

## 2.9.17 Hezekiah

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Preacher: Craig Dyer

[ 0 : 0 0 ] to the service this evening. Again, good to see a number of people from different places and a special welcome to yourselves. It's good to have Craig with us again and we're thankful for him opening up God's Word tonight and we look forward to him doing that again as he returns to Isaiah this evening. The intimations just wanted to before we begin, first of all to say that after this service there will be a time of informal fellowship here in the hall, probably around half past seven but if you're able to stay behind please do so. Informal fellowship, tea and coffee and we're looking forward to hearing the testimony of Shona Davidson, she's there, she's checking for her and also Dawn looks sweet. So we look forward to that time of fellowship. Stay behind if you're able to. Tomorrow the service is on the Lord's Day at 11 and 6pm, the usual times and the service at 11 will be conducted by

Craig and we will celebrate the second of the Lord's Supper at that service, the evening service at 6pm. Donations of food and bacon are required please for the fellowship after the Sunday evening and if you're able to do that please speak to whoever, I'm getting my head shake. We okay for donations?

Yeah, so forget that last information. The final thing to say is that the session remains open and for those who know and love the Lord and haven't yet confessed their faith and come to the table, please once again hear the invitation. The session will meet at the end and we'll be delighted to meet with any who would wish to come forward for the first time. These are all the intimations and let's begin with a short one of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this evening and for the glory of your creation. All that we've seen in the course of this day, the majesty and the splendor of it, directs us as a signpost to you, our creator and our maker, our sustainer and our saviour.

And Lord, we pray that just as we see something of your glory and creation, we pray that as we open your word this evening to sing and to read and to meditate, that we would see more of your glory, that you would reveal yourself to us and that you would reveal ourselves to us, that we would see our need afresh of Jesus and that we would be drawn to him.

[ 3 : 0 1 ] Still our hearts, we pray that we pray. Still our hearts, we pray. At the end of a busy day, we ask, Lord, that you would take from our minds all that would distract us and that you would enable us to think upon you and to have hearts that are responsive to your word.

We pray that we pray that we pray. We pray that we pray that we pray that we would that always there is need. So often there is crisis. So often there is crisis. And we pray, Lord, for your hand to be upon all those who respond to whatever it is that they are heading towards.

And for all, Lord, who would wish to be with us, but who are unable to be with us, we pray that you would touch their hearts, that they would know your presence, that they would know your hand upon them.

And for those who would know your hand upon them. And for those who would know your hand upon them. And for those who have opportunity to be with us, but have no present desire to be with us, touch their hearts, Lord, we pray. Awaken and revive. We pray these things in Christ's name.

We pray these things for your glory. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 5 : 0 9 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. we sing again to God's praise this time for mission praise 491 498 sorry 498 in mission praise oh God our help in ages past and hope for years to come now you're going to write and read God's word thank you pastor good evening everyone let's turn in the word of God this evening to Isaiah 38 Isaiah chapter 38 and as we do so let's say again what a joy and privilege it is to be here thank you for your prayers thank you for your encouragement thank you for your fellowship and I've just had an amazing day being driven around this magnificent heart

of God's creation and lapping it up and enjoying every moment of it so that's been an absolute delight we were just singing there weren't we about how time like an ever rolling stream bears all its sons away and we're going to read about one of its sons who was about to be born away in Isaiah chapter 38 in those days hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death and Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him thus says the Lord set your house in order for you shall die and you shall not recover then hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord and said please oh Lord remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart and I've done what is good in your sight and hezekiah wept bitterly then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah go to and say to hezekiah thus says the Lord the God of David your father

I've heard your prayers I've seen your tears behold I will add 15 years to your life and I will deliver you and this city out of the hands of the king of Assyria and will defend this city this shall be the sign to you from the Lord that the Lord will do this thing that he has promised behold I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back 10 steps so the sun turned back on the dial the 10 steps by which it had declined a writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness I said in the middle of my days I must depart I'm consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years I said I shall not see the Lord the Lord in the land of the living I shall look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world my dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent like a weaver

