

2 Kings 20:1-11 “A Remarkable Recovery”

For the Children: Have you ever felt so sick that you wondered if you might die? Hezekiah was told he was going to die. As God's king over God's people, he had a duty to pray for help, so that he might recover and lead his people against the Assyrians; and to lead them in a godly way. But Hezekiah was too concerned about himself. And when he did recover, he became rather proud. He was a good king, but far from perfect. The Lord wanted him to pray; He wanted to answer that prayer by sparing the king from death; and He wanted us to know about Hezekiah's weaknesses. For that helps us to see that we have a much greater King, Saviour, Mediator and Messiah. In the Lord Jesus, we are saved from all our enemies; and eventually healed from all sin and sickness. **Questions:** Are we healed from all physical sickness in this life? Why not? What kinds of healing do we get in this life, and what comes in the next life?

Introduction:

First Point: The Prayer for Healing

- 1) Mortally Ill: The Lord told Hezekiah he was going to die – by implication, unless something changed. It was not the Lord who changed His mind. He always intended to use this crisis to drive the king to prayer, to answer that prayer and to bring out both strengths and weaknesses in Hezekiah.
- 2) Turning to the Wall: Was the king's prayer facing the wall an act of faith, a bitter sulk or a mixture of both? The king probably wanted to live to help his people against the Assyrian threat. But in Is. 38 the king confesses that he was too concerned with his own welfare.
- 3) Prayer for Healing Today: We can still ask God to heal us, though we should do so without a “double mind” (Jam. 1:6-8). We can also pray for healing for others (Jam. 5:13f). But there is no certainty that God will grant the request in this life. We must ask for such things “Lord willing” – as Christ did in Gethsemane. Hezekiah's healing was a unique situation.

Second Point: The Lord's Answer

- 1) He Hears the Prayers and Sees the Tears: Despite the self-centred aspect of the king's prayers and tears, the Lord takes note. He is gracious and compassionate, despite our weakness.
- 2) The Promise of Healing: Hezekiah is promised that he will be well enough in 3 days to go to the Temple. He will also have 15 years added to his life. Again, this was always the Lord's intention.
- 3) The Promise of Deliverance: The Lord did all this to direct His people to the Messiah. Hence, He grounds the healing not in Hezekiah's good works, as the king asked; but in His own Name and for the sake of His servant David (vss. 5-6). For this reason, too, He promises to deliver Judah from the Assyrians. Ultimately, this is according to the “Davidic covenant” (2 Sam. 7), which promised that God would protect the Davidic kings if they remained faithful – and their people with them. That covenant pointed to Christ, the ultimate Source of deliverance and protection.

Third Point: Our Trust and Responsibility

- 1) The Fig Poultice: Isaiah's instruction to use a fig-poultice on the boil was a common ancient remedy. We are called to act responsibly and use reasonable means to keep well.
- 2) The Shadowy Sign: However, the final outcome lies with the Lord. We should not trust in earthly means above Him. To encourage that trust, the Lord grants a sign: the shadows on the steps will go backwards. We should never “test” God (Dt. 6:16, Mt. 4:7). But He sometimes gives signs to teach and re-assure us.
- 3) The Better King: By showing Hezekiah's weakness when faced with illness - and his pride after recovering (2 Chron. 32:25) – the text is pointing us to the Great King, Mediator, Saviour and Messiah. He faced a greater crisis but maintained perfect trust in His Father. The result is that we now have the ultimate healing, deliverance and protection in Him.

Conclusion:

