing. And that's how we are spiritually before God. Of course, the opposite of that would be like the Pharisees who were so proud and self-righteous. And the Lord says, you know, unless you guys repent, you're shut off from the kingdom of heaven.

So we all have those Pharisaical tendencies and, as it were, self-righteousness. This is what the Lord wants to purge out of us. He wants to deliver us from pride and self-righteousness. And so humility, we see that, and then we also see faith. He went into the house of the Lord. That's equivalent to us coming to God in the name of Jesus.

There's something about going to the house of the Lord. I've been going through the Old Testament, the first 5 or 6 books recently. You see this emphasis where God says you have to come to the temple to worship me, or the tabernacle back then, right? It was in the first few books of the Bible.

It was the tabernacle, then later with David and Solomon they built the temple. But it's the same principle. It's a place where you come and meet God, where the Holy of Holies, where the spirit of God dwells, that only the priest could go into the Holy of Holies once a year, the high priest going once a year and he better go with blood.

And if he didn't do it right, he could be struck dead. This is a picture of a Holy God that no one can just cruise into his presence and say "Hey God, how's it going man?" No, it's like, you are a Holy God. I better come with blood and I better approach your presence with fear and worship and love and honor.

So when Hezekiah goes to the house of the Lord he certainly wasn't going into the Holy of Holies. One king tried that. Remember Uzziah? And he got in trouble. Big trouble, got struck with leprosy. But no, Hezekiah just went into the outer courts and did the right thing. This is where you come to present your sacrifice.

This is where you come to pray. Or if you're a Jew, in your prayer time, you would point toward Jerusalem to pray because you're thinking of the temple. Well, that's the equivalent for us. We come in the name of Jesus. We don't just come to God like, oh, I've been a good person God, here I am. No.

We must very much have the consciousness of the cross. That's why we say you pray in the name of Jesus. I'm coming because Jesus suffered and died on that cross and shed his blood. So I come with blood to the very presence of God. That's what makes me worthy and holy. I'm cleansed by that blood and I come to God in the name of Jesus.

So, as we're attacked, like they were in chapter 36 with lies and threats and fear and intimidation, we are to respond with humility and faith. Okay, let's go on to verse 2. This is a long chapter. I'm going to have to start moving a lot faster.

“Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sack cloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.”

Okay, so it's interesting in the last chapter he sent two of these guys to the king or the leadership of the Assyrians. He went out to their army. Hezekiah sent leaders to speak for him. And he had sent two of these guys, But now the third one was dropped and he sent the elders of the priests instead.

I thought that was kind of an interesting change where now we see Hezekiah getting even more spiritual. He goes, now I'm going to send the priests to Isaiah, as well as some of my leaders. And they're all covered now with sackcloth. Again, here's the humility, now going to Isaiah the prophet.

That would be equivalent to us coming to the word of God for help in time of need. Coming to a Christian brother or sister asking for prayer, because we're going to see that's literally what he's going to do. He's going to ask Isaiah to pray. He's going to ask for a word from the Lord. So it is important that we ask for prayer from others.

We cannot do this Christian life on our own, in our own strength. As we're attacked, as we're discouraged, we need to open the word of God and ask God to speak to us. So I see that's what King Hezekiah is doing here. So they come to Isaiah, the prophet, and again, not going to military leaders.

Not going to a foreign power to try to get help. They're going to the Lord. So King Hezekiah takes this very seriously. He takes prayer seriously. He takes the temple of the Lord seriously. He takes the word of God seriously. He takes Isaiah the prophet seriously. Not everybody, not every king did that in the Old Testament.

This is a sign of a good king and I wonder for us as Christians sometimes when the pressure comes, when the reality hits, do we really believe God is going to help us? Do we really go to the word of God for comfort and help?

It should be a daily thing. I just had felt yesterday some attacks coming upon me, and this morning I woke up, started reading Psalm 119 and God speaking to me, God strengthening me, God feeding me. I'm amazed how God consistently does that. Well, that's what Hezekiah is doing, and this idea of going to the Lord for a word for encouragement is very important.

I like what Hezekiah is doing here. He's basically wanting to hear from God. It's interesting that in my life I've had times when God has spoken to me through his word. And a lot of times it's when there's a real big decision that you have to make.

