

SPREADING IT OUT BEFORE GOD

Let me give you a background to the passage, I am about to read to you. This happened during the reign of king Hezekiah, in which a king of Assyria named Sennacherib threatened the city of Jerusalem which was under king Hezekiah. He did this by sending a letter of threats, which also suggested that God could not stand against him as well. He had defeated many kingdoms like Gozan, Haran and Rezepth and was confident that even the God of Israel could not withstand him.

2 Kings 19:14 And Hezekiah received the letters from the hand of the messengers, and read it. And Hezekiah went up into the house of Jehovah, and spread it before Jehovah. 15 And Hezekiah prayed before Jehovah and said, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, who dwells between the cherubs, You are God Himself, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made the heavens and the earth. 16 Jehovah, bow down Your ear and hear. O Jehovah, open Your eyes and see, and hear the words of Sennacherib, who has sent him to taunt the living God. 17 Truly, Jehovah, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, 18 and have thrown their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone, and they have destroyed them. 19 And now, O, Jehovah our God, I beseech You, save us out of his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are Jehovah God, and You only. 20 And Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, So says Jehovah, the God of Israel, I have heard what you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria.

- This morning, I want to talk to you on the subject matter **SPREADING IT OUT BEFORE GOD**.
- Things were not looking good for Hezekiah as he was faced with a great threat to the existence of the city of God Jerusalem and his own reign as a king of the kingdom of Judah.
- This letter signaled bad news for him and what was he going to do about it?
- With this letter in his hands, the king had a couple options to go by:
 - Play dead and pretend as if no threat was imminent.
 - Seek out for an alliance with a stronger kingdom.
 - Start preparing his troops for the defense of their lives.
- Just like Hezekiah, at one point or another we have been put on notice by the devil. The devil does not care how respected you are by your kids, or by your spouse, your high-flying career, your latest acquisition or how long you have been a believer for, at some point he will take his chances with you.

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- I know that a lot of you here have been put on notice by the devil and for a long time, he has been on your case.
- The big question is this, how have you responded to the letters you have been receiving from the devil and his agents?
- This is the crux of the matter, how you respond to the threats against your life and well-being matters.
- When people are sick, they naturally run to the doctor, when your car has a breakdown, you naturally respond by taking it to the mechanic, when you are struggling with your studies, you look for a tutor for assistance.
- What should be the response of a believer in the face of a spiritual attack? – today, many believers have been playing dead in the face of conflict or have been running towards the wrong solution for their issues.
- In fact, you would think that all is well by the way some Christians behave.

Luke 16:9 ...for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light

Ecclesiastes 10: 7 I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves.

- Hezekiah was cut from a different cloth, in the day of trouble, he laid it out before God in prayer – that was his response. He didn't play dead; he didn't look for a strong alliance but spread it out before the Lord.
- Christians know where their help come from, and they know how to get it but very few do what is required of them.
- Hezekiah's response determined whether he was going to be a slave to Assyria or remained as king over God's kingdom.
- Your response to your situation will determine how things will end for you.
- Hezekiah, responded by spreading out his matter before God – In humility, Hezekiah laid out the letter which had the bad news before God.
- This was no ordinary response; it was one born out of a deep-seated desire for God to intervene.
- His faith prompted him to lay out the letter before God – he saw it as a point of connection, and wanted to pass the message clearly before God.
- This action by Hezekiah is one that resembles a prevailing type of prayer. He was not going to leave until God had read this letter.

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- We have a shortage of believers engaging in prevailing prayer – the type of prayer that endures until an answer comes through, a type of prayer that is born out of desperation.
- Hezekiah was desperate for an answer from God and was not going to leave anything to chance (He acknowledged God's supremacy, he detailed the threat that was before him, he petitioned God for deliverance).
- Spreading out the letter before God was no ordinary act of prayer but one that spoke of the level of faith that accompanied it.
- God will respond to your faith when you are praying – *“Let it be done to you according to your faith”¹*
- Hezekiah spread out the report before God – what are you going to do to elevate your prayer levels in this coming season?
- Prevailing prayers ask of God to move mountains that are hindering your progress.
- Prevailing prayers ask of God to open doors that are closed before you.
- When passion and faith collide, God will do the impossible for you.

