

The Enemy's Devices

Isaiah 36:1 – 37:7

Halifax: 14 March 2010

Introduction

My dear friends,

- If you are to ever understand this world,
 - You must come to understand that there are two opposing kingdoms.
 - In the fall, the whole race of mankind surrendered to Satan, the god of this world.
 - But God, in His grace, promised to raise up the seed of the woman who would be in opposition to Satan.
 - and He promised that He would at last crush the serpent's head.
 - Although the seed of the woman must suffer many things,
 - God promises that the Kingdom's of this world will become the kingdom of His Christ.
 - Through Jesus Christ, He will bring forth a righteous kingdom out of the ruins of this fallen world,
 - and will bring to destruction Satan and all who are in league with Him, casting them into the Lake of Fire forever.
 - Jesus Christ will reign until God has put all things under His feet and then He will bring us to the Father where we who are redeemed will live forever in glorious fellowship and communion with Him!

But as long as we are in this world,

- Satan continues with unrelenting effort to oppose Christ and His kingdom.
 - He gathers the nations together against the LORD and against His anointed.
 - He is armed with malice and craftiness,
 - and he uses every ploy to discourage anyone who would attempt to follow Jesus Christ.
 - In 2 Corinthians 2:11, the Apostle Paul mentions that we are not ignorant of his devices.

But I wonder if that is always as true for us as it ought to be?

- It is very important for you understand the devices of the wicked one as he tries to claw you back into the kingdom of darkness and rebellion.
 - It is important for you to understand how he operates lest you be taken in by his schemes.
 - It is important for you to learn find comfort in God's promises because Satan's goal is to get you to doubt God's promises so that you will turn away from Him.

- In Isaiah 36 & 37, we have a historical account of what happened in the day that Sennacherib came against Jerusalem...
- And this account is very instructive to us because it shows us how the enemy tries to turn us away from our faith.
- We are given an example for instruction of his devices so that we will understand and not be easily taken in.
- And we are shown how Hezekiah and those who were with him in God's kingdom responded to the enemy so that they did not lose hope.

So today we will look first at the enemy's devices, and then we will look at God's remedy so that we may learn how to retain our hope when the enemy attacks.

- So let us look first at...

I. Our enemy's devices.

- We will look at five devices that he employs...

A. First, see how he plays upon our discouragement to lead us to despair.

- He loves to attack us when we are already discouraged in the hope that he can drive us to utter despair.
- 1. Look at the discouraging situation that the Rabshakeh makes use of when he comes to Jerusalem with the intention of bringing them to despair in God.
 - a. Verse 1 tells us that Sennacherib has come against the fortified cities of Judah,
 - and not just come against them, but that he has taken them!
 - It is the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, it is the year 701 BC.
 - and according to Sennacherib's own reports,
 - he had taken 46 fortified cities of Judah!
 - And not only that, but he had already defeated Egypt in a battle and had conquered Philistia whom Egypt was supposed to protect.
 - Egypt's help had already proven to be worthless...
 - Israel, Tyre, and Syria had all been taken by this time.
 - For all intents and purposes, only Jerusalem remained in opposition against him in southern Palestine,
 - and they were by no means the strongest among the cities of that region!
 - And now he was moving against the cities of Judah with great ease.
 - In his own journal, Sennacherib boasted that he had Hezekiah now like a bird in a cage.