My wife has always been like this. I'll tell her, "Hey, I think God's calling us to do this or I think we should go in this direction" and she'll say, "Well, do you have a scripture?" And I'd be like, "well no, I just feel like the Lord's speaking to me." "Well, come back to me when you have a scripture."

I remember when the Lord, back in 2004, called us to plant this church. It's a long story, but I'd been coming to my wife and saying, "I feel like God's calling us to do this and every day it gets stronger." And again, she said, "Well, you got a scripture?"

So I said, okay Lord, I need a scripture. And I'm not kidding you, I opened my Bible and my eyes fell on this verse in Acts 5:20. I said, Lord, am I supposed to start a church? Am I supposed to be a pastor? And this just jumped out at me. It says 'Go stand in the temple courts and tell the people all about this new life, or all the words of this life' in the other version it says.

It was just like the Lord said, yeah, go stand in the temple. Tell the people the words of this life. I remember another instance when I'm looking for a scripture and we had been praying about my elderly mother coming and living with us. She lived out in California at the time. I think I was out there for a pastors' conference. I was staying with her in the evenings and hanging out with her. We could tell she was at the beginning stages of Alzheimer's, that she just could not live alone anymore.

I have three other siblings. So we were all trying to decide what to do. I was sensing that I think she's to come and live with us which is obviously a big decision. I remember praying all that week. Lord, are we supposed to do this?

I can't make this decision on my own. I remember the last day I was there. I was studying through the book of John in my daily reading, and I came that morning to the passage where John and Mary were standing at the cross and Jesus looks down and says, son, behold your mother; mother, behold your son.

From that time forward, the disciple took her into his home . And I was like, okay, that's it, you know? So it's the sense that God's calling you to do something, but also that scriptural confirmation. I think that's what Hezekiah was doing here. He is like, Lord, I need to hear from God. I need a scripture, I need a verse.

So he sends the leadership to Isaiah the prophet and then verse 3, *“And they said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah, ‘This day is a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the Lord your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, (the leader of the Assyrian army) whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the Lord your God has heard. Therefore, lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.”* So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

So you notice this phrase in verse 3 where he says this is a day of trouble. This idea of why would God allow trouble to His chosen people? Of course, God could have wiped out the Assyrian army at any time he wanted to, but he was allowing this pressure to come upon his people, and it made me think of 1 Peter 4:12 where it talks about trials. Last week we read about trials in James and he says here in verse 12, *“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”*

So Peter's saying, look it's kind of a normal thing for you as a Christian to have fiery trials and don't think it's strange. You're to actually rejoice to understand that as a Christian you're sharing Christ's sufferings and you're going to be very glad on that day of the Lord that you walk through the trial with a good attitude.

As Christians we should understand God uses trials to grow us up, right? And of course, that's what he was doing with this nation. He was preparing a remnant that would be ready to receive the Messiah many years later.

Then notice what he said. The children have come to birth, but there's no strength to bring them forth. Hezekiah is really saying you know we're in such a weak position. There is no way for us to go to the next level of defending ourselves from this great army. And again, often we feel that weakness, right?

As a Christian, we might think, well no, I'm supposed to be strong all the time. I'm supposed to think I can do all things through Christ. Yeah, that's true. But it's often in our weakness that we then quit trying to look within ourselves for strength. We're looking to the Lord and he's working that area of your life to humble your pride and letting you become weaker.

That's kind of what Paul talked about in 2 Corinthians 12:9. *“And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in weakness.”* So the Lord allowed that nation to come to this point of weakness. Often he allows us to come to a point of weakness that we might look to his grace and his power.

So verse 4 of Isaiah 37. *“It may be that the Lord your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the Lord your God has heard.”* And I thought what a great way to pray. What a great way to call upon the Lord to rebuke the words or to speak to someone.

Basically what he's saying is Lord, deal with this king who doesn't understand you, who's rebelling against you, God. I'm asking you to speak into his life. It just made me think about people that I'm praying for who are confused, who don't understand the ways of the Lord, to say, Lord will you speak into their lives?

