

Maranathan Fellowship 7-28-85

by David Ravenhill

This sermon teaches how to effectively resist the enemy's attacks and protect oneself spiritually by recognizing the enemy, cutting off the supply of life to the enemy, rebuilding the walls of spiritual protection, and watching for signs of spiritual attack.

Duration: 42:04

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 31:20

Topics: "Christian Life", "Courage in Adversity", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of spiritual vigilance and preparation in the face of adversity, drawing lessons from King Hezekiah's response to the Assyrian threat. Hezekiah's actions--recognizing the enemy, cutting off supplies to prevent the enemy's advantage, rebuilding defenses, and relying on God's promises--serve as a model for believers today. Ravenhill encourages the congregation to be proactive in their spiritual lives, to fortify their weaknesses, and to seek support from one another in prayer. He stresses that spiritual opposition often indicates effectiveness in one's faith journey, and that God responds to our efforts in faith and action. Ultimately, Ravenhill reminds us that with God on our side, we can face any challenge with courage and strength.

Transcript

David Ravenhill, a great man of God from New Zealand. I'll tell you, it didn't seem possible a year and a half since he was with us last, and we rejoice. God's kept him safe and God has kept him on the trail.

David Ravenhill. It's good to be back with you. I feel a little more at home this time than I did last time, because now you have a balcony.

Every Sunday morning my kids tell me, you never look up in the balcony. We have quite a large balcony in our church, and you get used to looking down. So forgive me if I fail.

The other thing the kids tell me, you can see your ball spot from up in the balcony, Dad. So there are advantages and disadvantages to having a balcony. I'm sorry I don't have a PhD to meet Brother Roundtree's sort of qualifications, but I've never been a post hole digger, and I don't don't plan on getting started.

My father has a saying, you have 32 degrees and still be frozen. So praise the Lord. Not many wise men according to the flesh, and God reached down, I thank God, into my life when I was not very good in school.

Got two brothers that are quite brilliant. My younger brother, my little brother I call him, he has a post hole digging certificate. My older brother is equally as bright, but challenged or challenged his sort of whole energies and everything else to to serve the Lord down there in South America.

Anyway, I wonder if you have your Bibles this morning, if you turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 31, and the latter part of the verse, verse 20, and then reading right through into chapter 32, down to verse 8. 2 Chronicles chapter 31, reading from verse 20. It's unfortunate that whoever put the chapter divisions in, didn't always know what they were doing. The thought begins in verse 20, and finishes in verse 8, at least according to the New American there.

Verse 20, and thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God. In every work which he began in the service of the house of the Lord, in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and prospered. And after these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah, and besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself.

And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, he decided with his officers and warriors to cut off the supply of water from the springs which were outside the city, and they helped him. And so many people assembled, and stopped up all the springs, and the stream which flowed through the region, saying, why should the king of Assyria come and find abundant water? And he took courage, and rebuilt all the wall that had been broken down, and erected towers in it, and built another wall outside, and strengthened the milt in the city of David, and made weapons and shields in great number. And he appointed military officers over the people, and gathered them to him in the square at the city gate, and spoke encouragingly to them, saying, Be strong and courageous.

Do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude which is with him. For the one with us is greater than the one with him. With him only is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles.

And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah. Once you do notice one thing here, it says that Hezekiah was prospering spiritually. It says in every work that he commenced, every service of the house of the Lord, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and prospered.

And then immediately after his spiritual prosperity, it says after these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib came and sought to invade Jerusalem. I would say unto you, it's a good sign when there is spiritual opposition. If you're facing the attack of the enemy, that's a good sign.

You may not think so at the time, but it is a good sign. The enemy only seeks to destroy those that have been effective. I think the one nation that you would fear as Americans, more than possibly any other nation, is Russia, simply because of its size and its power and so on.

They fear you. You're not afraid of some little island down in the Caribbean, that doesn't have any particular weapons or nuclear warheads or anything else, because they're no threat to you. So why should you fear them? Why should you worry about them? Why should you even invade them? And so on.

And likewise, the enemy. The enemy seeks to invade that which is a threat to his own purpose and his own kingdom. And we find here again that Hezekiah was prospering.