- b. How discouraging this must have been for the people of God!
 - It is not a whole lot unlike it is in Canada today for us as believers.
 - Look around in our city and what do you see?
 - You see once great churches that have fallen to the enemy... one right after another!
 - We see churches where Jesus Christ is no longer presented as the only hope salvation because they have been overcome by the enemy.
 - These churches do not believe the Bible to be God's holy Word...
 - They do not believe that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation...
 - They do not believe that He turned away the wrath of the Father by offering Himself on the cross for our sins, for they deny that God has any such wrath against sin.
 - All they are left with is a bit of moralism and do-good-ism, and even that is rapidly decaying.
2. It is in these discouraging circumstances that the enemy sends his representatives to discourage us and drive us to despair...
- a. The enemy, the king of Assyria in this case,
 - sends the Rabshakeh, his tartan (Rabshakeh is a position of title), to bring threats designed to discourage and bring God's servants to despair.
 - He meets the representatives of God's kingdom near to the city walls of Jerusalem, by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the fullers field where Ahaz had met with Isaiah years before and refused to look to the Lord.
 - Rabshakeh meets with them in order to call them away from their trust in the Lord.
 - His purpose is to cast doubt upon their faith...
 - "Hey dudes, **what** are you trusting in that you should try to resist the great king of Assyria?"
 - Look at verse 4 & 5:
 - Isa 36:4-5: Then *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: What confidence is this in which you trust? I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but *they are* mere words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me?'"
 - Whatever are you thinking that you would try to resist the King of Assyria?
 - b. And then he systematically tells them how worthless their resources are...

- 1) He starts with Egypt which represents the things we have wrongly looked to for our security as God's people...
 - Isa 36:6: "Look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him."
 - a) You will remember how Hezekiah had wrongly paid tribute to Egypt because of the Assyrian threat...
 - and Isaiah had warned him that he would only bring trouble upon the people of Judah if he did this...
 - But he did it anyway and now that trouble was upon him.
 - Forty-six cities of Judah had fallen.
 - The hard lesson had been taught that there was no safety in Egypt.
 - It is so sad to see people ignore the promises and warnings of God and end up going from one mess to another.
 - Egypt was now a broken reed that could not be relied on at all.
 - b) What a good thing it is when people finally learn this...
 - When you realise that you have been relying on worthless things, it is truly the mercy of God that has shown you this...
 - but it is still discouraging because your source of hope is gone.
 - And the enemy quickly points out the things you had trusted in to discourage you.
 - For example, a church that relied on their wealth instead of the gospel to draw men to Christ is brought to failure and their wealth is taken away...
 - And Satan comes and says,
 - "You see how the church has fallen!
 - She used to be rich and successful, but now she is poor and failed."
 - And it is discouraging to us because it is true,
 - And the enemy tries to make us think that we have nothing better to trust in than what we had been trusting in.
 - In other words, he plays upon our weak faith that was the cause of our turning to worthless things in the first place.

- c) In verse 8, the Rabshakeh points out that if it is horses they want, for that is what they trusted Egypt to provide,
 - he, the King of Assyria, could easily give them a couple thousand of those...
 - but even if they had them, would they even have enough trained men to ride them...
 - and how could they possibly expect to repel even the least captain of the great king of Assyria?

TRANS> Thus the enemy tries to discourage you in your own resources.

- But then he takes an even deeper plunge with his sword of discouragement...

2) He tries to persuade you that you have no reason to trust the LORD.

a) You notice that he refers to the LORD second because Egypt would surely be the more obvious source of help!

- Don't you see this all the time?
 - When the enemy is trying to discourage you from serving the Lord, he says,
 - "What are you leaning on?"
 - And he throws up a suggestion of something the you yourself have wrongly trusted in as a plausible source of trust...
 - and then says,
 - "You don't mean... surely you are not... you don't mean to tell me that you are relying on God, do you?"

b) And look at what his argument is at this point in the conversation...

- Essentially,
 - "You have offended the LORD, how could you rely on Him?"
- And then raises what had no doubt been a great point of controversy...
 - Hezekiah had been a reformer and he had taken down the high places where God was wrongly worshipped and had returned worship to Jerusalem.
 - God had commanded that all sacrifices should be offered at the altar in Jerusalem, but this had rarely been obeyed by His people.