I rolled up my life he cuts me off from the loon from day to night you bring me to an end I calm myself until morning like a lion he breaks all my bones from day to night you bring me to an end like a swallow or a crane I chirp I moan like a dove my eyes are weary with looking upward O Lord I'm oppressed by my pledge of safety what shall I say for he has spoken to me and he himself has done it I walk slowly all my years because of the bitterness of my soul O Lord by these things men live and in all these is the life of my spirit O restore me to health and make me live behold it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction for you've cast all my sins behind your back for Sheol does not thank you death does not praise you those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness the living the living he thanks you as I do this day the father makes known to the children your faithfulness the lord will see me and we will play with music on string instruments all the days of our lives at the house of the lord now Isaiah had said let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boy that he may recover Hezekiah also had said what is the sign that it shall go up from the house of the lord at that time Meridoc Baladan the son of Baladan king of Babylon sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah for he heard that he'd been sick and had recovered and Hezekiah welcomed them gladly and he showed them his treasure house the silver the gold the spices the precious oil his whole armory all that was found in the storehouses there was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah and said to him what did these men say and from where did they come to you Hezekiah said they have come to me from a far country from Babylon he said what have they seen in your house

Hezekiah answered and they have seen all that is in my house there is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them then Isaiah said to Hezekiah hear the word of the Lord of hosts behold the days are coming when all that is in your house and that which your fathers have stored up till this day shall be carried to Babylon nothing shall be left says the Lord and some of your own sons who come from you whom you will father shall be taken away and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon then said Hezekiah to Isaiah the word of the Lord that you have spoken is good for he thought there will be peace and security in my days this is the word of God we'll pray for a moment our heavenly father we thank you that you are the God who speaks to us and we thank you that as we have read your word and as we come now to meditate upon your word and hear your word preached we pray that just as you have spoken in times past you would speak today into each one of our lives that we would know the word of the Lord for us and that we would respond in a way that is glorifying to your name and saving for our own souls help us we pray we pray your special help to be given to Craig that he would know your reading and guiding that your light and that your truth would be sent forth as we pray that you would use him and we ask in

[ 13 : 03 ] Jesus name Amen well again this evening it would be a great help to me if you would have your Bibles open and Isaiah 38 and 39 as we come to these great passages and we come to a little bit that is to me in my first real visit proper visit to Lewis and Harris it's a bit like that part of the road down from Stornoway that I took note on yesterday when we move from Lewis to Harris

and the scenery just improves magnificently I'm only kidding if you're from Lewis don't be offended I'm just having a wee joke with you we're at the hinge point we're at the bridge in the two halves of the prophecy of Isaiah so far in Isaiah the big issue has been and we saw a little bit of this last night from Isaiah 30 the big issue of Isaiah has been repeatedly brought to the front and it's captured in chapter 36 by the question of the

Assyrian envoy sent out from his king who asks a question to Hezekiah Isaiah 36 verse 4 say to Hezekiah here's the big issue for Israel thus says the great king the king of Assyria on what do you rest this trust of yours that's the that's the massive issue that Israel was having to wrestle with all the way through Isaiah on what do you rest this trust of yours and this king of Assyria who had a huge hit for himself called himself the great king had the comity to say to the people of Israel I want to know your answer to this verse 5 do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war in whom do you now trust that you've rebelled against me says the king of Assyria that is the question all the way through Isaiah to the people of

Judah trusting in anyone and everyone other than the Lord their God the big question of the book to them is on what do you rest his trust of yours in whom do you now trust and if you know the story of Hezekiah you know that we see that question in his lifetime in chapter 36 and 37 it's a beautiful story I love the story Hezekiah gets word of this threat from Assyria and in chapter 37 he goes and he takes the letter do you remember and he spreads it out before the Lord and he pleads with God for God to intervene and the Lord wonderfully does so it's an astounding about turn of circumstances as Hezekiah begs the Lord for rescue against humanly insurmountable odds and the Lord delivered his people but as we come tonight to the next part of the story 38 and 39 what is happening here in these chapters these verses that we've read is similar to what we now know on this 20th anniversary of the death of