And then the enemy sought to break into the city of Jerusalem. Notice it says in verse 1, he thought to break into them for himself. I believe the thing that the enemy seeks to do, more than anything else, is to take that which is being committed to the purposes of God, like Jerusalem in this case, or in your case, your life, and try and use it for himself.

To try and frustrate the purpose of God through your life, and to try and accomplish his purpose instead. And we'll find here that Hezekiah did certain things. And I want to just meditate, if you like, this morning on some of the ways in which Hezekiah sought to come against the attack of the enemy upon his life.

Before I do that, let me just make one point here. It says in verse 2, when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, that he intended to make war on Jerusalem. The first thing that Hezekiah did, he recognized that he had an enemy.

I think we need to recognize that there is an enemy today. There's an enemy in your life. There's an enemy against the Church of God.

There's an enemy that would seek to frustrate the whole purposes of God. I believe it was C.S. Lewis that made the statement, you can make two mistakes regarding the enemy. One is to pretend he doesn't exist at all.

Don't give him any credit whatsoever. And the other is that we give him too much attention. Every time you sneeze, you've got a demon or whatever.

That type of overemphasis on the enemy's activities. I'm sure you've all heard the story of the man who was walking along, saw the devil sitting by the side of the road weeping. And he went up to the devil.

He said, what's wrong? He says, well, he says, those Christians are accusing me of all sorts of things that I'd love to do, but I don't have time to do them. And I think many times we give too much credit to the devil. But again, on the other hand, we can pretend he doesn't exist.

The Bible makes it very clear, your adversary, the devil, not the person on the left, not the person on the right, your adversary, the devil, goes around seeking whom he may devour. You have an enemy. That enemy is out to seek to destroy your life, to use it again for himself.

And we find that because of that then, that Hezekiah did certain things. And I want to just look at some of the things, if you like, the tactics that Hezekiah used to come against the onslaught of the enemy in this particular case. And the first thing we find him doing in verse 3, it says that he decided, along with his officers and warriors, to cut off the supply of water which was outside the city.

One of the tactics that was used, especially in the Old Testament, we find it referred to in Genesis concerning Isaac, that it says, Isaac dug again the wells of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had blocked up. And one of the tactics in warfare was to cut off any supply of life that the enemy could feed on. And we find here that Hezekiah did the same thing.

He said to himself, why should Sennacherib come with all his troops and so on and find an abundance of water? After all, if there's an abundance of water, he's going to sit there and camp there until eventually

we give up and he just marches in and takes over. And I think spiritually some of us, and no doubt there are some in this meeting this morning, that are feeding, if you like, the enemy. And the first thing that we need to do if we're going to be successful in coming against the powers of darkness, whether it be collectively, whether it be individually, is to cut off that which the enemy can feed on.

The New Testament says don't give place to the devil. In other words, we can feed him that which he delights in feeding on. And we need to immediately cut off that which will sustain the life of the enemy.

Jesus made the statement, Satan cometh, he has nothing in me. There's no area of my life, in other words, that he has access to, or that I will give him place to, or if you like, that I will feed him. Some of you, no doubt, have had the experience of having a stray cat come around, taking pity on that cat.

It's there shivering in the cold, the middle of winter, you open the door, there it is, and you know your heart of compassion just sort of aches for that little thing. And so you go inside, you get a beautiful dish of warm milk, and you set it down there, and you feed it. You go out a couple of hours later, and there's the cat again, wanting some more.

Well, the worst possible thing you can do is to continue to feed that cat, especially if you don't really want it around. And I think many of us, we feed the enemy. You know, we give place to that which the enemy delights in.

You read through the book of Romans there, and it says that no longer are we to present our members as servants, if you like, as members that would be yielded to unrighteousness or unrighteous acts. Instead, we're to mortify those things, crucify them, cut them off. And so we find that here, the first thing that Hezekiah did, he pulled in, if you like, the welcome mat.

He said, okay, I don't want you here. I'm going to, I'm going to cut off every supply that the enemy can feed on. Maybe you've got areas that you're supplying this morning to the enemy, areas of resentment, of pride, of bitterness, of sin, of some form or other, in which the enemy is going to sit there and camp round about your life, so to speak.

