

December 27

Scriptures: Read 2 Kings 20

Key Verse: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you.” (2 Kings 20:5)

Overview

When Hezekiah became sick and heard from Isaiah that the sickness would lead to death, his reaction was one of terrible remorse. Possibly he did not want to die and leave his people Israel without first being certain of their commitment to God, or without completing the moral reforms he had planned. Also, he would have been quite young to die (probably only about thirty-eight) and may not have yet had a son to succeed him. Manasseh, his successor, and probably his eldest son, was only twelve when Hezekiah died (21:1), but it had been fifteen years before that God had healed him from near death. Another reason Hezekiah gave for wanting to live is found in the book of Isaiah. Here we read his song of praise to the Lord for healing him that he might seek God’s truth and live to praise Him (Isaiah 38:18-19).

Whatever the reason, Hezekiah fervently prayed to live. God heard his desperate prayer and was compassionate when He saw his tears. God promptly replied by sending Isaiah back to Hezekiah with much better news than his first message. God had graciously consented to give him fifteen more years! The life span of any person is in the hands of God (Job 14:5; e.g. the death of Ahab, 1 Kings 22:31-27).

Isaiah then gave instructions to use the medicine of that day, the compress of figs, to put upon his boils. It appears that because of Hezekiah’s prayer, God miraculously accelerated the healing process using the remedies of man, thus combining the divine and the human elements. God has given mankind the wisdom and intelligence to make and use medicine for the healing of the body, and it is often His will to heal through these means.

The complete healing of Hezekiah, however, likely occurred after the sign that Hezekiah requested to verify Isaiah’s words that God would indeed heal him. Knowing that nothing was impossible with God, Hezekiah asked for the impossible, and God graciously honoured his request. By divine intervention in the natural course of nature, God caused the shadow to go back ten degrees on the sun dial (20:10-11).

Hezekiah’s healing is an illustration of the tremendous power of prayer, for prayer can truly shake the whole world. With the prayer of faith, truly nothing is impossible. Jesus said, concerning Lazarus whom he raised from the dead, that his sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God (John 11:4). When the Lord divinely heals, He expects to be glorified. It appears that Hezekiah did not give God all the glory as he should have, therefore he faced His judgment. (2 Chronicles 32:24-26).

God tested Hezekiah’s heart by the visit of the officials from Babylon (cf. 2 Chronicles 32:31). Hezekiah proudly and carelessly showed them all his treasures that Isaiah foretold they would one day carry away, along with some of his sons who would become their servants (20:17). On the surface, Hezekiah’s reaction seems selfish, but we know from the book of Chronicles that he

humbled himself before the Lord, and God said the judgment would not come in his days (2 Chronicles 32:26). Hezekiah's reply that the Lord's words were good (20:19) does not mean he was unconcerned for the welfare of his descendants. Rather, he recognized that whatever God willed was good, and He was just. Yet, knowing that God was also merciful, he was probably glad for the extra time, hoping that his descendants would prove loyal to God and thus avert this punishment.

Prayer

Remember, O Lord, We pray, how our Saviour Jesus Christ, "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." Heal us and keep us healthy, that we may love You with all our strength. Thank You for Your healing power. Thank You also for the gifts You've given to health workers. Bless them, We pray.