- Hezekiah was one of only two kings that removed worship in the high places.
 - The other was Josiah.
 - The LORD points out that this was a failing even of otherwise faithful kings... that they had allowed worship at the high places to continue.
- But you know how the enemy will turn even obedience and proper reformation against you!
- Do you really think it was right for you to that?
 - Do you really think you ought to obey the Sabbath?
 - Do you really think you should have left that church?
 - When Hezekiah took down these places of worship, there were many who would have accused him of wrong doing!
 - He was destroying the places where God was worshipped!
 - Reformers are always attacked in this way, even for their obedience.
- Some people speak against our congregation because we sing psalms and don't use musical instruments.
- They call us legalistic because of this—
 - They call us unloving and proud—
 - This is the enemy trying to tell us that God is not with us because we have sought to reform the worship of God.
 - You can be sure that there were those in Judah who had made such statements against Hezekiah...
 - Worship of Jehovah at the high places had been going on for centuries! What did he think he was doing?
- And now the Rabshakeh picks up on this and tries to discourage Hezekiah and the people of Judah...
- You legalists!
 - God is not going to be with you!
 - You have destroyed His places of worship!
- c) And look what he goes on to say in verse 10 to bolster his argument even more that God is surely not going to help them.
- Isa 36:10: Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'"

- Man, this guy had done his homework!
 - He seems to know that Isaiah had told them that the LORD Himself was sending the king of Assyria against them because of their rebellion!
 - Remember back in Isaiah 10:
 - The LORD called Assyria “the rod in my hand” and he told Judah that He was going to beat them with this rod.
 - In Isaiah 10:6, He says:
 - Isa 10:6: I will send him against an ungodly nation, And against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, To seize the spoil, to take the prey, And to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
 - and that was exactly what was being done.
 - So the King of Assyria, knowing this, says,
 - “The LORD is not going to help you! He is the one who sent me to punish you! I am here by His orders.”
 - The enemy has good theology!
 - The messenger of Satan sent to buffet them knew that he had been sent by God.
- The statement had truth in it and that is what made it so potent to discourage...
 - But there was much more to the story!
 - It was true that God was chastening Judah by the hand of Assyria, but He had also promised that he would not allow them to enter Jerusalem.
 - Do you remember what the LORD had sworn in Isa 14:24ff?
 - Isa 14:24-27: The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand: That I will break the Assyrian in My land, And on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, And his burden removed from their shoulders. This *is* the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, And this *is* the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. For the LORD of hosts has purposed, And who will annul *it*? His hand *is* stretched out, And who will turn it back?"
- Do not let Satan use partial truth to discourage you.
 - God may indeed be chastening you, but that does not mean He intends to destroy you dear child of God!
 - He chastens you in order that He might restore you!

TRANS> So you see how the enemy comes to discourage you when you are being chastened...

- He uses every ploy at his disposal to drive you despair.
 - Be aware of his tactics and do not be taken by surprise!
 - As we now move on to look at his other ploys, you will see that they are closely related to this first ploy of discouragement.
 - They are built on the foundation of discouragement.

B. Second, see how he uses fear to paralyse us.

1. The enemy makes his message very plain so that all will understand.

a. The representatives of God's people rightly try to protect the weak from the enemy's attacks.

- They ask him not to speak to them in the language that the common people can understand.
 - They want to protect them from unnecessary discouragement at this time.
- But the Rabshakeh has no mercy in him...
 - He is like the Amalekites who attack the women and children at the back of line!
 - He targets the weak!
 - Their request, rather than causing him to behave as a gentlemen, rather causes him to turn directly to address the people...
 - You see in verse 13 how he raises his voice and speaks directly to them.

b. And look at verse 12 where he tells the people that they will be the one who will suffer if they do not give in to Him:

- Isa 36:12: But the Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"
- He is referring to awful effects of the siege of Jerusalem that in his mind will surely come when they become so desperate for water that they will be forced to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine—
 - That is what the passage literally declares.
 - The translators have softened it up a little, but that is what his man is telling them...

- He is showing them how dreadful their condition will be if they continue to submit to the LORD.

TRANS> He offers them an alternative which we will look at in a moment, but first,

2. Consider how our enemy uses fear in this way!

a. All through the history of the church, believers have been tortured and persecuted in all sorts of ways...

- And often, when the persecution comes on, they fare better than they do when it is only threatened.
- We are in a time in our nation when there is a threat of persecution against us, but we must not let fear and intimidation move us away from our devotion to Jesus Christ.

b. Perhaps the most dangerous response is when we continue to follow Christ, but just modify the truth a little to avoid trouble.