Princess Diana what we now know has been happening to Prince Harry for the last 20 years have you read about it have you seen these articles on the television talking about how that young man has struggled down through the years to come to terms with the death of his mother and we all know what has happened in the nation over these two decades and now we know what was happening not just on a national level but on a personal level to the young prince he's now come out and said I have really struggled to come to terms with the loss of my mum and what was hidden what was deeply private has now become widely known to the help of many people I think exactly the same thing happens now in Isaiah's hinge section if chapter 36 and 37 give us the national picture of the period chapter 38 and 39 give us the personal picture of this king and we discover that around about the time of the invasion from Assyria or shortly after it

Hezekiah experienced a personal crisis an invasion of serious illness came to his life so we see the national picture we see the personal picture but beyond these Isaiah is showing us the eternal perspective he is showing us God's view on history and we find the question of where his people trust really lies is central to this section and on this weekend that's the thing that is helpful for us to be thinking about where does my trust really lie as I think about the Lord's table tomorrow where does my trust really lie Hezekiah has his life extended but only to decline in a way that was as determined as it was disappointing so there are two things I want to draw your attention to tonight last night I had two things and the first of the two things had two subheadings and the second had five so you got seven points for your trouble last night but you're only going to have two things for us to think about number one

[ 18 : 35 ] Hezekiah's wanted Hezekiah wanted extended life and the second thing Hezekiah wasted extended life let's think about these together number one Hezekiah wanted extended life look back at verse one in those days Hezekiah became sick was at the point of death and Isaiah the prophet the son of Elos came to him and said to him thus says the Lord set your house in order for you shall die you shall not recover and Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord and said please oh Lord remember how I've walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart and have done what is good in your sight and Hezekiah wept bitterly he was desperate to live longer in this life so desperate as you read the text that you'll see he tries to plea bargain with God by reminding God of what a good guy he was I hope none of us is coming to the

Lord's table tomorrow morning to show God what a good guy we are I guess that would be the one grounds in which we should not come well that's what was going on with Hezekiah and it's interesting the Lord says nothing in reply through Isaiah about the quality of Hezekiah's life but in verse 4 the word of the Lord came to Isaiah go and say to Hezekiah thus says the Lord the God of

David your father that's significant I've heard your prayer and I've seen your tears isn't that beautiful we have a God who hears our prayers and sees our tears that's really awesome and he does behold end of verse 5 I will add 15 years to your life when the Lord speaks through Isaiah to Hezekiah and establishes himself as the God of your father God of David your father God is making it clear that he is acting to spare Hezekiah not on the basis of Hezekiah's human performance but on the basis of God's divine promise he's doing this on the basis of the fact that he is the God of David your father he's working out his eternal purposes and the Lord amazingly extended the dying man's life by 15 years now this must have a resonance for many of us if not all of us here this evening because having a guaranteed 15 year extension at this point to your own life or to the life of your loved one would bring unimaginable joy and relief to many people when we talk about his life being extended because he wanted it to be so we know what that feeling is like don't we we know what we would give for a loved one who might be seriously ill to be given a 15 year extension we know what we would have given perhaps for our loved ones who've already passed away if they could have had a 15 year extension as the associate pastor at

Harper Church in Glasgow I spend some of my time in the hospitals around the city and as I walk around the hospitals and as I go in and out of the wards like anybody does here in any hospital anywhere in the world you don't need any medical training to see that there are people in these places who would give everything if there was a procedure on the NHS or in private medicine available to them called 15 year life extension operation they would give anything to have something like that and this hits us very hard I lost a beloved friend just last week went to be with the Lord age 64 now to some of you tonight 64 is ancient from where I'm standing 64 is not old at all and I would have loved him to have another 15 years and when