Why? Because you're feeding him. You're feeding him with that root of bitterness. You're feeding him with that sense of doubt, or discouragement, or despondency, or some other area of your life, that which the enemy delights in holding on to.

We need to begin to cut off. One of the brethren last night was sharing. I want to go into it.

I found himself in a situation that he didn't want to be involved in. It wasn't his own fault. He was taken there without knowing where he was going, and so on, with a family group.

But he said he did not give place to the devil. Not in so many words, but he said, I did not get involved in what they were doing. And he wanted to straighten it out with his brothers, in case somebody else had seen him in this particular place.

And he did a good job of clearing his conscience, I'm sure. But, you know, the one thing that I thrilled with was the fact that while he was under the pressure to conform to that situation, he did not feed, if you like, the enemy. He cut off that supply that the enemy could feed on.

And so we find that, again, if we are to be successful spiritually, we need to know what it is to, if you like, pull in the welcome mat, not to supply that which the enemy would feed on. All right, the second thing we find with Hezekiah is that it says that he took courage in verse 5, and he built all the wall that had been broken down. In other words, he recognized that there were areas in that city where the enemy could very easily gain entrance or access.

And I believe, again, in our own life, as we would look at this and take the spiritual significance behind it, we have areas in our own life where we're vulnerable to the attack of the enemy. We have places, again, where we're not strong. And it's those places that need to be rebuilt.

You see, Hezekiah was embarrassed. Suddenly he found himself under besiege. Suddenly the enemy was there seeking to come in, and so he began to take drastic measures.

He began to check the wall, and he realized there were certain areas of that wall that had been broken down, certain areas where the enemy could very easily come in. Hebrew says, the sin that does so easily beset us. I think in context there, it's speaking about the sin of unbelief.

But I think we could take it also that each of us have areas of besetting sins. You know, for one person it may be your mouth. You're always saying the wrong thing at the wrong time and so on.

Another, it may be anger. Another, it may be pride. Another, it may be jealousy or whatever.

But we know that it's that particular thing that constantly gives place, if you like, to the enemy. And that area has to be rebuilt. And the rebuilding process takes time.

Since I was here last, you've done a lot of rebuilding, so I think most of you know what the rebuilding process is all about. It takes time. It takes materials.

It takes a great deal of effort and so on. And likewise, spiritually. Spiritually, there is time that is needed to rebuild the walls.

You need to sit down and take a spiritual inventory. Like Nehemiah of old, remember when he checked with some brethren and said, you know, what's happening? And they said, well, you know, Jerusalem is already pretty well burnt down. It's lying in rubble and so on and so forth.

And the people are in distress, and it says that Nehemiah sat down and he wept. And then he asked leave of the king if he could go and visit his brethren. And he went to that city, and it says in the middle of the night he walked around and he checked the walls.

He saw the rubble. He saw the condition. And then he started to do something about it.

He started to rebuild those walls. It says after a while, the walls began to be rebuilt. And then the enemy came.

And the enemy sought to attack. And it tells us there in Nehemiah that he placed men in the low spots in the walls. In other words, those walls were not yet fortified.

And so he did something. He put men there that had had spears and shields and so on. And he stationed them in the lower parts of the wall.

And likewise, spiritually, we need to fortify those areas of our life where we know we're vulnerable to the enemy. We need to find out what the Word of God says. How can I strengthen myself in this particular area? What can I do? And so we find that again, that was the second thing that he did.

He began to rebuild those walls. And some of you, maybe this morning, need to start rebuilding some of the walls. Do a spiritual inventory.

As the Bible says, examine yourself. I never used to like examinations. You know, examinations reveal what sort of an individual you really are.

Remember when I was in school, I was very quiet. Never gave any problem to the teacher. I always looked like I was concentrating on what was going on.

But most of the time, I was doodling away. And that dreaded day would come every week or every couple of weeks, where the teacher would come in and say, take out a blank piece of paper, write your name on the top and so on. And then all of a sudden, there'd be five or ten questions that had to be answered.

