

Isaiah 14 24-27

2 Kings 18 and 19 Sept 24

We are embellishing our text this morning with two other texts. Last week we looked at 2 Chronicles 32:1-23. This week we will focus on 2 Kings 18:17-22

2 Kings 18:17-22

¹⁷ Then the king of Assyria sent *the* Tartan, *the* Rabsaris, and *the* Rabshakeh from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they had come up, they went and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which *was* on the highway to the Fuller's Field. ¹⁸ And when they had called to the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them. ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ You speak of *having* plans and power for war; but *they are* mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? ²¹ Now 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. ²² But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' *is* it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?" '

So we have the enemy at the gates. The bribe Hezekiah sent was not effective. Fleshly methods in dealing with the devil's forces are never effective. Touch not, taste not, handle not does not work we are told in the New Testament. Nothing has really changed. If we are to have victory over the enemy, we must do it the way God says.

Hezekiah intended this conversation with the enemy to be a private conversation. But the devil always wants his lies distributed to those least able to discern the truth. Hezekiah sent Eliakim, who was likely his right hand man, a scribe and a recorder to deal with the enemy.

Now look at the message from the enemy. Very little ever changes with the devil's attacks.

First, Rabshakeh calls Sennacherib "**the great king**". Our enemy always overestimates his power. He always wants to create the impression that it is he who is in ultimate control. He wants us to think that we are at his mercy. He will never create the impression that he is really the lapdog of the King of Kings. He will roar like a lion, because his roar can frighten us. But his teeth cannot destroy us. His threats against us are bluffs. He cannot do us ultimate harm. I think of a

Mark Heard song that says, "Out in the eye of the storm the friends of God suffer no permanent harm."

Look at this attack on the things that Hezekiah is assuming to trust.

First- vs 20 The trust in human wisdom. The enemy is saying that if Hezekiah plans to have a human battle with superior human plans, he is wrong. He will not win. And in this case he is correct. We will never defeat the devil with fleshly strategies.

Second- vs 21 Trusting earthly alliances. Again, the enemy is correct. Judah will never defeat this enemy using political power. Our enemy is the **prince** of those powers. That would be like one sheep depending upon another sheep to overcome the shepherd. It is not going to work. And Hezekiah shouldn't have fallen for that in the first place.

Third- vs 22 Trusting in false gods. While the enemy refers to them as the Lord, it isn't the Lord at all. He is referring to all the idols that Hezekiah tore down. It is very likely this attack was trying to appeal to all those whose hearts went after those idols. He was probably trying to get some inner conflict going on. He wanted the idol worshippers in Judah's camp to cause discord because of their dissatisfaction. Hezekiah was right to tear down the false gods. He was pleasing to God. But the enemy wants to undermine that confidence in the people listening. He wants to confuse them about what the will of God really is and who God really is.

2 Kings 18:23-24

²³ Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses--if you are able on your part to put riders on them! ²⁴ How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?

Here is what the enemy is after. He wants our service. He wants our loyalty. He wants our commitment. He says, give a pledge to me. Give in to me because only I can give you what your flesh craves. He is shooting for our loyalty because that is what God deserves. And the enemy takes satisfaction in taking what is rightfully only God's.

Give a pledge. Promise to give him something so you can get what you desire. The devil is always happy to give you stuff. But it is never for your good. It is only to seduce you away from God. He will make all kinds of promises.

Consider your history. What have you hoped to gain by pursuing things apart from the Lord's will? Don't they always seem like good things, desirable things, things you must have, things you can't do without? Do you ever see the price tags visible? No they are hidden. They will come at a later date. That is the spiel in this text. Pledge to this evil force and you will get your protection, your

deliverance, your safety and avoid the enemy's wrath. That is what is stated. But it is mostly a lie.

Then look at the next ploy.

2 Kings 18:25

²⁵ Have I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.' "

One of the most dangerous lies that we will ever encounter is the lie that our God is against us. Our God does not want what is best for us. Our God only wants to destroy us. That was the lie the devil used with Eve to turn her. He said in

Genesis 3:5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

He was essentially saying don't you see it? God isn't for you. God doesn't love you. God doesn't intend good for you. He is holding out on you because it will mess up all his plans if you take the good things I am offering you.