I say that that must bring pain to many hearts as we think about these realities and it's not just the sick who die even on a beautiful day like this there will be people who will have been going about their business today full of them and big vigour as they jumped out of bed this morning and have gone by tonight through accident and injury and sudden illness it's the nature of life in this world death is a bitter enemy and Isaiah records Hezekiah's own reflections on the horror of hopeless years verse 10 Hezekiah I said in the middle of my days I must depart I'm consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years He's grieving over his untimely death He was about 39 years old at this point and he says

[ 24 : 07 ] I'm going to be cut off in my prime I'm going to go to Sheol the place of the departed and he knows that he'll be alive when his life is over in this world verse 11 I said I shall not see the Lord the Lord in the land of the living he wasn't mourning the fact that he wouldn't see God in death but that he wouldn't see God's providence in this life again was what he was mourning I shall look verse 11 on man no more among the inhabitants of the world then he wrestles with the terrible suddenness of the changes that death brings and its apparent cruelty verse 12 my dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent like a weaver I've rolled up my life he cuts me off from the loom Alec Mateo says that Hezekiah pictures himself as the weaver who has finished his pattern detached it from the loom and rolled it up like the weaver the individual weaves the pattern of his life and what he has weaved he takes with him but the limit of material allocated to him and the time for weaving is decided by another who cuts him off from the loom that's exactly the picture that Hezekiah used to describe how he was feeling about his life and how horrible this intervention was that he's going to bring it to some men he says at the end of verse 12 from day to night you bring me to an end

I calm myself until morning like a lion he breaks all my bones from day to night you bring me to an end fascinating isn't it that Hezekiah attributes his untimely death to the work of God he says Lord it's you that is doing this he says he sees God as a lion that breaks his bones and brings him to an end and you know what Hezekiah is absolutely correct the God of the Bible never hides himself when we go to see who is the one behind our life who is the one behind our death it is one and the same it is the Lord who gives and the Lord who takes away we are His our lives are His even if they feel like they are ours we are

His and we have no difficulty in expressing the pain that we feel when that happens that pain is undeniably overwhelming we want our lives to be extended and even though you and I have no clue how often the Lord has extended our lives we have no idea where He spares us from in the day of days I wonder if you ever think about that do you ever think how often the Lord has spared your life that you may have no idea about seconds could have made a difference split seconds

sometimes we never know how often He spared us from injury and illness and yet we feel it so cruel when He acts not to do so when He acts not to do so and it is so intensely personal

God has taken away my life or the Lord is going to take away the life of my love man and the question is how are we going to relate to this God well you will know that there are some people who cultivate a real stony heart towards God in these circumstances they actually begin to hate Him for not intervening and answering their prayers the way they want it and that doesn't help and it's a difficult thing to say but I sometimes say to people after the event when things have calmed a little bit and I can see a hatred in their heart towards God I sometimes say to them look I can better understand the fact that you really dislike God because He did not answer your prayer in that regard I can better understand it if you were so thrilled with

Him every day that He gave you life if you were just overflowing with love and praise and gratitude to Him for every day that He blessed you with life and with the life of your loved ones but of course there's very very little of that generally people in that position move from a situation of taking everything from God and not giving Him a thought and suddenly disliking Him when He doesn't do what we want no what we need in life and death is to know this God is to trust this God is to praise this God because there is a sense in which the words God gave Isaiah for Hezekiah are the words God speaks to every human being on the planet the words of verse 1 thus says the Lord set your house in order for you shall die you shall not recover and you're saying to yourself well this is a very cheerful Saturday night we're having down at the community centre in the free church I'm glad we got this guy up from Glasgow we all feel so much better now oh we're going to get to the good bit don't worry but often in the gospel you get to the best bit through the worst bit you only hear the good news when you've heard the worst views and there it is there's a message of