- I do not mean by this that we should be deliberately offensive.
 - We are not to strive, but to be gentle and gracious to all men...
 - But we must never adjust the truth because of fear or intimidation, for as soon as we do that, we start to move away from the LORD and to destroy our communion with Him.
- Martin Luther pointed out that if we give way on the points that our particular society is most offended by and are true to everything else,
 - we have in fact denied our Lord!
 - Jesus might easily have avoided the cross if He lightened up a little on the scribes and Pharisees.
 - In our day, we might be tempted to soften what the Bible says about homosexuality or fornication or about Christ being the only way of salvation because we fear persecution.
 - But we must rather continue in the truth.

C. Third, see how the enemy attempts to sow discord among us.

1. All through this account, there is an effort to create division among the people.

a. We have already seen how, in verse 7, the Rabshakeh speaks about how Hezekiah had torn down the altars... as a bad thing.

- He surely brought this up to bring about doubt on a controversial point,
 - but you can be sure that he also brought it up because it was a sore spot for many...
 - They did not agree with what Hezekiah had done, and the enemy wanted to play on that disagreement to sow discord.

- The enemy will do this.
 - We have to be very careful that we obey the Lord right down the details,
 - but as we do, we must also be careful that we do not allow differences about the details to divide the church.
 - The prophets spoke against worship at the high places, but they did not regard those who did this as outside the kingdom of God.
 - They did not cut them off and treat them as unbelievers.

TRANS> Besides the mention of the high places,

- b. Rabshakeh also directly addresses the people, warning them not to allow Hezekiah to deceive them.
 - He tries to make them think that Hezekiah is keeping them from what is best for them...
 - the very same ploy the enemy used in the garden of Eden regarding the forbidden fruit.
 - “Hath God said that you may not eat from any of the trees???”
 - In this way, he hopes to raise up a company of dissenters who will object to Hezekiah’s policy and rebel against it.
 - Paul had to struggle with the Corinthians doubt of his leadership and care for them because the enemy had spread rumours about him.
 - The enemy had taken the fact that Paul had had to change his plans about visiting them to use it against him and stir up dissention.
2. This ploy of sowing discord among God’s people is one of the most successful the enemy employs.
 - a. If he can get you to become suspicious of the elders, and can raise up some grumblers in the church,
 - He can destroy the work of the Spirit in the congregation.
 - He works from both ends—
 - He tries to make the elders do obnoxious things so the people will have reason to be offended...
 - And he tries to make the people offended even when they have no good reason for it.
 - And of course he tries to make a big deal out of every little thing...
 - It is amazing to see what little things will divide a church!

- We must pray that the LORD will preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,
 - We must pray for the elders and for the people...
 - And we must do all that we can on our part to preserve unity by squelching gossip and murmuring as soon as it begins...
 - by following the Bible's way and taking the one who gossips to talk to the one they have gossiped about to work through the problem...
 - And also by squelching our own murmurings when they first arise in our hearts before they turn into a root of bitterness that defiles many persons.

b. The people do very well in this case with the Rabshakeh...

- Even though some of them might not have agreed with Hezekiah, they all keep silent and do not raise their objection.
 - They realise that it is their leader's responsibility to decide what to do in this difficult circumstance.
 - Clearly, God's Spirit was working among them at this time because God had purposed to deliver them.

D. Fourth, see how the enemy uses enticement to lead us away from service to Christ.

1. The Rabshakeh, having painted the ugly picture of the siege to put fear in the people's hearts,

- presents to them an alternative in verses 16-17:
 - Isa 36:16-17: "Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me *by a* present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards."
- He does not attempt to hide from them the Assyrian policy of deportation,
 - but he promises them that if they will submit to his terms,
 - they will be able to continue normal life in Palestine for a while, (instead of experiencing a siege and war)
 - and then will be able to continue the same normal life in the land to which he will take them...
 - a life of ease and comfort and prosperity in a new kingdom.

2. This is one of Satan's favourite ploys for sure!

- a. Did he not use this with our Lord Jesus Christ when he called Him to simply bow down and worship him in exchange for the kingdoms of the world?

