

Trusting God
Isaiah 37:14-20,
Trinity Sunday I, June 7, 2015

Sermon Text: Isaiah 37:14-20 (KJV)

“And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only.”

Beloved of the Lord.....There are many people in this world who believe in God – at least in some god or other. If you were to take a poll, most people would say, Yes, I believe in God. That might or might not mean the Christian God, for Jews and Moslems and many irreligious people also believe in god. The god they believe in does not really exist at all, but in their minds they believe in God. There are even many who believe in the God of the Bible, of whom they have learned in church. They know he is good and gracious and almighty and omnipresent. Some people only believe that there is a God, but have no interest in Him at all. They do not trust in Him, but trust in themselves or something else. But there are many people who do trust in God, whoever their god may be, and pray to Him. They depend on Him for their living, call on Him when they are in need, and they expect His blessing. Is God with them? In a sense He is. He pours out the sun and rain upon the just and the unjust alike. He keeps all men from many dangers, gives them their daily bread, heals their sicknesses, and gives them many things they pray for. But in another sense He is not with them. He sends His good gifts so that they will know He is good and will call upon Him in truth and believe in Christ Jesus and be saved. But at the same time, as the Bible says, “God is angry with the wicked every day.” And if they do not repent and believe, they will die in their sins. We are not supposed to trust in Him only for earthly things, but He requires that we trust in Him with faith in Christ. We must believe that He will send us His blessings for this reason only, that Jesus paid for our sins and made us acceptable in His sight, and that for His sake God is gracious to us.

While there are many heathen, and many unthinking Christians, who trust in God quite apart from Christ, there are also many true Christians who trust in Christ for their salvation, but neglect or forget to look to Him for their daily needs. They are ready to die, but not ready to live with God and with Christ. They pray, perhaps, for forgiveness of sins, but do not think to pray for their daily bread. When trouble comes, they count on their own resources, their intelligence, cleverness, strength, friends, relatives, doctors, lawyers, government, or equipment to rescue them. Is God with them? Yes, but they do not know it or seem to care. If you had a faithful and wealthy friend who really loved you and was eager to help you, but you never call on him, never talk to him, but call on no one or on everyone except that friend, how would you expect him to feel?

If you trust in Christ as your Redeemer from sin and your passport to eternal life, then you should also trust in God and in Christ, - for Christ is God, one of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, - in every need. You should trust in Him for your daily bread, for health, life, and protection, and for rescue in emergency. You must not allow your saving faith in Christ to be limited only to the spiritual and eternal things, but it must radiate through every part of your life. So let us now learn about Trusting in God.

I. Trust in Him in every need. That is the lesson we learn from the example of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was king of Israel at Jerusalem about the year 710 B.C. The Assyrian army that once saved Judah from Israel and Syria, was now on the march. King Sennacherib was greedy for conquest. He had conquered all of Judah and now came against Jerusalem. HE sent his ambassador, Rabshekah, with promises, threats, and boasts, to convince the city to ignore Hezekiah and surrender. He even said, “The Lord sent me.” And he sent a letter to Hezekiah, an ultimatum. And what did Hezekiah do? He **took the letter, read it, went into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord, and**

said, Open thine eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacharib. Now therefore, O Lord, our God, save us from his hand.

That is what God wants us to do. **Spread it before the Lord.** Go to Him in faith and turn the problem over to Him. That is what you do when you trust God. Many of the problems we have come because we do not trust Him. All our sins are acts of mistrust of God. If we trust Him completely, we would never sin. The more you trust Him, the less you sin. We should trust Him enough to put our guilt and sins at the foot of Christ's cross. We should trust Him enough to entrust our immortal souls to His care. We should trust Him enough to obey His Commandments, knowing they are good for us and not bad. But we distrust Him. We think, "Oh, no! That will never work. I will not succeed or survive or be happy or be able to do good if I do what that Commandment says; I must do something else." That is why people steal, commit adultery, kill, believe false doctrine, worship false gods, practice unionism, and the like, and that is why they turn to alcohol, drugs, and suicide to escape their problems. They do not trust God. That is how it happens that people who have been good Christians come to do such things. They believe in God for justification and salvation, but they do not trust Him otherwise. They do not trust Him even though His promises are rich and abundant throughout Scripture, and even though Jesus said, " *whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you.*" For such Christians the spiritual has nothing to do with the practical matters of life, such as business, family, health, job, safety, food, and the like. Those are things you have to take care of yourself. When they do resort to prayer, it is as a last resort rather than the first one. They do not begin by putting their affairs in God's hands.