[ 30 : 14 ] God to everybody on the planet set your house in order for you shall die and you shall not recover that's true of every single person I've sat with many people when they've been told there's nothing more can be done for them and one of the experiences is to feel that they now move to being a different type of human it seems to those who are told there's nothing more can be done for them that everyone else is the living but now they're in a different category they're in the dying but that's not the reality though we don't all mercifully we don't all have a known terminal diagnosis or prognosis we are nonetheless all dying and the message of the gospel is suppose you live to year 115 thus says the Lord set your house in order for you shall die and you shall not recover no one has any more certain grip on life than anyone else humanity including me has not got used to the fact that 100% of people die often we face illness or injury and we recover and we are slow to bless

God for sparing us even when we are quick to blame him when he doesn't but written over the entire planet as a result of the sinful rebellion from the garden of Eden against God written over the planet is the inescapable truth of verse 1 thus says the Lord humanity thus says the Lord set your house in order for you shall die it's true of every one of us unless the Lord Jesus returns first now Hezekiah got another 15 years and some of us today as we've said would give everything for another 15 years but we'll see an interesting thing in this story we'll see that there is no guarantee that there will be a good 15 years there's no guarantee that these 15 years of extension will land us closer to the

Lord because tragically that's not what happened with Hezekiah so number one Hezekiah wanted life extended number two Hezekiah wasted life extended there's a huge reminder in the restoration of Hezekiah that it is the Lord at work and he works as wonderfully through medicine as he works through miracles I know we have some medics here which is wonderful look at the answer to prayer in verse 21 of chapter 58 now Isaiah has said let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boil where they may recover and Hezekiah also said what is the sign that we shall go up to the house of the Lord isn't that amazing take a cake of figs and apply it to this boil that is killing the poor man and he will recover every time your doctor writes you a prescription for an antibiotic to get rid of that infection you should think of

Hezekiah every time you get something for your blood pressure or to strengthen your heart or whatever the treatment regime may be that you are on every time you take something we should be grateful grateful but we've moved on from the cake of figs I'll grant you we're glad about that but grateful because we know that just as surely that prescription has spared us from death just as this one spared Hezekiah from death and God is at work as gloriously through the prescription through the medicine as He is through the direct miracles and we long for more of these amazing people who work in medicine to see the hand of almighty God who gives them the knowledge and the

grace and the skill for we are fearfully and wonderfully made and the sign had been given verse 6 that God would deliver

Hezekiah and the city out of the hand of the king of Assyria and would defend the city and the sign that the Lord would do this is verse 8 behold I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun the dial of Ahaz turned back 10 steps so the sun turned back on the dial the 10 steps by which it had declined and some folks will say of course that's ridiculous of course that's impossible what do we say we say yes it is impossible for us it is impossible for a human to new man but we're not talking about a human here we're encountering the sovereign Lord the master of creation it is well within his right and power to lengthen and shorten time just as it is within his power to lengthen and shorten life why would that be difficult but we need to focus on the outcome for Hezekiah what he did with his extension and he wasted it chapter 39 verse 1 at that time

[ 36 : 01 ] Meridoc Baladan I think that sounds like a Gallic name to me I don't know what anybody else thinks Meridoc Baladan the son of Baladan king of Babylon sent envoys with letters of a present to Hezekiah for he heard that he'd be sick and had recovered I want to tell you my friends tonight strange to tell this development this present became more deadly for Hezekiah than the boil this became more disastrous and the illness that was going to carry him off in chapter 38 you see Meridoc Baladan king of Babylon wanted support for a rebellion against the mighty Assyrian he wanted someone to come and team up with him and share the costs of war and put an army together to take on the Assyrians and Hezekiah proves to be the very man the very supporter he is flattered into action and flattered into destruction verse 2