Will you bring circumstances and people into their lives that they might hear from you and understand that you're the living God? Then notice the end of verse 4. Asking Isaiah, *“Therefore, lift up your prayer for the remnant that is*

left.” He's asking this man of God to pray for them. For the remnant or for those few righteous people who are left.

We've talked about the remnant as we've gone through Isaiah, where God is taking this large crowd of people and reducing them down. It's like a purification process and I think that's a symbol of what God's doing in our life. He's whittling us down to where we're righteous, we're holy, we're pure before him, but also asking for prayer from other people.

We see even Jesus did that. Remember in the garden he said can you guys pray with me for an hour? We see Paul, in his epistles, often asking people for prayer. It's kind of what we did this morning in our prayer meeting, didn't we. Somebody was asking for prayer and we got to really minister to her and pray for her, and that's a wise thing to do, to ask people to pray for you.

And then in verse 6 “And Isaiah said to them, *‘Thus you shall say to your master, ‘Thus says the Lord: Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria has blaspheme me.’*” So here comes this word right away from Isaiah, this word of encouragement. First of all, do not be afraid.

Isn't that always the word that comes to us from the Lord when we're striving, when we're under pressure? The temptation is to have fear. And the Lord says, do not fear, do not be afraid. I've heard this before where someone counted the number of times it says ‘Do not fear’ in the Bible or some form of that.

And they counted 365 times. So one for every day of the year, right? Do not fear. Do not fear. Do not fear. You can almost randomly open your Bible in Isaiah and see that jump out at you. God does not want us to fear, so we have to deal with the fear.

Philippians 4:6 says “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” He wants us to have peace. He doesn't want us to be anxious. He doesn't want us to be afraid. So that is of course the enemy's tactic to put fear upon us.

First thing Isaiah says is do not be afraid of the words which you have heard. And the enemy, he tries to come at us with words, with lies, with thoughts. We have to control our thought life. We talked about that last week out of

1 Corinthians. The first few chapters talk about walking in the spirit and having the mind of Christ.

We don't have to be dominated by these thoughts that come at us. We can just claim, no, I have the mind of Christ. So let's go on to verse 7. *“Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”* So notice that Isaiah is not saying a lot at this point.

Or the Lord is not saying a lot through Isaiah. He's saying, look, don't be afraid and I'm going to give you a little promise here. I'm going to send a spirit upon the king of Assyria and he's going to return to his own land, and then he's going to fall by the sword.

Now what's interesting is if you know the end of the story where one angel comes and wipes out 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night. There's no mention of that. So God's not giving the whole story to Hezekiah right now. He's just saying, look, I don't want you to fear and I want you to trust me. I'm going to take care of this, and I have my ways to take care of this. I'm going to give you part of my plan, not the whole plan.

And again, it speaks of us trusting the Lord and his word. God doesn't have to tell us everything he's going to do. We trust him. Then verse 8. *“Then the Rabshakeh returned.”* Now the Rabshakeh is again the leader of the army of Assyria.

“He returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia. He has come out to make war with you. So when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah.” So right away we see the fulfillment of what God had just promised Hezekiah through Isaiah. He's going to hear a rumor, he's going to be called back home and he'll be gone.

Then he's going to eventually be killed in his own nation. Verses 8 and 9 are telling us that the king returned because he heard this rumor of Ethiopia attacking them. Now in verses 10 through 13, we're seeing the king of Assyria, even though he has to leave Jerusalem, he's now going to make another attempt to discourage Hezekiah to give up.

I think this speaks to us of how in our battle of faith, we're going to the Lord, we hear something from the Lord and we think, oh good, I'm at peace. I don't

have fear. I'm trusting the Lord. We see maybe one answer to prayer, but then another attack comes maybe even stronger.

And that's what we're seeing where Hezekiah heard this word from Isaiah. He's encouraged, okay, I'm not going to fear. God's going to deal with this king. And now he gets this message from the king of Assyria. *“Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah King of Judah, saying: Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you.”*

Can you imagine that? Now he's accusing God of deceiving, that's not a good thing to do.

“Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you saying, ‘Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? 12Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? 13Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?’ ”

So he says again, throwing discouragement at Hezekiah: Hezekiah, be reasonable. You can't trust all this spiritual mumbo jumbo. Look at the reality. Look at history, my man. I have defeated every nation and their gods haven't been able to deliver them. Why do you think your God is special? So you can just see the attack, the pressure, and isn't that what the enemy does for us?