Prevailing prayer gives you access to a big God.

- Elijah engaged in prevailing prayers – he was a man of like passions as us and yet he prayed big prayers. His prayers stopped rain from falling for 3,5 yrs, his prayers made rain to fall again.
- Joshua engaged prevailing prayers – he commanded the sun to stop for a whole day to defeat the enemies of God (Joshua 10:1-15).
- Hannah, the mother of Samuel, engaged in the prevailing prayer for conception.

1 Samuel 1:10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to Jehovah, and wept sorely. 11 And she vowed a vow and said, O, Lord of Hosts, if You will indeed look upon the affliction of Your handmaid and remember me, and not forget Your handmaid, but will give to Your handmaid a man-child, then I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

Hannah is a true example of prevailing prayer in action:

- She was consistent in prayer (every year she went to the house of God) – you need to learn to tarry in prayer until answers come your way.

¹ Matthew 9:29

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- Don't be too busy for individual and corporate prayer – every mature believer understands the power of prayer and actively looks for opportunities to pray.

I am so busy now that if I did not spend three hours each day in prayer, I could not get through the day – Martin Luther

- She persevered in prayer. You cannot afford to go on retirement – we need to engage prayer all the days of our lives.
- She went to the temple whenever the season came – please do not exclude yourself from prayer. When you exclude yourself from prayer, you are excluding yourself from possible breakthroughs.
- She was emotionally expressive (she wept sorely), when your case is dire, there is no room for dignity during prayer – you will do what makes you feel like you have touched heaven.
- She prayed from a place of total devotion to God – she pledged to give back the child to the service of God. She was not consumed by a need for a child, but was consumed by God's honor and glory. It was a selfless prayer, which was directed at God.
- When Hezekiah spread out the letter before God, it was a physical act that influenced the spiritual realm.
- Sometimes what you do physically can become a significant symbol that impacts the invisible world.
- Moses raised the staff up in the mountain and as long as the staff was raised, Joshua prevailed down in the valley.

Exodus 17:9 And Moses said to Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out to fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. 10 And Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And it happened when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. And when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

- The raised staff was a symbol of victory in the spirit and Moses had to keep it raised – it influenced what was happening down in the valley.

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- Joshua and the Israelites were instructed to circle the city of Jericho 13 times and on the 13th time, they were to make a huge noise. This physical act of faith resulted in the taking over of the great city of Jericho.
- Let the Lord show you what you need to do in order to elevate your prayer life to another level in this coming season of fasting and prayer.
- People will lie down prostrate in prayer, as a way of humbling themselves before God, some people will commit to come and spend the whole night here at the altar in prayer, some people will fast longer than the church programme requires.

Why did Hezekiah bother to spread the letter before God?

- Hezekiah must have known something about God and that made him do what he did. What you know about God determines how you pray and what you expect from Him.
- God's nature and track record compels us to trust Him in prayer.

2 Kings 19: 15 And Hezekiah prayed before Jehovah and said, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, who dwells between the cherubs, You are God Himself, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made the heavens and the earth. 16 Jehovah, bow down Your ear and hear. O Jehovah, open Your eyes and see, and hear the words of Sennacherib, who has sent him to taunt the living God.

- Our God is like no other, He is Elohim – the almighty God (That is the Hebrew word used in verse 15). Hezekiah called out to the multiplicity of God – God the Father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit.
- This speaks of the multidimensional nature of God – there is nothing He cannot handle.
- God is all powerful, God is all seeing and all present – there are things you might not be able to vocalize but he knows them. That is why we sometimes pray in an unknown tongue.
- The reason why Hezekiah spread out the letter before God and prayed, he actually believed that God sees, God hears and that He can save the day.
- Prevailing prayer only happens, if you are convinced that God is able, that he cares about your situation.
- People of God, we serve a God who is capable – we see His capability being described when he spoke to Moses from a burning bush.

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Exodus 3:7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

- God speaks, God sees, God hears, God knows and God saves – this is why we should spread out our matters before Him.
- What was the result of spreading it out?

2Kings 19:20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard... 34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.