- It was a promise of prosperity and ease without having to go to the cross!
 - Praise be to our LORD Jesus, He did not give in to it.
 - b. But how many, like Demos, have forsaken Christ's kingdom because of the love of this temptation?
 - How many have started out in the kingdom of God with enthusiasm only at last to be choked out by the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches?
 - How many have started out with a faithful testimony and then softened it to avoid the strife and the conflict?
 - Examine yourself to be sure that you have not laid down the sword when the LORD has called you to take it up for Him!
 - As the poet said,
 - Shall I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease,
 - While others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?
 - c. Brothers and sisters, Jesus tells us that we must be prepared to suffer for Him!
 - Do not expect a life of ease if you want to be His disciple.
 - You must be ready to bear reproach for His name!
 - You must expect to have people speak ill of you.
 - Just see that it is not because of your wrong, but because of your right doing.
 - Satan will constantly attempt to present you with what you are missing in this world if you serve the LORD and what you might have if you will yield to him...
 - How much more success you might have with a little deception in the name of good business...
 - How much pleasure you will have if you might just play around the edges of that affair...just a little flirtation perhaps...
 - How much better off you will be if you give way to the pressure that is coming from your family—you can still serve the Lord—just turn down the zeal a little.
- E. Fifth, see how the enemy resorts to blasphemy to make us think Christ is worthless.
1. In verses 18-20 he dares to compare the living God to the idols of the nations!
 - He says:
 - Isa 36:18-20: *Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand?

Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?

- This is just flat out blasphemy!
 - Before he had told them God would not be disposed to help them because he was displeased with them...
 - but now He speaks directly against God so as to say that He will not be *able* to help them.
 - He suggests that if all the other gods have failed, Jehovah will also fail!
2. I am sure you have heard this sort of thing before as a Christian.
- a. The enemy is constantly trying to break down the radical distinction that there is between the one true God and all the false gods.
 - You will hear things like,
 - “All religions are basically the same.”
 - “There is really no difference in what we believe.”
 - b. But as we saw when we studied the first commandment recently,
 - God’s first commandment is, “you shall have no other God’s before me.”
 - The difference between the true God and all other gods is that the true God is the Father of Jesus Christ who came to redeem us.
 - If we do not know God as revealed in Christ, we do not know Him at all.
 - He is a holy God and there is no way for us to know Him and to be brought into His favour but through Christ crucified.
 - If we know of some god who receives us apart from such measures, we know only a false god who cannot save us.
3. In blaspheming God like this, the Rabshakeh makes a fatal mistake...
- He might have spoken against the people and told them that God was not pleased with them...
 - and he might have pointed out how weak their army was and how impotent Egypt was to assist them...
 - He might even have threatened them with all the trouble that would come to them and what ease they would have if they would submit,
 - but now He has deigned to speak against the One true God and to question His ability to deliver His people!
 - This is blasphemy!
 - This is a step too far!
 - He might as well have asked Jehovah to destroy him!

TRANS> And now I want to show you how the people responded to the enemy's devices.

- There is a wonderful example here for us to follow.
 - We will do well to learn from them.
 - So here is...

II. The remedy against our enemy's devices.

A. First, you see in verse 21 that they submitted to Hezekiah, their rightful king.

1. Hezekiah had wisely instructed the people and the three ambassadors not to answer the Rabshakeh a word.

- There are times when it is best not to answer a fool according to his folly.
 - Eve debated with Satan in paradise and fell...
 - Jesus refused to debate him, but rather resisted Him with God's word and stood when facing the pains of Hell.
 - Instead of contending that Satan could not give him the kingdoms of the world,
 - He simply quoted the command of God that we are to worship the LORD and Him only.
 - Here the people refuse to quarrel with the enemy or argue with him.