Hezekiah welcomed them gladly and I wondered as I read this earlier on this verse 2 I wondered did you begin to get the sense hang on there's something not there's something there's a bad smell about verse 2 look at it again Hezekiah welcomed them gladly and he showed them his treasure house the silver the gold the spices the precious oil his whole armory all that was found in the storehouses there was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them something wrong with that isn't there that's got a bad stink to it verse 4 of chapter 36 still rings in our ears say to Hezekiah on what do you rest this trust of yours that's the big question that hangs over the whole of Isaiah on what do you rest this trust of yours and if he had been asked at this moment Hezekiah would have to be honest and say devastatingly that his trust was no longer resting in his God who'd heard him who'd spared him who'd extended his life by 15 years

Hezekiah would have to have been honest and said that his treasure was where his trust was he was trusting in the treasure that he had amassed because that treasure got him a seat at the table with the big boys with Meredith Baladan and the merry men of Babylon Hezekiah was trusting in his treasure and he was trusting in Babylon verse 3 then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah and said to him and he wondered did the alarm bells ring in Hezekiah's head when he heard the question what did these men say and from where did they come to you now notice the emphasis on Hezekiah's self-importance as he answers the prophet the prophet of the God who gave him life and who spared his life in the verse 3 Hezekiah said they have come to me from a far country from Babylon they have come to me look how don't forget

Isaiah who you're talking to mate these guys have come to me I'm a respected global leader these guys have come from a distance Babylon is now coming to me for him Isaiah said verse 4 what have you seen in your house and he didn't even have a wit to lie he answered we've seen all that is in my house there's nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them then Isaiah said to Hezekiah hear the word of the Lord of hosts behold the days are coming when all that is in your house all that you've shown them and that your fathers are stored up till this day shall be carried to Babylon nothing shall be left says the Lord and some of your own sons who will come from you whom you will father of Babylon extended life wanted extended life wasted

Isaiah effectively says to Hezekiah since he is so impressed with Babylon he will be pleased to hear that everything he treasures everything he's shown to Merodah Maladah is going to be taken away to Babylon it's going to be taken away from his descendants who would otherwise have inherited it and his descendants are going to be taken themselves and neutered and made powerless and without influence under the regime of a Babylonian king disaster absolute disaster 2nd Chronicles 32 records it like this in those days Hezekiah became sick he was at the point of death and he prayed to the Lord and the Lord answered him and gave him a sign but Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him for his heart was proud therefore wrath came upon him and Judah and Jerusalem there's a little summary of Isaiah 38 and 39 summarized for us 2nd 2nd

2nd let that sink in as we draw this to a close tonight let that sink in that his heart became proud after all that he lived through and remember that Hezekiah was one of the really good guys he'd become king at 25 years of age he'd reigned for about 29 years he as much as any king worked to turn the nation back to the Lord worked to turn them back from the catastrophic direction that his father

[ 42 : 18 ] Ahaz had taken in Hezekiah had experienced revival he had known the amazing grace of God at work in his nation and in his life but his heart was proud please friends take a look at this sorry figure at the end of his 15 year extension or as he thinks about what's going to come at the end of his 15 year life extension take a look at this walking tragedy that is Hezekiah and never doubt your capability to do exactly the same thing please never trust yourself not to fall into the danger of pride and a hardened heart towards the Lord if this can happen to Hezekiah it can happen to anyone it doesn't matter how long you've been a pillar of the community or an elder or a pastor in the church or a theological instructor in the colleges it makes no difference who you are and what you've done never trust your heart we can never live long enough and be long enough on the road that we can relax and think that we can trust our own hearts not to do something really stupid

Jesus talked about in Mark chapter 8 didn't he he talked about those who hear the word but the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and chop the word and it proves unfruitful in their life now that presupposes that these very people of whom Jesus is speaking had for a period been hearing the word and been applying the word but then there was a sea change something happened and their minds were turned and their eyes went elsewhere and the cares of this world the things that this world offers us became more significant and more important and the deceitfulness of riches that is the idea of riches being the most important thing and the desires for other things entered in and choked the word so that it became unfruitful that's the tragedy of