And it was an examination, a test. And I used to dread that. Because all of a sudden, the truth was made known that I wasn't really listening.

I wasn't really concentrating. I was doodling away. I was looking out the window, and she was looking somewhere else and so on.

And spiritually, we need to examine ourselves. You know, how am I doing spiritually? Do I have areas? Areas of my life that are broken down? Areas that I need to strengthen? Areas that I need to do something about? Areas where the enemy so easily has access into my life? And again, it takes time. It takes materials.

It takes effort. I think many times, you know, we tend to rush to the pastor. And I know that the pastor's here to, you know, minister in certain areas.

But it's been my experience that most people that come for counsel want the pastor to sort of do the job that they should be doing themselves. Most of them know the areas of their life that are in need. They know what they should do about it.

But they want somebody to sort of lay hands on them, impart something, cast something out, or do something, whereby instantly they won't have any more problems. And I don't find that in the Word of God. You know, we need, again, to begin to rebuild the walls spiritually in our own life.

Through prayer, through reading the Word of God, through meditating, through seeking God. And that area that is weak needs to be strengthened. And so he began then to rebuild the walls.

There's a verse in Ephesians. Maybe just read it here for a moment. Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 28.

Let him who steals, steal no longer. But rather let him perform with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need. Now here's an individual that has had a problem.

His problem is that he's a kleptomaniac, if you like. He's been stealing. He's been involved in taking things from people.

Now the answer that the Bible gives is not just simply let him that steals, steal no longer. You know, that's just a half measure. He stops stealing.

But the Bible says now he's to rebuild, if you like, that area. He's to do the opposite of stealing. It says, but rather let him now begin to work.

And not only work, but let him also have something whereby he may share with somebody else, which is the opposite of stealing. In other words, he's been in the habit of taking from people. Now he needs to start working, which he hasn't been doing.

And in the product of that which he receives from his work, he's to be able now to give to somebody else. You see, the Bible never says just simply cut off doing what you're doing. In other words, repentance is not simply stopping.

It's going the extra mile. It's doing the opposite. If you've been unloving, start loving.

If you've been stealing, start giving. And so on and so forth. Start rebuilding those spiritual walls that have been broken down.

You know, Isaiah says that the walls are salvation and the gates are praise. Salvation is an all-inclusive term. You know, so often we say, well, I'm saved, meaning that there was a time 10, 15 years ago when you accepted Christ.

And we can use it in that sense. But salvation is also the ongoing process. You know, we are saved.

We're being saved. We will yet be saved. And you know, we need to begin again to erect those walls of salvation, that ongoing process.

No doubt most of you know that you're born again. You're saved this morning. And yet again, you're conscious that there are areas of your life that are broken down.

Areas where you're vulnerable. Areas where constantly the enemy comes in. Maybe in the mind.

Maybe in some other area. And you need to begin to take, again, a spiritual inventory of that and say, Lord, I want you to begin to help me in this area. I'm going to do something about it.

I'm going to rebuild that area of my life. I'm going to search your word, find out the materials that are necessary, whereby I can strengthen myself in that area. I'm sick and tired of the enemy sort of running roughshod over my life.

And then the third thing that he did, it says in verse 5, that he erected towers. He erected towers. Now, towers were used for one reason.

They were used for the watchman. The watchman would stand in the tower there. He would look out and look out across the countryside and see if there were any signs of the enemy's activities.

And then he would sound a trumpet. And the people in the city then would know to prepare themselves. Again, there was somebody coming against the city.

And spiritually, we need to have our towers erected. Again, here was the city. There were no towers.

In other words, the job of the watchman had failed. And likewise in our own life. You know, the Bible says, be on the alert.

Your adversary, the devil, goes around as a roaring lion. In other words, have a spiritual tower erected, be alert, be sensitive, be constantly watching out. Many, many times in the New Testament, we've got that little phrase there, to be awake or be alert.

You know, Jesus said to Peter, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. In other words, the enemy's there, Peter. Watch, be alert, have a spiritual tower erected, and then you can do something against it.