We need to understand just how deadly of a lie this is. It is a foundational lie. If the devil can get us to believe **this one lie**, there won't be a single thing in our life that is done in faith. We cannot regard God as **a hard master** and **serve Him the way He wants served**. It can't be done. We may **serve** Him, but not in a way that **pleases** Him. And we are much more likely to rebel against a God like that than to serve Him. But in the end, it doesn't make any difference which we do. Because **we cannot be pleasing to God when God is not pleasing to us**.

What do you believe about God? Is He **for you** or **against you**? He may be against some of the things you do if you are disobedient. He may need to discipline you. But in your heart of hearts do you think God is coming to **you to destroy you** or to **show you kindness**? The answer to that question is very very important. The enemy wanted the Judeans confused about God. He wanted them to think they were wrong about God. He wanted them to think he represented God's interests. And again, it was all a lie. He was certainly doing God's will, but he was not representing God's interests.

2 Kings 18:26-30

²⁶ Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it*; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall." ²⁷ But *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "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?" ²⁸ Then *the* Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and spoke, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹ Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; ³⁰ nor let Hezekiah make

you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." '

Isn't it interesting that in the church we approach each other privately with correction if at all possible. We limit exposure. But our enemy does no such thing. His tools are gossip and slander, innuendo and media. He wants his lies and our faults spread as broadly as possible. He wants to use those who are not discerning to serve his purposes. He wants lies to create division inside the camp. We do not want to be the ones who serve his purposes.

Look at these blatant lies. Everything this messenger so confidently proclaims is an absolute and total lie. God is going to do exactly what Hezekiah is standing for. God is going to deliver them.

If you are a believer, there will be times in your life when you have to stand against very **blatant lies**, very **blatant attacks**. Your future will be told to you by people who are just repeating what the Father of Lies has given them to say. This will happen. And we need to follow Hezekiah's example. We cannot turn from the truth.

Just because someone confidently and blatantly affirms something they believe to be true, that does not make it so. It is just like the lies that Mr. Hawking and his like are saying now about the future of the world. He speaks his opinions confidently. And the people on the walls listening tend to believe what they are told by so called experts. But lies are lies. And believing them does not make them true. But our enemy's efforts are all directed toward getting us to believe them. He comes to us with so called experts telling us that the Bible is a lie, but what they are telling us is the truth. They call us fools for believing what God says. Nothing has changed.

2 Kings 18:31-32

³¹ 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; ³² 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, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die. But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us."

Hezekiah says trust God and He will take care of you because you are cherished child of His. Obey Him because He ultimately **wants** and **has in store** what is best for you. But that requires a great deal of trust. Because sometimes the road we take is anything but pleasant in the short run.

But our enemy offers a different course. Doesn't this speaker make it sound like the enemy will offer them a promised land? Look at the prosperity offered.

Nothing but happiness will come about by abandoning your God and what He wants for you.

And you know what would really be gained by following the enemy's advice? Bondage. Sheer bondage of sin. It is always this way. No matter what degree it is, the deal has never changed. **Sin is brutal. It is pleasurable, but oh the price it exacts from us.** For a Christian it will steal our peace, our joy, our confidence, our assurance. And it will just leave us with regret.

Isn't it interesting, here is the enemy again saying, if you will just do what I say you surely won't die. Does that sound familiar.

2 Kings 18:33-35

³³ Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴ Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? ³⁵ Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?' "

Oh the reasoning of the enemy looks so reasonable. But it is still based on subtle lies. The problem in this last statement is that none of these idols are really the true God. There is only one true God. And that changes the whole conversation. When the enemy argues with you, look deep for the wrong assumptions. That is where the argument is flawed. If all these other gods were really gods, then the reasoning would be good. But they are not gods at all. So the reasoning fails. But even with that being true, Assyria **was** a killing machine. And it had already captured Judah's sister in the north, Israel. So it would be easy to be misled.

2 Kings 18:36-37

³⁶ But the people held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." ³⁷ Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the* Rabshakeh.

You have to admire the people who held their peace. Sometimes that is the best you can hope for, for people who **don't know much to not say much.**

Now, what will Hezekiah do? Will he collapse? Will he go into a tizzy? Will he dope himself up? Will he run and hide?