2. In this way, they submit to their lawful authority.

- God had put Hezekiah over them and Hezekiah had told what to do in this matter for which he had legitimate authority.
 - Even though they may not have agreed with all that Hezekiah had done, for example, in taking down the high places,
 - they submit to him and keep their peace.
- Sometimes you will see a Christian woman take a shot at her husband when the enemy comes and points out an area about she disagrees with her husband...
 - or a child agree with the neighbour kids that their parents have been unreasonable...
 - or a daughter resist her father's counsel about relationships with a man...
 - or a church member agree with an adversary that their elders are wrong about this or that.
- If there is disagreement, let them speak to those in authority.
 - To agree with the enemy is to allow discord to be sown in the body and to bring trouble to yourself and to others!

- We may have our disagreements with one another, but we need to take these out into the public square.
- The people in Isaiah 36 were smart enough not to do this.

B. Secondly, you see that they humbled themselves before the LORD.

1. In verse 22, you see that they tore their clothes...

- This appears to have been for two reasons—
 - We will look at the first reason now and at the second reason later...
 - The first reason is because they realised that they were being chastened by the LORD and so humbled themselves before Him in this way that they might find mercy.
 - This is what the people of Nineveh did when Jonah brought God's pronouncement of destruction upon them.
 - We should also humble ourselves before God when we realise that we are being chastened by Him.
 - In this we, we acknowledge that we are in His hands—
 - that our calamities are not upon us because of the strength of the enemy, but because it has been God's will to chasten us or perhaps to test us.
 - We must humble ourselves before Him as the one who ultimately has sent our affliction and who alone can deliver us from it.
 - It is very important when the enemy assaults to realise that you are not really in the enemy's hand at last,
 - you are in God's hands.
 - Humble yourself before Him!

2. Hezekiah the King also humbles himself in the same way...

- In 37:1 we are told:
 - Isa 37:1: "And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it*, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD."
 - He realised that he was in God's hand and so he goes into God's house to pray—to meet with Him and to plead with Him...
- And look at his humble confession of dependence in verse 3:
 - Isa 37:3: "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.'
 - With these words He acknowledges that he has no strength to deliver the people...
 - He has been foolish to look to Egypt contrary to God's counsel...

- He mentions a particular concern as well that he has just now been making efforts at reformation...
- He has been attempting to bring reformation, and the children of reformation are ready to be born,
 - but he has no strength to bring them forth!
 - Oh that every minister and every elder and every parent and every soul would understand this!
 - You cannot bring forth life!
 - You cannot deliver a soul from the clutches of the enemy!
 - You cannot change the leopard's spots.
 - You cannot take a stony heart and turn it into a heart a flesh.
 - You cannot even do this in yourself, much less in others!
 - God alone must deliver His people!
- Hezekiah further acknowledges that this is not just a day of trouble,
 - but also a day of rebuke!
 - He and his people are being afflicted because of their sin and so are shut up to God's mercy alone as their only hope of deliverance.
 - They have trusted in foolish things and they have not sought the Lord.
 - It was the sin of Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, that stirred up the LORD to bring Assyria against them in the first place...
 - and Hezekiah had made matters worse in looking to Egypt for help.
 - It was because of his sin that these things have befallen the people now...
 - It is a day of rebuke!
 - In saying this, Hezekiah confesses that they have done wrong.

3. Oh my brothers and sisters,

- Let us learn to humble ourselves like this when the enemy threatens us and tries to discourage us.
- Let us see that we are in God's hands and let us humble ourselves before Him as the only one who can deliver us...
 - Did we not learn in Psalm 3 that we are to show him the distress that we are in and present it before Him?
 - Does Peter not tell us to cast all our care upon Him?
 - We cannot do anything about it—so let us give it to Him to do what He will—perhaps He will have mercy on us!

- But it greatly dishonours Him for us to keep our burdens to ourselves as if we had some hope of carrying them ourselves.
- And if we have sinned, let us also humble ourselves and confess our sins before Him that we might find His mercy.
 - Does He not promise to forgive us if we will confess our sins before Him?
 - Usually, the biggest problem is that we do not humble ourselves.
 - We are too proud to confess either our dependency or our sin.

TRANS> Just think about the benefits of casting your cares upon the LORD.

- The enemy can no longer discourage you once you have done this.
 - You have put yourself in God's hands and not the problem is His!