How foolish that is when we know the grace of God. If He loved us enough to offer His only Son to provide us forgiveness for our sins, if He loves us enough to promise us eternal life and to give us the Holy Spirit, surely He loves us enough to provide for our bodies. When Jesus taught us, " *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,*" He added, " *and all these things shall be added unto you,*" and added also, " *Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.*" Besides, He said, " *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?*" How foolish not to trust God when we know also His power. When Hezekiah trusted God the situation looked hopeless. What chance had they against the army that had trampled down every army, every city, every nation, every obstacle, and every god in their path? But it was that mighty army that fell in one night because God intervened. You might say, But God doesn't intervene like that today; that was only in Bible times. Now you have to live by your own wits. But God does intervene; only you cannot see it. Now He does not interrupt the natural order, but He uses it and provides for you by the instrumentality of all things. *All things work together for good to them that love God.* The ups and downs of nature, the marching of armies, the industry and inventiveness of businessmen, the weather, the stars, day and night, summer and winter, and all things else are serving you – not so you might have a "cushy" life, but so you might live for the glory of your God and Savior. And that brings us to the next point:

II. that we put His kingdom first. See what Hezekiah prays: **Hear all the words of Sennacharib, which he hath sent to reproach the living God. Save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only.** In other words, Hezekiah was saying it is God and His glory that are at stake. Sennacharib had said, " *Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord.*" In 2 Chronicles 20 another pious king, Jehoshaphat, was troubled when the Moabites and Ammonites came for war, and he prayed: " *O our God, we have no might against this great multitude, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.*" And this is the answer he received through the prophet Jehaziel: " *Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not your's, but God's.*" When Luther prayed, it was not for himself and his cause, but for the cause of God and God's church. Too many of our prayers are self-centered and selfish. It is not we that are important, but God and His kingdom. James writes, " *Ye have not because ye ask not; ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*" In Numbers 11, when Moses heard the people complain and weep, he prayed, " *If thou deal thus with me, kill me.*" Elijah was depressed and asked, " *Take my life.*" Jonah prayed, " *Take my life, for it is bitter.*" The mother asked Jesus that her sons might sit on Jesus right and on His left in His kingdom. Those were selfish prayers. They did not put the kingdom of God first, but self and their own desires.

But aren't you suppose to pray for the things you want? Didn't Jesus tell us that? Yes, but when we do, the kingdom of God and His righteousness for ourselves and for others, must still come first. We add the condition for all things of this body and life: If it be thy will. That is, if it will be good for my eternal salvation and for that of others and good for thy glory, then let me have this thing; if not, I do not need it. Do not give me, O God, anything that I want, no matter how badly, if it will be bad. John writes, " *This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.*" It is salvation that comes first; it is God's glory that comes first. It is

His battle and glory. Let our desires come second, and as for our needs, we only need what will keep us unto eternal life. Let us first pray for that, and then for safety, rescue, relief, and the needs of this body and life. Finally, trusting God means also

III. that we understand that He works in mysterious ways. God fights His battles in strange ways sometimes, because His ways are not our ways. See how He conquered Jericho with a miracle; how He brought Israel out of Egypt by slaying all the firstborn in one night and by marching Israel through the Red Sea; how He defeated the Midianites through Moses prayer, with his arms held up as he prayed; how Joshua won his great battle with the sun standing still in the heavens; how another army was decimated with a storm of fiery hail; how another was frightened by a noise of chariots and horses and a great army when there was none; how Gideon defeated an enormous army with trumpets and pots and shouting; and in this chapter how God defeated Sennacharib. Sennacharib had come with an army of about a million men. It was invincible, like an army of locusts. But in the night the angel of God struck. In 2 Chronicles we read, *“The Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria,”* 185,000 of them. So the king had nothing but 815,000 privates, and he had to go home, where he was murdered in the house of his god.

Consider also how God kept the widow of Zarephath, with oil and flour that just never got used up, how Jesus fed the 5000 with a few loaves and fishes, and consider how He crushed death and hell, got rid of the guilt and punishment of sin, and opened the door of heaven: by becoming a man, hanging on a cross, and dying in place of sinners. So do not expect God to do things your way. He has His own way, and it is much wiser than yours; it is also much better. Your eye may never see His works in this life, but He is doing great things for you, for you who believe in Him are chosen and His delight. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He has your deliverance all prepared and on its way, even before you ask. Trust in Him. Amen.

NOTE: This sermon was written by Pastor Kenneth Miller, and is found in the book “The Gospel According to Isaiah”, pg. 216ff

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