Somebody said it was because Peter failed to heed that. Just a few moments later, certainly within a matter of hours, he was confronted by a little maid who said, you're one of them, aren't you? And he denied the Lord. You see, if he'd have been spiritually alert, if he'd have heeded the advice that Christ gave to him, he would have never had to deny the Lord three times.

But again, that spiritual tower was down. And the enemy was able to come in, he was unaware of it. And likewise, in our own life, I think we need to know what it is to be constantly spiritually aware that there is a battle going on, that you and I are under, under siege, if you like.

That your adversary, the devil, goes around us the wrong way. Be alert, be aware of it, be conscious of it. Don't sort of settle down and say, oh well, it never happened to me.

You know, the devil's too busy running after Jim Wright to come my way, sort of thing. Well, you know, don't be too sure. Don't be too sure.

He's after you as well, your adversary, the devil. And so these towers were erected. You know, the Lord's Prayer says that we are to pray, deliver us from evil.

And then it says, lead us not into temptation. It says that first, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. You know, I think many times we wait till we get in a, some sort of a fix, and then we ask God to get us out of it.

We say, God, I'm in this terrible situation. I want you to deliver me from it. And he said, well, listen, you should have prayed, lead us not into temptation.

You know, don't even, don't even get us in there. And I think many times if we begin our day by praying and saying, Lord, I want today to be spiritually alert to situations that may, I may confront, to things that I may read, to advertisements that I may look at, and jokes that I may have to listen to, and so on and so forth. Lord, I want to have my guard up.

I want to have that spiritual tower erected, so the enemy can't penetrate in my life, so that I can see him coming. So often he sort of sneaks up unawares, because we're not, again, in our spiritual tower. And repeatedly the Scriptures say, we need to be on the alert.

We need to be awake. We need to be active as far as looking out for the enemy. Paul says we're not to be ignorant concerning his devices.

In other words, we're not just to settle down, but we're to be constantly on the alert. All right, the next thing we find that Hezekiah did, it says that he made weapons and shields in great number. He made weapons

and shields in great number.

In other words, Hezekiah was prepared to fight. You see, up until this time, most of this was sort of defensive. He was erecting the walls, or strengthening the walls.

He was erecting the towers, and so on. But now, he begins to make weapons. And the Bible tells us that we have weapons, whereby we can come against the onslaught of the enemy.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they're mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. God has given us the equipment, if you like. God has given us the spiritual sword, which is the Word of God.

And we need to begin to use that. We need to become aggressive, if you like. So many people tend to take a sort of a state of apathy and indifference.

They allow the enemy just to buffet them back and forth, carried about, if you like, by every wind of doctrine, and so on. Instead of sort of standing up and say, God, I'm not going to allow this any longer. I'm going to do something.

You've provided me with the equipment. You've provided me with a sword of the Spirit. I'm going to get angry against the enemy.

I'm tired of the enemy coming in, constantly defeating my life, constantly entering into my mind, bringing all sorts of uncleanness and everything else. God, I'm going to do something about it. And too many people have sort of settled down, and they've allowed, again, the enemy simply to control their lives.

And so he began, again, to make shields and weapons in great number. In other words, he wasn't passive. He wasn't indifferent.

He didn't say, oh, well, now I've rebuilt the walls and so on. I won't do anything. I'll just settle down.

The enemy can't get in. But instead, he began to challenge the enemy, began to do something about it. The Bible says, the kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violence take it by force.

You know, there's something about a violent Christian in the right sense of that word, one that is aggressive in the things of the Spirit, one that doesn't stand for the enemy, constantly coming against him. And he begins to get angry against the powers of darkness, begins to rise up in his spirit, and takes the Word of God, begins to use that shield of faith, begins to use that sword of the Spirit, begins to use the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, begins to use the blood against the powers of darkness, and stand against them. And here we find, again, that the weapons, he says that he made, and he made them in great number.

You know, he wasn't content just with a little supply. He knew the Word of God, if you like. You know, some of us have just got one little weapon.

You know, resist the devil, he'll flee from you, or some other little weapon like that. But the Bible says that here he made them in great number. You know, the Scriptures tell us that God has given us exceeding great and precious promises that with these, it says, we might be partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world.