C. Thirdly, it is for you to take hope that the LORD will defend His name...

1. I mentioned to you before that the Rabshakeh made a fatal error when he blasphemed the LORD.

- If he wanted to do something to stir up the LORD against Him, it was surely to compare the LORD to the gods of the nations!
 - and to suggest that He would not be able to deliver from the hand of the Assyrian!
- I mentioned before that there were two reasons why Hezekiah and his officers put on the clothes of mourning,
 - The first reason was because they knew they were being chastened for their sins and wanted to humble themselves that they might have mercy...
 - The second reason was because they were grieved that Rabshakeh had blasphemed the name of the LORD.
 - They could not wear their honourable clothing when their God had been dishonoured by this vile Assyrian.
 - We should also be zealous for God's name my brothers and sisters!
 - We should care about the way that men speak of Him and take offence when He is not honoured!
 - Not that we always have to issue a rebuke to the one who blasphemes, but we need to mourn before our God and even do so publicly.

2. But Hezekiah and the others also take hope in this blasphemy of the Assyrian,

- because they know that God will want to defend His name and they are confident that He is able to do so.
 - When the enemy rages against the LORD whom we serve, we can be sure that vengeance belongs to the LORD and that He will defend His name.

- See what Hezekiah says in verse 4:
 - Isa 37:4: 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. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.”
- God will hear the blasphemy and God will deal with the blasphemer.
 - You do not need to fear or be dismayed.
 - Surely the time has come for the LORD to act!
 - Always know that the day of judgement will come and the LORD will deal with those who are in opposition against Him.
 - Keeping this before you will help you to keep your faith strong when the enemy rages the most against you.
 - There is an end and the end is in God’s hands.
 - He will take care of everything.
 - Encourage yourself, as Hezekiah did, by praying for God to defend His glorious name!

D. And fourthly and finally, you see how Hezekiah strengthens himself by going to God’s Word in the day of trouble.

1. He comes to Isaiah the prophet who speaks God’s word concerning this situation.
 - a. When Hezekiah was bent on obtaining help from Egypt, he had not been willing to listen to Isaiah...
 - But now he had nowhere to turn but to the Lord, so he comes to his word.
 - b. It is so much better when we are finally brought to this place...
 - If you have many afflictions, be glad for it... God uses them to refine your faith.
 - As long as you think Egypt can help you—or that you can deliver yourself,
 - You will only come to God’s word in a half-hearted manner if at all...
 - You will derive little comfort from the LORD has to say.
 - But once you have come to see that nothing matters but His salvation and mercy...
 - that you cannot make yourself secure and neither can Egypt or anybody else in this world...
 - Then you are in a position to hear and be blessed.
2. Look at the encouraging words of assurance from Isaiah:
 - Isaiah 37:5-7: So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said to them, “Thus shall you 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 have blasphemed Me. 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."'"

- God is going to deal with the Assyrian.
 - He will not allow this proud man to blaspheme His name!
 - Hezekiah and his people have nothing to fear now—God has spoken His sure word of prophecy.

- My brothers and sisters, you have a greater word of encouragement than this.
 - For we live in these days after the appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.
 - And we are assured by God's promise that in Him every last one of our enemies will be destroyed...
 - And that we shall be given an everlasting inheritance in His kingdom!
 - And that our enemy will not be able to take us out of His hand.
 - All who believe will inherit God's promise.
 - So put away your worry and your fear!
 - Even if you have sinned against God, repent, come to Him confessing your sins,
 - and you will have His sure mercies renewed.

 - Take the Word, believe the Word, and you will not be disappointed.
 - Let your enemies and your calamities drive you to the Word and you will obtain peace and assurance such as you never had before.
 - Let the enemies muster everything they have:
 - to discourage you,
 - to put fear in you,
 - to turn you against your brothers and sisters,
 - to entice you,
 - and to bring reproach on the name of your God...

 - In the end,
 - it will only serve to strengthen your faith and your assurance in your great God who will act for His name and for all that is associated with it.
 - Just see to that you are truly associated with His name in faith and you will never be disappointed.