We hear from the Lord. We're locking into it. I'm trusting the Lord. And then you think, well, that's it, the enemy's not going to attack you again. It comes with another wave. It is another testing. Do not be surprised at the testing of your faith as though some strange thing were happening.

I think it's important we have that mentality of warfare, that, hey, we're soldiers. Of course we're going to get attacked. So we're going to be expecting it, we're going to be prepared for it. We're going to have our armor on, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, breastplate of righteousness. The enemy hits us one time. We deflect it and we're seeing victory. And then don't be surprised when you come around the next corner and here comes another attack.

So God wants us to grow up and to understand we are in a battle here. In this next section Hezekiah spreads this letter before the Lord and prays. Now it's interesting because after Hezekiah got this latest letter from the king of Assyria, more discouragement, more attacks come.

Hezekiah doesn't go to Isaiah. He goes right to the Lord. This is interesting. This is a man of God. It's okay to ask for prayer, but there's a time where you just have to go pray yourself. Verse 14 says *“And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.”*

Isn't that beautiful? Sometimes maybe that's a good idea. Just write out your problems on a piece of paper and lay it before the Lord. I love to do that in prayer. Okay, I've got 20 different things laid before the Lord, laid at his feet and trusting him that he sees it, he's going to deal with it.

I think that's a beautiful picture. He spreads it before the Lord. Lord, read this. You see what they're threatening me on, and then his prayer. I love it. That Hezekiah prayed to the Lord saying, Oh Lord of host, God of Israel, the one who dwells between the Cherubim.

And of course that would be a picture of heaven. The dwelling with the angelic host. The one who dwells between the Cherubim. You are God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. So just notice in Hezekiah's prayer the exaltation of the Lord. Isn't that a great way to pray?

Lord, you sit in the heavens; you're surrounded by mighty angels. Lord, you alone are King over all the kingdoms of the earth. In fact, you made heaven and earth. Such an important part of prayer that we see God for how mighty he is. See, that's what creates strong faith, is when you're meditating on the greatness of God.

You're reminding yourself how mighty God is. If he made the heavens and the earth, just spoke them into existence, of course he can handle our problems.

Verse 17 *“Incline your ear, oh Lord, and hear; open your eyes, oh Lord, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands - wood and stone. Therefore, they destroyed them. Now therefore, oh Lord our God, save us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you are the Lord, you alone.”*

So he is just pouring out his heart to the Lord. I love that in the Psalms, where you'll often see that - Lord, open your eyes, open your ears.

Well, obviously we know God can hear and see. It's just that sense within ourselves like it doesn't seem like you're seeing this situation, Lord. And I think God's okay with that. You're pouring your heart out to him and you're talking through with the Lord these thoughts that you're having, these attacks, these discouragements.

Like he says, Lord, he's right, none of the other gods have been able to deliver these nations that were defeated by Assyria. But those were false gods. You're the true God. I love how he's talking through what he's been attacked with. And then verse 21, *"Then Isaiah, the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah."*

So he's in the temple praying. Isaiah doesn't necessarily know that but the Lord has told Isaiah, "I heard Hezekiah's prayer. Send him this message." *"Isaiah, the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, this is the word which the Lord has spoken concerning him. The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you, laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind your back!'"*

So it's this picture now, this word going to the king of Assyria that the people of Judah would just laugh at him. That he's going to be defeated, and as the king of Assyria is fleeing from Jerusalem, the Jews are just going to shake their head and laugh.

Verse 23, *"Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the holy one of Israel. By your servants you have reproached the Lord and said",* Now here comes the pride part. God's seen the pride of the Assyrians. This is what the Assyrians were saying.

"By the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the heights of the mountains, to the limits of Lebanon; I will cut down its tall cedars and its choice cypress trees; I will enter its farthest height, to its fruitful forest. I have dug and drunk water, and with the soles of my feet I have dried up all the brooks of defense."

So God sees the pride of their heart, how they're saying look at what I've done. Look at how great our army is and the Lord is going to deal with their pride.