How do you escape the corruption that's in the world? By taking these exceeding great and precious promises and using them. It's no use having promises unless you use them, unless you begin to apply them. And it says that's the way that you escape the corruption that's in the world.

Scripture says that through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope. Some of you, no doubt, have read the book by, I think it's Charles Blair, The Man Who Could Do No Wrong. Anybody read that book? And Charles Blair, quite a big-name preacher in Colorado, who was involved in a sort of a fraud situation, and as a result had to step down from the ministry for a little while and so on.

And the book describes his, this whole situation, very embarrassing situation. He never purposely got himself involved, but the way things worked out, that's what happened. And he was devastated.

A church that was known all over Colorado, church that was known really around America and around the world, and all of a sudden finding himself in a very embarrassing situation. He sought out, he says in his story, three men, at least on a video that I watched, he sought out three men. And those men said, you need to go to the Word of God and find in the Word of God, men that had similar situations to your own, and how God rescued them, or what they did to get out of that situation.

You see, that's what the Word of God says, that through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope. The Bible is full of mistakes, somebody said. Talks about Adam's mistake, and David's mistake, and Abraham's mistake, all sorts of mistakes.

But you know, those mistakes are recorded there, so that you and I might have hope. So that you and I can see that God can take somebody who's fallen in adultery, and use him again. God can take somebody like Moses, who was a murderer, and use him again.

God can take somebody, again, like Jonah, who disobeyed the call of God, and use him again. The Word of the Lord came a second time to Jonah. And it's through the encouragement of Scriptures, we might have hope.

We need to find out, where is a man that has a similar situation to me? Where is a woman that has a similar situation to me? How did they get out of that situation? And then begin to apply the Scriptures. And so we need to have, again, shields and weapons in great number. And I thank God for those exceeding great and precious promises, that through those, we might escape the corruption that is in the world, through lust.

All right, and then we find that he began to rely upon the Word of God. It says there, he spoke in verse 6, gathered together all the men in the square of the city, and spoke encouragingly to them, saying, Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be dismayed, because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude which is with him.

For the one with us, is greater than the one with him. With him only is an arm of flesh. But with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles.

You see here, Hezekiah knew the Word of God. Hezekiah here, was encouraging himself in the Word of God. There's a statement there in Deuteronomy.

Maybe just read it to you for a moment, in Deuteronomy chapter 20. And here's a promise that God gave to the nation of Israel. It says in verse 1, When you go out to battle against your enemies, and you see

horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them.

For the Lord your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, is with you. And it shall come about, when you're approaching the battle, the priest shall come near, and shall speak to the people. And he shall say to them, Hear O Israel, you're approaching the battle against your enemies today.

Do not be fainthearted. Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them. For the Lord your God, is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, and to save you.

You see God said, even when you're outnumbered. When they, when the other side is better equipped than you. They've got horses, they've got chariots more numerous than you.

Now the natural tendency is, that when you're confronted with a host of individuals, or or an army that is better supplied than you, naturally you're going to be terrified. But God says, don't be afraid, don't tremble, don't be fainthearted, because I am with you. And we find Hezekiah here, looking at the enemy there, around campground, about the walls of the city.

He gathers together his people. He says, listen with them is the armor flesh, with us is the Lord our God. He's going to fight our battle for us.

In other words, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His mind. And we need to strengthen ourselves in the Word of God. We need to saturate ourselves in the Word of God.

I used to make it a habit, when I was counseling, especially at a an altar call, where people would come up, and they'd begin to acknowledge they had needs, and problems, and so on. Invariably, I would ask them what their quiet time was like. If they had a consistent time every day, reading the Word of God, and praying.

And invariably, I'd find they didn't. And sometimes, I didn't do it. I felt like sort of, uh, give them a good kick, and say, well it serves you right.

You know, after all, God has given us again, the Word of God. Whereby, we can come against the powers of the, uh, of the enemy, and the attack of the enemy. We need to strengthen ourselves in the Word of God.

That's what Hezekiah did. He encouraged the people, by speaking to them, what God's Word says. And some of you, maybe have let down your guard in that particular area.

