

him with prestige. Hezekiah became famous. News of the amazing victory over Assyria spread around the world. This was followed by the news of his recovery from his deathbed.

- 2) The king of Babylon sent letters and a present to Hezekiah to congratulate him (2Ki 20:12). He proudly showed them all of his treasures.
- 3) His pride and foolishness angered the Lord (2Ch 32:25).

b. Proper focus is threatened

- 1) Isaiah told him that all he had shown the men from Babylon would one day be carried there as spoil.
- 2) He did humble himself so that God postponed His judgment (2Ch 32:26), but Hezekiah was not the same after that. He lost his godly focus.
- 3) Hezekiah's response was less than godly. (2 Kings 20:19) "*Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?*"
- 4) It was during those extra 15 years that his son Manasseh was born. Evidently, his proud heart had so damaged his walk with God that he failed to train up his son in the way he should go. "[Manasseh] became a curse on the earth and an abomination in the sight of the Lord." Lockyer
- 5) We must beware that prestige gained by our successes in life often leads to pride and God **hates** pride. **Pride steals the glory that belongs only to the Lord.**

Conclusion: The devil used three things to threaten Hezekiah's godliness: The **pressures** of life, the **presence** of pain, and the **prestige** of success. He will use the same things in your life. The only way to stay godly is to stay very close to the Lord. We must use these trials as **stepping-stones** across the troubled waters of life not as **stumbling-blocks** that cause us to fall on our face. Remember, living godly in an ungodly world is like paddling a canoe upstream. It is hard work and faced with many obstacles, but it is not impossible. Press on! Press on!

Song: Follow On **398** (#2)

Godliness Threatened

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Introduction: Hezekiah was a very godly king during one of the darkest periods of Judah's history. Living a godly life in an ungodly world has always been like paddling a canoe upstream in a rapid-flowing river. It is hard work and faced with many obstacles, but it is not impossible.

Transition: As we examine Hezekiah's life, I want us to note three things that threatened his godliness and will also threaten yours.

The first thing that will threaten one's godliness is ...

1. The Pressures of Life

a. He had an overwhelming duty

- 1) Hezekiah came to the throne at age 25 (2Ki 18:1-3). Evidently, his mother Abi, a godly woman, had reared him to fear and obey God contrary to the wicked character of his father Ahaz. He *did right in the sight of the Lord*, just as king David had done.
- 2) The nation had fallen deeply into idolatry and rejection of God. Hezekiah had an overwhelming task of removing the symbols of idolatry set up by his father and seeking to turn the people back to Jehovah God (2Ki 18:4).
- 3) God tells us that Hezekiah trusted in the LORD God **more** than any other king of Judah (2Ki 18:5-6).
- 4) Hezekiah reopened the doors of the Temple that his father had closed (2Ch 29:3). He cleansed the Temple (2Ch 29:18). He then restored Temple worship (2Ch 29:20). This brought great rejoicing (2Ch 29:36).
- 5) He held a great Passover feast (2Ch 30). (2 Chronicles 30:26) "*So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem.*"
- 6) He reinstated the work and support for the Priests and the Levites (2Ch 31). At his command, the people began to bring in their tithes to meet the needs (2Ch 31:5-6).
- 7) All these national reforms were a huge undertaking for a young king. Certainly, he felt the pressures of life. In all this, he did not allow his busyness for the Lord to distract

from his walk with the Lord. **Spiritual activity must never substitute for heart fellowship with God.**

b. He faced opposition

- 1) Those who do right and live for the Lord must expect opposition from those who oppose God. This was true for Hezekiah as well. (2 Kings 18:13) "*Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.*"
- 2) One of the captured cities was Lachish, a large city 43kms SW of Jerusalem. "An interesting wall relief taken from the excavation of Sennacherib's royal palace in Nineveh is persevered in the British Museum. It portrays the Assyrian king on a portable throne in his military camp outside Lachish. Prisoners of war are marching by on foot, and all the booty from the city is being displayed on ox-wagons." (Dilday quoted by Guzik)
- 3) God does not shelter his children from all conflict. It is during times of conflict that we must learn to trust the Lord more fully.
- 4) At first, Hezekiah tried to appease Assyria by giving them great sums of money (2Ki 18:14-16). This did not stop the determined Sennacherib.
- 5) Hezekiah then prepared to protect Jerusalem (2Ch 32:3). He encouraged the people to trust the Lord (2Ch 32:7-8). As the siege began, Hezekiah continued to trust the Lord. (2 Chronicles 32:20) "*And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.*"
- 6) God miraculously rescued them. (2 Kings 19:35) "*And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.*"
- 7) When the pressures of life threaten your godliness, stay true to the Lord as did Hezekiah.

The second thing that will threaten one's godliness is ...

2. The Presence of Pain

a. Pain is a genuine burden

- 1) Right after the great victory over the Assyrians, God

allowed Hezekiah to get deathly sick. [The attack was in his 14th year and he lived after his sickness 15 years and reigned a total of 29 years.] God makes no mistakes. He knew that Hezekiah needed that sickness to test his godliness.

- 2) (2 Kings 20:1) "*In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*"
- 3) His sickness included an infected boil (2Ki 20:7).

b. Pain reminds of life's brevity

- 1) Here in the prime of life at age 39, just after a miraculous victory over the Assyrians, Hezekiah hears that he is going to die.
- 2) There is nothing like a bad sickness to get us to think about the brevity of life and the possibility of dying.
- 3) Satan wants us to get angry with God when the life of a godly person is shortened and the life of a wicked person is prolonged. It may seem unfair, but we must not forget that existence does not end with physical death. Death is just the beginning of a blessed eternity for the Christian and the beginning of dreadful eternal damnation for the unbeliever. (cf., Ps 73).
- 4) Hezekiah prayed and begged God for more time (2Ki 20:2-3). In gracious mercy, God gave him 15 more years (2Ki 20:5-6). To assure him of this promise, God moved the sun back 10 degrees in the sky (2Ki 20:11).
- 5) When the devil tries to use the presence of pain to threaten your godliness, do not become bitter. Pray fervently and leave the results in the hands of the Lord. **I know that is easier said than done, but it is still the right thing to do.** (1 Peter 5:7) "*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*"

The third thing that will threaten one's godliness is ...

3. The Prestige of Success

a. Pride subtly invades

- 1) When Satan could not get Hezekiah to yield to the pressures of life or to the presence of pain, he tempted