

Scripture Text

Isaiah 36

Context

Chapter 36-39 form a narrative bridge between the mostly poetic chapters 1-35 and 40-66. Chapters 36-37 look back to 28-35, proving through Hezekiah that faith in God is met by his blessing. Chapters 36-37 show divine faithfulness (36-37) even in the midst of the most outrageous threats. God is seen as the only hope of His people. Note that Isaiah 36-39 is paralleled in 2 Kings 18.13-20.19

Observation and Meaning

- Jerusalem was the last city in Judah still standing in 36v1. How frightened do you think God's people would have been?
- 36v2 contains many similarities to 7v3. What connections are we supposed to see between these two events? How is 36v2 a test for Hezekiah that his father Ahaz failed?
- What one word is repeated again and again in v4-7? How does this understand the thrust of the intimidation by the Assyrians against God's people?
- What other intimidation tactics does the Rabshakeh use in v4-10? What half truths does he use? How are these powerful in destabilizing God's people? Identify and list them all.
- Draw out the irony of the pagan's taunt in v4. Where is the field commander right and where is he wrong? (Note v 10)
- What one word is repeated again and again in v14-20?
- Identify the fatal error in the argument (v18-20)
- What has God said to His people that should be the basis of their confidence (See Ch 7)
- How does Hezekiah command his people to respond and why is this wise?

Big Idea

Christians face all kinds of oppression and intimidation from the forces of darkness. Understanding the schemes of the enemy help us to know how we can stand firm on God's Word in the midst of these assaults against our faith.

Connecting to the Bible's storyline

Faith in God's person and Word is the foundation of a life of faithfulness to Him. This passage shows us how the main attempt of the enemy is to get us to doubt God's Word, and believe a lie. But God's Word is good and true even when it seems most unlikely.

Sermon Outline

1. Two different basis for confidence - faith or sight (v4)
2. Three familiar schemes of the devil (v5-20)
 - to distort reality through half truths
 - to stir up fear and then offer hope through illegitimate means
 - to directly undermine our confidence in God
3. One way to respond - be very careful to do nothing at all, but stand firm (v21-22)

Application

- What circumstances are most likely to cause you to fear. Why?
- What are the most frequent lies that are you told by the evil one? What half truths are you prone to believe?
- What has God said in His word that is a counter to these lies that you are prone to believe? How does Jesus' perfect love cast out your fears?
- What role do the relationships in the church play in helping us stand firm in the midst of the enemy's intimidation?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?

What is the situation of the author and of the readers?

Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?

Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.