Maybe the whole realm of prayer, and Bible reading, you know, is something that you don't do from one week to the next. You come along, relying upon meetings. Thank God for meetings.

But you know, they're no substitute for an individual quiet time with God. Time when you have, of reading the Word of God consistently, day after day, after day, of seeking the face of God. Setting time alone.

The Bible says that if we enter into that closet, and pray, even though we do it in secret, it says God will reward us openly. We need to, again, know what it is to spend time seeking God. Like Hezekiah here, he encouraged himself by the Word of God.

How many of you really know what it is to long after the Word of God? Maybe some of you are bound by television, or other things. You need to turn that thing off. Again, where the enemy comes in.

Turn it off. Begin to pick up the Word of God. Begin to ask the Spirit of God to quicken that Word.

To make it real. To make it alive. To feed yourself spiritually.

And then finally, the last thing that we find Hezekiah doing there, in verse 20. And between verses 9 and 20, we find that the enemy sought to use words. The enemy was using words.

He was beginning to call out to the people on the walls of the city. And saying, listen, I'm so great. There's been nobody that's been able to resist me.

Nobody that's able to stand against me. And who do you think Hezekiah is? You think Hezekiah can look after you? Do you think Hezekiah is strong enough to stand against me? I've defeated this king and that king and so on and so forth. You know, the enemy's great at using words, isn't he? You know, if so-and-so can't make it.

If so-and-so didn't make it. Who do you think you are? And he comes in with his accusations. He comes in with his doubts and his unbelief.

Comes in with all those negative confessions and everything else. Trying to somehow destroy us. It says here, Hezekiah in verse 20.

And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, prayed about this and cried out to heaven. You know, Hezekiah was man enough to acknowledge he needed somebody to stand with him. He went to Isaiah the prophet and he says, listen, pray with me.

Pray with me. You know, I think there are times when we need to bear one another's burdens. When we need to go to a brother or a sister and say, listen, I've been under attack this week.

At my job, at my place of employment. You know, I've just really had it. I just feel that the enemy's just had one continuous onslaught against my life.

I want you to pray with me. I want us to stand together. One will chase a thousand, two will chase ten thousand.

And Hezekiah, here he was, the king. You know, in the natural, the one that everybody would look up to. Here he was, the great king of Israel.

And yet humble enough to go to Isaiah the prophet and say, listen, let's, let's pray together against this thing. You know, we need to do something. And I think so often, you know, we, we put on that sort of spiritual front.

We refuse to admit that we're under attack. We tend to pretend that we're somebody that, you know, has it all together. We carry our Bible in a certain way.

We look very pious, very religious and so on. And yet, you know, we're, we're under attack. And we need to go, we need to confess to a brother or sister, somebody we've got confidence in.

Somebody that we know isn't going to blab the problem all over the church and so on and say, listen, pray with me. I need you. I need you to help me.

That's what the body of Christ is all about. You know, it's when we get down to the sort of the brass tacks of Christianity that I think we'll begin to see some sort of results. I remember listening to Howard Hendricks who came to New Zealand for a navigator conference.

And he had a minister seminar in the afternoon. He was talking about some of the ways that he was training leaders. He told how he met with six men.

I think for about six years, every Wednesday morning from six to seven thirty, he met with these six men and they prayed together. And he said that they came such a tremendous bond between those six men over the years that he said they're his closest friends even to this day. But he told how they got to that place of total honesty with one another.

And then he says, how many of you ever been to a prayer meeting where somebody will stand up and say, listen, my Aunt Matilda's gone into hospital tomorrow. She's got an ingrown toenail. Would you pray for her? And then somebody else will say so-and-so's, you know, my Uncle Joe is sick.

He's got shill blains or something and he needs prayer and so on. They said, how many of you have ever been to a prayer meeting where a young man has stood up and he said, listen, I've got a problem. I'm constantly tempted with, you know, with some of the pictures at work and so on, some of the dirty jokes and so on.

He says, I've got a tremendous problem in this area of lust and I want some of you men to pray with me. He said, chances are the pastor would whip out his notebook and say, who was that and write down the man's name. You see, we're not honest enough.

