

Scripture Text

Isaiah 39

Context

We know that this event takes place after Hezekiah's illness and recovery (38), but before the events of 36-37. Bear in mind that Hezekiah did live a life that generally honored and pleased God (2 Kings 18), though this account shows how even those who live lives that please God are not immune to immature responses to circumstances.

Observation and Meaning

- 39.1-2: Why did this seem like such a good idea at the time? What do you think were some of the motives for Hezekiah receiving them gladly? Why do you think Hezekiah showed them all his treasures?
- 39.3-7: What is ironic about how Hezekiah showed them all his treasures, and how the judgment involves all the treasures being carried off?
- 39.8: Why is Hezekiah's response tragic? How does this show us his failure as a king who is supposed to be completely concerned with the future wellbeing of his people?
- As we end the first half of Isaiah, how are we being lead to think about the futility of the king who was ironically one of Israel's best (2 Kings 18)? What kind of a king do we long for, and who is that king? How is Jesus different from Hezekiah?

Big Idea

If we want to live lives that please God and serve future generations, we have to constantly remain in faith, but the only one who has perfectly done that is Jesus Christ, and therefore our weak faith needs to rest in his perfect faith and deeds. We can entrust ourselves to him, the perfect King who will not use us or live a self-centered life, but will lay his life down for us.

Connecting to the Bible's storyline

Hezekiah was supposed to rule over God's people on behalf of God and care for their future and wellbeing. His faithlessness means we need a better King that we finally get in Jesus.

Sermon Outline

1. The weaknesses of unbelief
2. The long term effects of unbelief
 - a. Effects on our legacy
 - b. Effects on those around us
 - c. Effects upon our own hearts
3. The man who makes all God's people sing
 - a. One who is humble, not showing off his glory
 - b. One who is not self-preserving, but lays down his life for others
 - c. One who lives to intercede for others

Application

- In what areas of your life are you most tempted to lose faith in God and his promises and trust in other gods? List them.
- How does the irony of Hezekiah's trust in Assyria by showing them his treasures, and the prophesied judgement of having all his treasures carried off to Babylon remind you that often we get enslaved by the false gods we trust in?
- In what areas of your life are you making decisions that are good for your personal comfort but completely neglect the wellbeing of those around you or who will come after you?
- How does this passage help you to see and trust in the faith and work of our better King, Jesus? What does it look like for you to entrust yourself entirely to him now?

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.