2 Kings 19:1-4

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. ² Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 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. ⁴ It may be that the LORD your God will hear all 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.' "

What a tremendous example for us to follow. Hezekiah ran to God and to the people of God. Never can anything be done better when facing a crisis like this. We need to notice something here. Hezekiah did not take this personally. He knew that what he had heard was not really **a statement about Hezekiah**. It was ultimately a statement about **Hezekiah's God**. So his appeal to Isaiah is the hope that **God** will take what was said **personally** and do something about it.

Blasphemy is falsely ascribing to God something that He either did or did not do. Everything that the enemy said was blasphemy about God. He ascribed God attributes that He does not have and denied the attributes that God truly has. And he did it in a blatant fashion.

Hezekiah knew that when you obey God and speak for God, the backlash really isn't against you. It is against God. Christ told His disciples as much. He said if they hated me, they will hate you. And so they do. There is something nice about doing what the Lord says. We never have to take our critics personally. They are really angry at our Master, not at us.

Now think of what it would have been like to be in Hezekiah's seat. You talk about a gut wrenching test. What if he makes the wrong move? What if he misunderstood what God wanted? He could have thousands of people tortured and killed by his mistake. And if God didn't come through, they were all toast. They were putting everything they were on the line. They were trusting God in about the most testing environment one can come up with. They could not afford to be wrong.

This would not have escaped the king and his prophet as they called out to God. And realize too, all they had at this point was God. Nothing else would save them. They were in the pressure cooker of life. They were betting on the **person** and **promises of God** and if God did not come through for them, they would be lost. This is not an unusual position for God to put His people in. He doesn't hesitate to put His people into the position where all they have to trust in is Him. We often don't really grow in our faith until this happens. We don't **expect** His deliverance until we have been in a spot that **without His deliverance** we would be lost.

So if you are finding yourself in that spot, don't despair. It is very common for the people of God.

You can bet that Hezekiah and Isaiah were calling out to God with everything they were. If you are going to **speak** for God, you had better be ready to **stand** for God, to wait expectantly for God to do what He said He will do, just like Elijah.

2 Kings 19:5-9

⁵ So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 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 have blasphemed Me. 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." ' " ⁸ Then *the* Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. ⁹ And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "Look, he has come out to make war with you." So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, Look at how the words of God contrast with the words of the enemy. The enemy says you better be afraid. You better panic. You better fear. Isaiah says don't be afraid. Don't worry about what they are saying when they blaspheme God. They do not have the authority to represent God. And they will be dealt with for speaking wrongly of God.

Then Isaiah tells of Sennacherib's near history and ultimate death. The enemy **taunts us** with **the uncertainty** of the future. Our God **comforts us** with His **sovereign knowledge** of the same. It is so good to know we can rest in exactly what God says the outcome of all life will be. We may not know the future of our earthly enemies on earth. But we do know what **our ultimate destination** is no matter what happens to us now. So we can live and not be afraid.

Then when the enemy's servant returned to his master he found things just as Isaiah had prophesied. Now you would have thought that would have been the end. But no. It isn't.

The enemy may not be brilliant but he is persistent. He has seen that if he tells his lies often enough, if he roars often enough, he will always spook out some prey.

2 Kings 19:10-19

¹⁰ "Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: '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." ¹¹ Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? ¹² Have 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? ¹³ Where *is* the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?' " ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, *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. ¹⁶ Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. ¹⁷ Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD God, You alone."

This time the enemy writes a letter. And in it he directly attacks the trust that Hezekiah has in the one true God. Here is the enemy saying to Hezekiah, don't let your God deceive you. Here it is again. Just like in the garden of Eden, just like in our minds every day. The enemy, who is the **father of lies**, tells us not to trust the way the truth and the life because he is deceiving us. He is going to lead us into a disaster.

All the devil has in his arsenal are lies. That is all he has. And the only way he can topple us is for us to believe them. That is it. Those are his flaming darts. Everything we do is based on what we believe. So the battle is won and lost, not in what we do but ultimately in what we believe.

The lie from the enemy here is simple. Look at all the fallen. If everyone else has fallen, how will you not fall? He uses that reasoning all the time. That is why it is so effective when he can get a leader to sin. The enemy can whisper into everyone else's ears, if he is fallen you don't stand a chance. If the mighty have fallen, how can the weak stand? But it is a lie. If it bets against the ability of God to deliver His people, it is always a lie. Delivering people from evil is what God has always been good at, as long as there have been people. Because that is always what **He must** do. We sure can't or won't initiate it. He must.