Hezekiah can you believe it after seeing these stunning miracles nationally and personally he turned away from trusting the God to whom he had instinctively turned in prayer turned from the God who had so graciously spared him because he was flattered and then flattened and I wonder when you see in verse 8 how defiantly proud Hezekiah's response to God's judgment on him is so he hears what's going to happen to future generations and verse 8 then said Hezekiah to Isaiah the word of the Lord that you have spoken is good for he thought there will be peace and security in my days his first thoughts in this section are

I'm dying under God's judgment judgment is terrible that's how he begins chapter 38 and dying under God's judgment is terrible his last thoughts are I'll die before God judges it's fine I'll be gone before any of this happens he couldn't care less about those who were to come after him as long as he gets to live out his life extension in peace and quiet the word of the Lord seems good to him talk about the word of the Lord being choked talk about him understanding exactly what God was saying and do nothing with it but just it bouncing off Hezekiah's heart like a wooden mallet off a piece of rubber the word of the Lord had no impact on him at this stage that's fine he said she had the fires in

Harper Church in Glasgow we have a church conference every year where we look at how we're doing and we try to work out how we can better serve the Lord and better be a community of his people and better reach that hugely multicultural part of Glasgow we have about 20 nationalities now in our church family and about four years ago at the church conference I used this example of Hezekiah as a huge warning to the older ones in the church family and I just show you it tonight for what I hope will be your encouragement the danger of the Hezekiah syndrome the danger would be that you get to the point in your Christian life where you really know that to effectively engage Tarbert and North Harris or South Harris or West Harris or East Harris or anywhere in Harris with the gospel to effectively engage people you might have to think about making some changes to things and you might have to engage in different ways in order to try and get the unchanging gospel out to a changing world and the temptation might come to you

[ 48 : 21 ] I don't really mind if the church declines and dwindles and does nothing I don't really mind as long as they can bury me I've had conversations with people who've said things like that I don't really want I'm not really that bothered if we don't grow as long as you can bury me I'll be quite happy that's the Hezekiah way I think as long as it doesn't happen in my lifetime I don't really care I've no thought no concern for what will happen after my time I'm sure you're not like that I'm sure

you're not like that but if you find in your heart the fact you are think about it that is a lousy way to think that is not a way that brings honour to the Lord maybe how Hezekiah reacts seems like nothing to you maybe you think that I'm exaggerating when I say that he would have been better to die 15 years earlier in pain close to God than 15 years later in peace far from

God maybe that sounds like ridiculous to you I'm saying he would have been better to have died 15 years earlier in pain but close to God then 15 years later in peace far from God totally in peace no concerns about what came afterwards that's a horrific situation to get yourself into when God can be speaking of the judgement to come and it makes no impact on you as we close let me show you why that's true that he would have been better dying earlier close to God here we see a king afflicted with illness and powerless to do anything about it we see him wanting and wasting an extension to his life and the question is how does this help us what relevance does this have to us tonight beyond what