Aunt Matilda's ingrown toenail, fine, we can confess that and so on. But, you know, when it gets down to, listen, I've been tempted this week. I've got a problem.

I want somebody to pray with me. I want somebody that can agree together. I'm under the attack of the enemy.

I want to be honest about it this morning. I'm not where I should be spiritually. I'm constantly, my mind is like a cesspool.

The enemy just seems to come in and constantly destroy me week after week after week. I need somebody. And yet, so often, you see, we put on such a spiritual front that we're afraid to acknowledge that to somebody else.

We think, oh, so and so won't understand. I mean, they seem to have it all together. Instead of being honest and going and saying, listen, my marriage isn't very good.

You know, my husband and I look all right in church, but really our marriage is falling about. There's no real communication. I don't love her the way I should or she doesn't love me the way she should and so on.

I want you to help us. We want to begin to rebuild the wall. We want to rebuild our marriage this morning.

Listen, my relationship with my kids is not right. May look all right in church, but listen, if you lived in our house for just an hour, you'd see what I'm really talking about. My whole marriage is just crumbling.

I want you to do something. I want you to pray with me. Agree together with me.

Meet, come over to my house. Let's, let's pray. Let's get this thing right once and for all.

You see, we're tremendous at putting on a show, aren't we? You know, we're so conscious about even the way we look, about our clothes and everything else. But you know, we don't let people really see our heart. We're not willing to expose those things.

And Hezekiah here was willing to go to Isaiah the prophet and say, listen, I need help. I want you to agree with me. I want you to pray with me.

Let's see this thing finish once and for all. And finally, in verse 21, it says, And the Lord sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior, commander, and officer in the camp of the king of Assyria. And he returned in shame to his own land.

When he entered the temple of his God, some of his own children killed him with a sword. You know, I've often thought why God didn't just sort of intervene right at the very beginning. You know, God allowed Hezekiah to do all these things, which were really a lot of hard work.

Imagine trying to block up all the springs outside the city. You know, it's one thing to fill in a little puddle, but a spring is a different thing. You know, a spring is pretty hard.

You can pile all the dirt on and it jumps up here, it squirts out there or whatever. You know, that was rough work. And then to rebuild the walls was not easy either.

All those stones and everything else, it's easy to start from scratch and to rebuild a wall. You've got to fit all the pieces in at the right place and so on. When you start from scratch, you can just sort of lay them all out and it's an easy job.

And then to erect all the towers, then to fashion all those swords and spears and everything else. You know, why didn't God just sort of come in and say, Oh, well, you know, I'll take care of it, Hezekiah. I know you're my child and so on.

You see, I believe that there are certain things that we have to do before God will answer our prayer. So often we want God to do everything. And God is saying, Listen, how about you reading my word? The answer's in there.

You know, how about you praying? I'm a God that answers prayer in case you didn't know. You know, how about you doing this or doing that? What about that area? Why don't you cut off feeding the enemy? You know, put away those magazines, quit going to those films, quit doing this or quit listening to those stories and so on and so forth. Why don't you begin to fill in the springs a little bit? You see, it's when we begin to do all these things like Hezekiah, then we can pray and we can pray effectively.

We can say, Lord, I've done everything, having done all to stand. And yet so often we're not willing to do anything and we fall. It's having done all to stand.

And I trust this morning that some of you may, no doubt, are under the attack of the enemy. You know it, you're conscious of it. Areas of your life, your mind, your marriage, other areas, the enemy simply come in.

But you'll be honest enough, first of all, to begin to rebuild. Begin to do something about it. Sit down with your wife and say, listen, we can't go on any longer like this.

Let's start to rebuild our marriage. Maybe to go to somebody, pastor, one of the leaders. Say, listen, help me.

Pray with me. And then expect God to do something. Amen.

Father, we just thank you this morning again for your word. Thank you, Lord. That word is a light to our path.

We pray, Lord, that you'd just quicken it, breathe upon it by your spirit, and make it real, make it living. To each one here we ask, in Jesus' name, Amen. Spirit within me, cast me not away from thy presence, O Lord.

Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and renew a right spirit within me.

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