

TRUST THE GREATER POWER AMONG US!

The Lord is with us; He has promised to fight our battles.

2 Chronicles 32:7-8

TEXT: *"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. 2 Chr 32 Hezekiah's father, King Ahaz, was the most wicked king in Judah's history since the kingdom of David and Solomon had divided. But by God's grace, Ahaz' godly son, Hezekiah, ruled Judah as his great-great-great-grandfather David had done. And yet, we are told: *After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah.* 2 Chr 32

Only 9 years earlier, Sennacherib's grandfather had already destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel, laying siege to its capital city of Samaria, killing the Israelites, and sending Assyrians into Israel to colonize the land. These 10 tribes of Israel would never return. The Israelites who did survive intermarried with the Assyrian colonists and would become the Samaritans of Jesus' day.

The Assyrians were a powerful and terrible people who terrorized and showed no mercy. Now they were about to lay siege to Jerusalem. Humanly speaking, Hezekiah had no power against this overwhelming force. But what Hezekiah did have was the power of the Lord who had promised that the Savior of all mankind would come from the House of Judah, a descendant of King David. Based on this fact revealed by the only true God, Hezekiah prayed. Then he preached a powerful sermon to his people. Then he and the Lord's prophet Isaiah together prayed again for the Lord's deliverance.

During his sermon Hezekiah emphasized his confidence in the Lord's faithfulness to His promises. He declared: *Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles."* And then Scripture says: *And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.* This same Lord is our God and He has given us His gracious Word and promise for us to know, believe and to trust. **TRUST THE GREATER POWER AMONG US!** I. The Lord is with us; II. He has promised to fight our battles.

Hezekiah's sermon was powerful because it was based on a sure Word of God. His great-great-great grandfather, Solomon, at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem had received this promise from the Lord: *When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.* 2 Ch 7

Hezekiah knew and believed, and boldly trusted the faithfulness of the Lord. He would keep His Word!

We are not ancient Israel. There is nothing in the Bible that says that the United States of America, or the people of Michigan, or of Saginaw County, or the Lutherans, Baptists or Catholics are set apart as the people from whom the Savior would come. There is nothing written in Scripture that assures any of us that by our association with this group of people or that group of people, or by our membership in any particular organization or church body we are safe from the enemies of God. But Hezekiah's own pastor, the prophet Isaiah, a few years earlier did reveal this truth: *...the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.* Is 7 Then 750 years later an angel entered the private quarters of a young man engaged to be married and declared: *Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.* And then it says: *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"-which means, "God with us."* Mt 1 Immanuel, God with us!

This child is Jesus who paid for the sins of the world with his blood and rose again from the dead for our justification. Jesus the Christ, crucified and raised from the dead is the assurance that God is with us. Jesus, who has promised that were only two or three gather together in his name, there is will be with us! Jesus, whose body and blood is given to us here today for the forgiveness of our sins has made us God's own and is truly present with us as His Word and Promises declare.

Trust Jesus! He is the power of God for He is our God and our Redeemer who is with us. He has promised to fight our battles!

So Hezekiah prayed. He also prayed in the House of the Lord with Isaiah the prophet at his side. And yet he had already been taking some precautions against this overwhelming force of the Assyrian army. He enlisted everyone to block off the springs and diverted the water into the city. He repaired the walls and built towers and ramparts. The question is that if Hezekiah was so confident in the Lord and if he and Isaiah had been praying the Lord for deliverance, why does he work to make Jerusalem a better fortress?

The answer is that Hezekiah is king, and so he is responsible to God in doing what his God-given reason says that a king must do in being a king. Trust in God and prayer do not relieve anyone from their God-given responsibilities as a king, or a husband or wife, a father or mother, an employer or employee. Hezekiah was a godly king and along with doing what a king is to do, he prayed the Lord that He might do what no human arm could do. But he did not put his arms at his side and simply sit and wait. Nor will any Christian.

Fifteen hundred years earlier, the Lord had commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the son of the Promise, on a mountaintop that God would show him. Abraham didn't argue with the Lord, but according to Scripture he reasoned that if Isaac is the one through whom the Savior of the world was to come, and if God would have him sacrifice Isaac, then God would have to keep his promise by raising Isaac from the dead. So Abraham obeyed, and still the Lord made poor Abraham trudge up that high mountain

with his faithful son at his side. Step after step with pain in his heart for what he was going to have to do at the top of that mountain Abraham trudged upward. As Abraham learned and points out to all of us, "it is at the TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN that the Lord provides.

God answered Hezekiah's prayer at the last moment. The Bible says: *...the LORD sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he went into the temple of his god, some of his sons cut him down with the sword.* 2 Ch 32 The Assyrian king went to sleep that night and was awakened the next morning to see the death of 185,000 of his men.

You and I are not kings or people chosen to do great things for the Church like Abraham. But the Lord has revealed to us who are His enemies and ours. Sin, death and Satan have already been defeated by Jesus. We know that and believe that. But Jesus also warns us: *If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.* Jn 15 When this happens to you, stay the course with the work and responsibilities God has set before you, trust in Jesus and pray. Jesus says: *If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.* Lu 9 When a cross is placed on your shoulders, stay the course and continue to follow Jesus, trusting in his wisdom and grace, and pray.

Who knows when and how God will bring you His deliverance? But He will because the Lord of Hezekiah and Isaiah is the same God and Lord who is Immanuel, God with us. He wants us to pray, to pour out our troubles to Him so that we can learn from our own experiences to trust Him and his promises.

When, in His wisdom and grace, and at His time, He demonstrates His power, you will offer Him worship and praise. Amen