I've tried to show you already what is the gospel from Isaiah 38 and 39 well as we've seen the gospel begins with the bad news verse 1 thus says the Lord set your house in order for you shall die and you shall not recover it's true of everybody in the planet unless Jesus comes first to take those who are trusting in him to be with him forever but the good news good is not a big enough word the most glorious news our ears have ever heard is of a better king than hezekiah is of a better king for god's people a king who doesn't put his own needs first a king who does the opposite of hezekiah who puts the needs of his people ahead of his own a king who puts his people's eternal future ahead of his own a king who doesn't just want death postponed for him but who comes and who dies and rises so that death can be destroyed for everyone who puts their trust in him and this book of is is ultimately about that king and in the second half that we're going to be in now in chapter 49 and 51 tomorrow if we were spared we'll see him all the more vividly but we see him here we see the king the lord jesus even here earlier on reflecting on his powerlessness over death in verse 14 hezekiah said like a swallow or a crane chip crane i chip i moan like a dove my eyes are weary with looking upwards oh lord i am oppressed by my pledge of safety that literally means oh lord be my guarantor you know what a guarantor is oh lord post bail for me lord do whatever is necessary to free me from death that's the cry of hezekiah's heart in the absolute weakness he says i'm just like a moaning dove i'm just like a chirping crane or a whistling swallow it's as weak and faint and powerless as that but i'm seen to you oh lord be my pledge of safety lord will you post bail lord will you be my guarantor lord will you do what is necessary to free me from death and that is exactly what this great king the lord jesus has done for us you know 2 timothy 1 verse 10 the appearing of our saviour christ jesus who abolished death he didn't just postpone death he didn't just give us a life extension he abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel oh that's glorious why do we wish for death to be postponed when you can have death abolished and demolished it's so much better than having a 15 year extension because 15 years goes like that and when you know this god throughout life when you know this god as you face death it transforms everything and you get to the high point that hezekiah got to before his private word took him you get to know and believe and build your life on and tell others things like verse 17 where he said in a better day behold it was for my welfare that

I had great bitterness but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction for you've cast all my sins behind your back isn't verse 17 a very precise application of the christian gospel is it not exactly the testimony of everybody who knows and loves the lord that for our welfare we had that bitterness it may have been a period of suffering that brought us to our senses it may have just been a crushing conviction of sin that was overwhelming us it was a bitter experience but it was for our welfare that the lord brought that to us that we might taste of life and cleansing and forgiveness and forgiveness because in love he has delivered our life from the pit of destruction because he has cast all our sins behind his back isn't that glorious in fact

Isaiah will go on to say in chapter 53 which we'll not get to look at this weekend he'll go on to say in chapter 53 not only did he cast them behind his back he put them on his own back he bore our sins in his body on the tree in order that he could put our sins behind him forever in order that the whole grinding horrific reality of death being the consequence of sin and separation for God could be neutralised abolished demolished and that you and I can live our days telling others of this great God so here's the message of the gospel to the nations whoever we see wherever we go here's the truth for everybody set your house in order for you shall die and this is how you set your house in order this is how you prepare for that you trust in

[ 56 : 38 ] Jesus to abolish your death for you and you see what he has done for you how in love he has delivered your life in a pit of destruction because he's cast our sins behind his back that's why we break right that's why we gather as a community as people so conscious of our own sin and tomorrow morning we'll take the bread and we'll take the cup and we will proclaim his death and we will remind ourselves that's how he casts our sin behind his back not just by forgetting about it as though it didn't matter but by paying for it in death and blood so that we know he can never find it again he can never hold that to our account because our saviour has paid it for us maybe there's someone tonight who wants to ask him the one who bore our sins and his body on the tree now to make that a reality in your life as you cry out to the one who in verse 5 hears our prayers and sees our tears that we thank you heavenly father for this glorious king the lord jesus how we thank you that he became obedient to death even the death of the cross how we thank you that through the appearing of our saviour christ jesus he abolished death how we thank you that he has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel how we thank you that we stand in immeasurably a better position than hezekiah did on his happiest day and so our gracious god tonight we pray that you would bless your word to us for we still live in a world cursed and scarred by sin and death it still chills our latest breath and we ask our gracious father that you would be pleased to work out your purposes in our lives and if there are people tonight who need to do business with you who need to cry out to you who've moved away from you or who've never known you and by your mercy you brought them in here tonight please lord be at work let nothing yet steal away the word and we produce a harvest a hundred times what was sown to the glory of our saviour and king the risen and eternally waiting the lord jesus amen we're going to stand and sing together hymn 171 give to our god immortal praise and the final verse he sent his son with power to save from guilt and darkness and the grave wonders of grace the god the lord repeat his mercies in your soul shall we stand and now may the god of peace who brought again from the dead of lord jesus the great shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the eternal covenant equip you with everything good that you may do his will working in us that which is pleasing in his sight through jesus that will be glory forever and ever amen