

### Introduction:

Imagine for just a moment that you are a king. Your capital city is being threatened by the siege works of the greatest army of the time. The commander of that army has publically mocked you, threatened you, and explained that he is going to destroy you and your city if you don't surrender to him. Your army is no match for his. Your city cannot stand for long under siege. Imagine the fear in the city. Imagine the fear in you. Imagine the inner turmoil in your own mind—the fear, the anxiety, the stress. What will you do? Hezekiah chose to pray. In **II Kings 19:15-19**, Hezekiah prayed:

O Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. 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 mock the living God. Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands 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 were destroyed. So now, O Lord, our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone.

In **II Kings 19:35-37**, God destroyed the Assyrian army. Sennacherib turned tail and ran back home where he was killed by his own sons. God brought peace to Hezekiah, nationally and personally, in response to Hezekiah's prayer. We need to see the importance of prayer and its connection to peace for us. In **Philippians 4:6-7**, Paul said if we remove anxiety by laying out our requests to God, then His peace that passes all understanding will guard our hearts and minds. Hezekiah's prayer is a great example of that. Of course, I don't believe the story of Hezekiah means if there is war and we pray for national peace that God will necessarily say yes. I don't think it means anything we think to pray for God will do. That is not how prayer works. I do think when we pray properly, internal peace will always be the result. However, notice I said when we pray properly. Sadly, many of us think all we have to do is say some words in God's direction and that should be a prayer that brings peace. Let's look at what happened with Hezekiah and learn some principles to help us make prayer the connection that calms.

### Discussion:

- I. Believe in the power of God.
  - A. Some people pray but they don't think God will do anything. They either believe God isn't really there, isn't really listening, or can't really do anything. Hezekiah believed in the power of God. In **II Kings 19:15**, he praised God saying, "You have made heaven and earth." He hearkened back to the first words of the Law. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (**Genesis 1:1**).
  - B. Just consider the power such a statement proclaims. Think of the power it takes to say, "Let there be light" (**Genesis 1:3**), and there it is. Think of the power it takes to call for life from that which has no life (**Genesis 1:11**) and there it is. Think of the power it takes to bring a sun, moon, and stars into existence by saying, "Let it be so," (**Genesis 1:14**) and there it is. Think of the power it takes to speak a fish, a bird, a cow, a rhino into existence (**Genesis 1:20, 24**). Think of the power it takes to breathe life into a man (**Genesis 1:26**). Brothers and sisters, that is amazing power. It is power so immense some people simply can't fathom that God has it. But He does. Listen to what God explained to Job in **Job 38:4-33**. Job had not done any of this. No man has done any of this. None of this just happened on its own. God did this.
  - C. **Ephesians 3:20** says God can do far more abundantly than all we ask or think. If we want prayer to be our connection to God that calms us in time of fear, doubt, anxiety, and stress, if we want the peace that passes all understanding, we have to believe that God is more powerful than we can imagine and recognize that He uses that power for our good.
- II. Believe God alone can give you peace.
  - A. Why did Hezekiah pray to God in this time of need? **II Kings 19:15** explains, "You are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth." Jehovah was the only God. He was the only one to whom Hezekiah could turn for help.

- B. One of the reasons so many people offer prayers without receiving peace is because they actually think they can get peace from other places. So, they offer a prayer, but then they turn to other things like money, drinking, drugs, gambling, eating, personal manipulation and control.
- C. Only when we realize God is our only hope, will we throw ourselves truly on His mercy. Only then will we be like the psalmist in **Psalm 18:1-3**. Only then will we cease to try to find solutions in other places.

### III. Don't succumb to the devil's lies.

- A. In **II Kings 19:10-13**, Sennacherib sent a message to Hezekiah. He reminded Hezekiah about how he had defeated all the other kingdoms. He reminded him how the gods of all the other lands had not been able to help them. Sennacherib was sure he could beat Hezekiah. He was sure Jehovah couldn't help. Satan wanted Hezekiah to believe God couldn't and wouldn't help. He made a case. It seemed airtight. No one else had been able to stand up to Sennacherib.
- B. Someone else might have fallen for the lies. However, look at Hezekiah's prayer. In **II Kings 19:17**, Hezekiah knew the reason no other gods had stood up to Sennacherib. They weren't really gods at all. They were statues and that was all. Because Hezekiah recognized Satan's lies, he was able to maintain his faith in God.
- C. Satan will lie to us. He will try to convince us that God's way won't work. He will try to convince us that there is no hope. He will try to tell us that God's word isn't right. He will try to tell us that others know better than God. He will try to tell us that God doesn't know what he's doing. As he lied to Eve in the garden, he'll lie to us because he is the father of lies. His lies steal our peace. If we want prayer to be the connection that calms, we have to see through the devil's lies in order to trust God.

### IV. Trust God's word.

- A. In **II Kings 19:20-34**, Isaiah gave a prophesy from the Lord regarding what would happen to Sennacherib and Assyria. He declared that Sennacherib would not come up into the city or even shoot an arrow there. God gave His word and Hezekiah trusted it. There were times when God had told His people to take up arms and fight. But this time God simply said He would take care of the enemy. Hezekiah trusted God and that night God did what He said (**II Kings 19:35-37**).
- B. This is one of the most important aspects of letting prayer be the connection that calms. There are a lot of people that pray, but they don't trust God's word. When God says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (**Matthew 6:33**), we need to believe Him. God has promised to take care of us when we seek Him first. If you don't trust that God will care for you, it doesn't matter how much you pray, you'll never have peace. You have to take God at His word that He has your best interests at heart.
- C. Part of trusting the word of God, means obeying the word of God. Handing things over to God in prayer doesn't mean just sitting on our thumbs. It means doing what God has asked of us and leave it up to Him to take care of everything as He has promised. Notice **Philippians 4:8-9**. Right after Paul said prayer could bring us peace, he also explained that we need to act in accord with his teachings to have peace as well. When we trust God's word, we study it, submit to it, and trust God to care for us through it.
- D. As **Romans 8:28** says, God causes everything to work out for good for those who love Him. Trust God in that. No matter what you face, understand that He is there for you and will see you through. You may not be able to see how at the moment, but you can trust God. It is that trust that causes us to pray, causes us to submit, and grants us peace.

### V. Be more concerned about God's glory than your will.

- A. This is perhaps the most important key to having peace through prayer. So many don't have peace through their prayers because they are self-centered in their prayers. They are treating God like a vending machine, asking for things to spend on their own pleasure (**James 4:3**). When our minds are eaten up with our own selfishness, we will not ever have peace.
- B. But notice Hezekiah. In **II Kings 19:16**, Hezekiah saw that the main problem with Sennacherib's letter was it mocked God. He wasn't as concerned about the danger to Jerusalem as he was about God's name. Then when he asked God to deliver them, he prayed, "God, save us,

please, from his hand, that the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone" (**II Kings 19:19**). Again, Hezekiah was most concerned about God's glory and will.

- C. Sadly, this is one of the main problems for us, keeping us from having peace. We are often filled with anxiety because things aren't working out the way we want. We aren't as concerned about God being glorified as we are getting whatever it is that we want. Therefore, we pray and then we get all worked up because we are afraid that God's will won't coincide with what we want. However, when we want what will most glorify God, we don't have to worry about God being willing to help. God will accomplish what will glorify Him most. We can pray, submit to God's word, and trust Him to accomplish what will most glorify Him. Even Jesus was able to have peace in the garden through His prayer because He was willing to pray, "Not as I will, but as you will" (**Matthew 26:39**). If we want prayer to be a connection that calms, we have to want what God wants more than we want what we want.

#### VI. Actually pray.

- A. Before we finish this lesson, we do need to see something. It is so obvious we may overlook it. We've talked about attitudes, desires, motivations. However, if we stop here, we still won't have the connection that calms. We need to see that Hezekiah received peace because he prayed. In **II Kings 19:20**, Isaiah says, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard." Without this prayer, God would not have brought peace to Hezekiah and Israel.
- B. We need to have our attitudes and desires in the right place. We need to have faith and trust. We need to submit. But we must not forget this great key. If we want peace, we really do have to pray. We really do have to let our requests be made known to God (**Philippians 4:6**). We really do have to cast our cares upon God (**I Peter 5:7**).
- C. If you want prayer to be the connection that calms, you have to pray. If you really want it to be the connection that calms, make it your constant work. As **I Thessalonians 5:16-18** says, we should rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances. Walk in God's presence. Recognize His presence at all times by praying with Him. Walk hand in hand with Him by offering up continual, consistent prayer. Prayer can bring you peace, if you consistently pray.

#### Conclusion:

When Hezekiah prayed, God gave him actual, physical, national peace. In just the same way, if we pray as Hezekiah did, He will give us internal, mental, emotional, and spiritual peace. But we must make sure we have the right attitude, the right faith, the right submission. When we do, God's peace will guard our hearts and minds.