Verse 26, *"Did you not hear long ago how I made it?"* So this is now God's speaking about how he used Assyria to defeat these other nations as a form of judgment. He was just using them. *"Did you not hear long ago how I made it,*

from ancient times that I formed it? Now I have brought it to pass, that you should be for crushing fortified cities into heaps of ruins. Therefore their inhabitants had little power. They were dismayed and confounded. They were as the grass of the field and the green herb, as the grass on the housetops and grain blighted before it is grown.”

So God’s saying you're taking pride in what you've done. But it was actually me using you to defeat these other nations.

Verse 28, *“But I know your dwelling place, your going out and your coming in and your rage against me.”* So you never want to hear that from God. I know where you live is basically what God is saying.

“I know your dwelling place. Your going out and your coming in, and your rage against me because your rage against me and your tumult have 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.”

This is what the Assyrians used to do when they would take a nation captive. They weren't giving them a land of milk and honey, they would literally put fish hooks through their nose and pull them along or through their lips, very cruel, the way they treated other nations. God says I'm going to do that to you. I'm going to put a hook in your nose, bridle on your lips. I will turn you back.

You ever hear about these atheists, these books they've written against God and against the Bible? It's one thing to say I don't believe in God and you go do your own thing. It's another thing to actually write a book against the Bible and try to discourage people from believing. That’s scary for those people; pray for them because they're walking on thin ice over hell.

So the Lord seems pretty upset here and he's going to deal with these folks. Okay, verse 30. These next couple verses are an encouragement to Judah. He's now turning his attention from Assyria to Judah and saying, look, I'm going to bless you. You feel like you're under threat and you are under a threat and this pressure, but I am going to bless you.

“This shall be a sign to you: You shall eat this year such as grows of itself, and the second year what springs from the same; also in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

So whenever the Lord says he's going to do something in his zeal, he's got power, he's got zeal. Isn't it beautiful to pray and wait upon the Lord to perform something on your behalf?

He loves us. He wants to bless us. Yes, he does bring correction in our life and he's purging us and he's growing us up, but ultimately he wants to bring us to that place of blessing. It talks about in Hebrews that chastisement is not pleasant while it's happening, but it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. That's where God wants to bring us.

It's like our children, right? We don't want to be chastising them all the time, but we know they need it in order to come to a place of maturity. And so God's saying look, right now your crops have been under pressure because of the Assyrian Empire. You haven't been able to do your normal farming.

He says I'm still going to bless you. Agriculturally is basically what he's saying there. Then verse 33, *“Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return; and he shall not come into this city, says the Lord. For I will defend this city, to save it for my own sake and for my servant, David's sake.”*

So more encouragement from Isaiah to the leaders, the nation of Judah. Verse 36, *“Then the angel of the Lord went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses – all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. Now it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.”*

They say this was actually 20 years later after he came home, that his sons killed him and it fulfilled the promise of the Lord.

So great lesson about prayer, about humility, about faith, about trusting the Lord, doing spiritual warfare and seeing God come through for us. Which reflects the title of my message ‘Your Deliverance is coming.’ That's what we're all believing, for God to break through in our lives in different areas. So let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for this chapter that teaches us many lessons about spiritual warfare, about prayer, about faith, dealing with fear, dealing with the pressures of life. Lord, we want to be the kind of people that ask for prayer from others, that were in fellowship, that were going to your word to get a word from you.

Even a word from maybe a brother or sister of prophecy, of encouragement. Lord, all of these things build us up, prepare us for the battle, the next battle. As we're dealing with fear give us your peace. The peace and joy even in the midst of the trial. Then Lord, as we're trusting you that you're going to work and another attack comes, we just deal with that and call upon you even more. So, Lord I pray for each of us that we could grow up in these things and see your kingdom go forward.

Lord as we think about how spiritually weak we are, that's okay. That's by design that we're then to look to you for strength every day. We can't be proud of a righteous life because it's a gift from you and you want to remind us of that every day. You want to get all the glory and you deserve it.

And so Lord, as we now go to fellowship over lunch I pray you bless that time, bless the food to our bodies, Lord. And then for afterglow time that you would speak to us through your word, through whatever giftings you want to manifest, and we commit this day to you in Jesus' name. Amen.