Now Hezekiah had a letter written to him. What letter have you had written to you? Oh ours isn't likely to be so blatant. Ours tend to come in life circumstances.

How about a pink slip from an employer? Isn't that received like an enemy letter? Aren't we immediately tempted to think all is lost? How will I make it through this? All is lost. My life will fall apart. I will lose everything. I have no value. How about a doctor's report? How do we respond when we get a bad report, a life threatening report? How do we respond? Do we respond with despair? Do we act like we have just been undone, like our God cannot be trusted?

Aren't there events in our lives where we wonder, **what good has it done for me to follow God and obey God?** Aren't there events that undermine our faith in God so easily? We resort to fleshly reactions, fleshly anger, fleshly fears, fleshly panic? We despair. We act like there really is no God in heaven that has our back. Or if there is, we dislike what he is doing to us.

When we get our letter, we need to do what Hezekiah did. We need to **take it to God and to God's people.** We need to get His perspective before we respond. God has made some commands, not suggestions but commands. He says **do not fear.** Do not fret. Do not be dismayed. Do not worry. But give thanks. Obey. Trust. That is what Hezekiah did. And look what happened.

Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD God, You alone."

Notice too how Hezekiah prayed. If you want to know what it means to pray in Jesus name, this is it. "That everyone may know that you are God." When you pray according to the glory of God, you can rest assured that the Lord will guard His glory. He will do what it takes for His name to be glorified. So that is praying, "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." That is praying according to God's will. That is praying in Jesus's name.

Now, skipping ahead a little bit

2 Kings 19:32-37

³² "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. ³³ By the way that he came, By the same shall he return; And he shall not come into this city,' Says the LORD. ³⁴ 'For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.' "

Do you see that? Do you see the reason for why God did what He did? For His own sake and for His servant David's sake who God had made promises to. When we pray that God honors Himself and His promises, we can rest assured that **He will.** When we care about God's honor like it is the most important thing to us, we will pray the prayers that get answers. When what offends God offends us, we will pray smartly. Hezekiah got it right. And so did Isaiah.

And God **comforted Hezekiah** with the truth that countered the lies of the enemy. That is always where we find **the comfort of God.** In **the words of God.** In the promises of God.

³⁵ **And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses--all dead.**

³⁶ **So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home*, and remained at Nineveh. ³⁷ Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the**

temple 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.

I think it is worth noting that one angel killed 185,000 trained troops. And what enemy are **you** afraid of?

Now we look at this end and we have to say Wow. Wow.

This attack by God on an enemy of His people is probably only exceeded by the number of Pharaoh's men dead at the bottom of the Red Sea.

Can you imagine? Isaiah and Hezekiah **believed God** in the face of the tremendous pressure to relent. They risked not only their own lives but the lives of all their countrymen. If they were wrong it would have been awful. But they were **not wrong**. God came through very dramatically. And God did exactly what Isaiah had prophesied years earlier. But not before Isaiah had to **put his money where his mouth was**.

And something very unusual happened. Faithfulness was recognized and rewarded in this lifetime.

2 Chronicles 32:22-23

²² Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *others*, and guided them on every side. ²³ And many brought gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.

Don't count on that. It doesn't happen very often. Hezekiah actually received gifts due to his faithfulness. But notice the prophet isn't mentioned here. The prophets don't usually get many earthly proceeds for the work they do. I guess that is another example to follow. If you aren't doing it for the earthly rewards, when the rewards don't come it won't bother you.

I think it would be fitting, after getting a letter **from the devil to God's people** that we would end with a wonderful letter **from God to God's people**. As we read this, apply its principles to your life. It is a letter to us too.

Psalm 46:1-11

¹ God *is* our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; ³ *Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled, *Though* the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah ⁴ *There is* a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy *place* of the tabernacle of the Most High. ⁵ God *is* in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. ⁶ The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved;

He uttered His voice, the earth melted. ⁷ The LORD of hosts *is* with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah ⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth. ⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. ¹⁰ Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! ¹¹ The LORD of hosts *is* with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah