

Series: Isaiah

Title: A Believer's Honest Confession

Text: Isaiah 38: 1-22

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God's grace humbles the believer. He makes us honest with God and with our brethren. Has God made you honest about yourself? I pray now God use this word to humble us and make us honest before God.

Isaiah 38: 1: In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

This was about the time the LORD had defended the city for his glory during or after the Assyrian's assault on Jerusalem.

Isaiah 38: 2: Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, 3: And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is good in thy sight*. And Hezekiah wept sore.

(Drop down to verse 9)

Isaiah 38: 9: The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:

This is one of those precious times in scripture when the man afflicted—himself—gives us the account of what was going on within him during a great trial and then he tells us what he learned.

Proposition: Hezekiah's account reminds us that God is a very present help in trouble. It shows us how able God is to deliver the needy no matter how big our trouble. But it also reminds us that God does so only when we have come to the end of ourselves and entrusted all into his hands.

Hezekiah is honest with us at what he was thinking and feeling. He tells us that first he was swept over with fears and even complaints. And he tells us what they were.

Isaiah 38: 10: I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.

- He describes this as "*cutting off my days*"
- *I am deprived of the residue of my years*
- Hezekiah is about 40 years old
- He has no son to take the throne
- His nation is suffering troubled times

A. Hezekiah had an attachment to this life that made him grieve at the thought of dying.

Remember, he has fresh in his mind all those things which were said of him by the awful messengers of king of Assyria—now if he dies it will appear to his enemies that God is against him. It sounds like Hezekiah was thinking like David did on one occasion:

Psalm 73: 1 : «A Psalm of Asaph.» Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart. 2: But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. 3: For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4: For *there are* no bands in their death: but their strength *is* firm.

Psalm 30: 8: I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. 9: What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

B. These earthly thoughts clouded his mind so that he could only think of seeing God in this life so that the consolation of being with God in glory was not on his mind at all at this time.

Isaiah 38: 11: I said, I shall not see the LORD, *even* the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

Notice, it was not hell that grieved him—but not being able to see God. He repeats the name of God twice, expressing how strong his desire to see God.

C. Thoughts of his own sin swept over him so that it appears he thought God was cutting him off in judgment.

Isaiah 38: 12: Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.

I have cut off my life.

- Here he ascribes the cause of his death to himself—
- For this he says, God will cut me off, thou wilt make an end of me.

Isaiah 38: 13: I reckoned till morning, *that*, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.

He reckoned he might live it until the morning but then the LORD would break his bones like a lion and make an end of him.

D. He was so burdened at these thought that he could not look up to God.

Isaiah 38: 14: Like a crane *or* a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail *with* looking upward:

While these thoughts were sweeping over Hezekiah wave upon wave, Isaiah was making his way out of his bedchamber, through the halls, out toward the middle court.

Here is where a change takes place with Hezekiah. Hezekiah comes to the end of himself. He is weighted down. This became his groaning within him.

Isaiah 38: 14...O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me. (Be surety for me!)

- What did he finally pray? “Lord, Thou will be done!”
- As Eli, “he said, *It is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.”
- As David said: Ps 39:9: I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.

O LORD, I am oppressed!—are you oppressed? Has your sin become heavy upon you? Do you see that there is no way of delivering yourself from the awful weight you are under? Here is the only way of salvation—O LORD, undertake for me! When Hezekiah had no hope anywhere else, he looked to the Lord God for grace! Broken, he poured out his soul to God. Oppressed, he sought a Surety – “Undertake.” “Be Surety for me!”

Now look back up to Isaiah 38: 4:

Isaiah 38: 4: Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, {2 Kings 20:4 says “Before Isaiah had made his way out into the middle court”} 5: Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. 6: And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.

Down to verse 21:

Isaiah 38: 21: For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover. 22: Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?}

Isaiah 38: 7: And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; 8: Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

WHAT SHOULD WE LEARN FROM HEZEKIAH? HEZEKIAH TELLS US HIMSELF.

Application #1: Believer, go softly in the fear of the LORD. Sojourn through this life with a loose grip on everything. Have “our loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand;” ready to depart. (Ex 12: 11). **Isaiah 38: 15: What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.**

Application #2: Learn from the trial so as to repent from all such bitterness of spirit. **I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.** Hezekiah says, I will remember my hastiness, my impatience, my inordinate affection for this world so that it shall be bitterness to me to think like that again. But I will acknowledge the goodness and kindness of God to me in spite of my thoughts.

- Job 40:4: Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.
- Job 9:15: Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.

Application #3: Thank the Lord for giving the trial. **Isaiah 38: 16: O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.** By these trials and deliverances, by these sinkings and risings, strippings and clothings, emptyings and fillings, "by these things men,"--spiritual men--"live." In proportion as we die to the world, to self, to sense, to nature, and to false religion, the life of God is strengthened in our conscience. At the first, Hezekiah's faith and hope were gone. But the flood of the trial always sweeps away only that which is not anchored. Rather than losing faith, his faith was secretly given new life.

Illustration: Stripping away the ivy from the oak tree at the back of grandmother's house. Didn't kill the oak, made it thrive. "By these things the child of God lives,"--the life of God is maintained and kept in the soul by the Holy Spirit through many trials.

Application #4: Here is what the Father teaches his children: in everlasting love God has put away your sins and will not allow one for whom he died to perish. Isaiah 38: 17: Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: When our peace becomes this life, anything but hope in our Savior, God is sure to make it bitter to us—but what grace! **but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. 18: For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. 19: The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day:** Before God discovers to us HIS peace, he makes everything else bitterness to our souls

- We must behold our sins, our unfaithfulness.
- We must be brought down to behold the pit of corruption where we live
- When God brings us to behold we have given him every reason to cut us off—God reveals his love-- **for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.**

God will not cut off his elect children because he cut off his only begotten Son in just judgment when he was made sin for us

- Isaiah 53:8: He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.
- Isaiah 53: 10: Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Job 33: 24: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

Application #5: Child of God, now that your Father has taught you, redeem the time, let us teach our children the grace of God in Christ. Isaiah 38: 19: The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

Don't wait on another to do so—the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

Applicaton #6: Praise the LORD in the house of the LORD the remainder of your days. Isaiah 38: 20: The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD. Constrained by the love of Christ we are dedicated to God's Truth, dedicated to God's Glory- "The Lord was ready to save me!" And dedicated to God's Worship. God does this in conversion, he continues to do this—He has saved us, is saving us and shall bring us home with him in glory all by his free and sovereign grace as a wise Father to his children! Has the Lord saved you? Confess Him. Consecrate Yourself to Him.

Amen!