

When You Don't Know What To Do

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2 Kings 19:1-20

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One thing about life that is universally recognized, affirmed, and felt by all people of every age is that sometimes, ***life is hard.***

I love the fact that the Bible does not hide from this, it both points it out, and tells us why.

Job 5:7

⁷ Yet man is born to trouble,
As the sparks fly upward.

Job 14:1

¹ “Man *who is born of woman*
Is of few days and full of trouble.”

These ***troubles*** can take many forms, and we could spend all day talking to everyone sitting here and hearing all about it.

It could be: *Relationships, Financial, Work, School, Health, Death, Loss of any kind...* or a million other things. These things are “*just the tip of the iceberg.*”

If you became a Christian because you thought it would fix all your problems, I hate to be the one to break it to you, but before Jesus was crucified, He prepared His disciples for the day He wouldn't be with them any longer. During that time, He told them this:

John 16:33

³³ These things I have spoken to you, **that in Me you may have peace.** In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, **I have overcome the world.**”

Jesus affirms that even the believer in God will have trouble in this world, He guarantees it. The question I hope to answer today, is what to do when this ***tribulation*** or ***trouble*** comes up you.

If you can't prevent it, or even anticipate it, the best thing you can do is prepare yourself for it! When it comes upon you, you may be surprised, but you won't be unprepared.

Often times, when something really difficult is going on in your life, you don't know how to respond, or what to do.

That's where we pick it up with King Hezekiah in 2 Kings. He was one of the righteous and good kings of Judah. But even though he was a *good* king, **he still encountered immense difficulty and an impossible situation.**

Now, where we jump into this with Hezekiah we find that Sennacherib, the king of Assyria (one of the arch enemies of Israel), had already taken captive the Northern 10 tribes known as "*Israel.*"

2 Kings 17:23b

^{23b} So **Israel was carried away** from their own land **to Assyria**, *as it is to this day.*

After taking Israel captive, Sennacherib set his eye on Judah, where Hezekiah was king.

In 2 Kings 18:13, Assyria attacks a few cities of Judah and conquers them. Hezekiah responds there in Ch. 18 by trying pay him off for a swift, easy solution to his problem.

***Sometimes – often times – the “easy way out”
is not the best way forward.***

“Compromise never ends.” = There is always more to give, to take, to lose. The nature of compromise is that it's never enough, it's never satisfied, it's never done trying to get a little more.

In 2 Kings 18 we have a few key moments that lead to where we are tonight. Picture the scene with me: 3 Assyrian officials come to Jerusalem, and 3 Jewish officials meet them outside the gate. In the background, there are numerous Jews listening in to the conversation from the wall.

In verse 22, Sennacherib mocks the LORD, the God of the Jews. In verse 29-30 he directs his voice to the people on the wall not to trust in their God for deliverance, and then in 31-32 the king of Assyria offers the people land, riches, and food if they would defect.

It would be one thing if these were empty threats, but while this is going on the Assyrian army of 185,000 men is standing outside the city gate ready to conquer, waiting on the command.

So, this is where we find king Hezekiah. *Between a rock and a hard place. Stuck between impossible & no way out.*

We learn from Hezekiah, that when *we don't know what to do, we must do what we know*. He gives us **5 Actions** to take when we don't know what to do.

1. Know Where To Go (1)

As Hezekiah hears all this information and these threats for the first time, he is processing it all and has no idea how this is going to work out. His counselors are beside themselves on what to do, and so is he.

It is in this moment that though he doesn't know what to do, we see his first action...He **Knows where to go...**

2 Kings 19:1

¹ And so it was, **when King Hezekiah heard it**, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.

Notice: he *“went into the house of the Lord.”*

When he is overwhelmed and at a loss, he goes straight to God's house.

This is important to realize: It was **far more** than a building...it was **who** the building represented. It was **not** the “house” as much as **who** lived in the house.

Ultimately it comes down to this, Hezekiah **went straight to the Lord.**

Let me show you...when Solomon built the temple initially, look at what he said about it:

1 Kings 8:28–30

²⁸ Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O Lord my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: ²⁹ that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, ‘My name shall be there,’ that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. ³⁰ And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, **when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place;** and when You hear, forgive.

1 Kings 8:33–34

³³ “When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple, ³⁴ **then hear in heaven,** and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers.

1 Kings 8:44–45

⁴⁴ “When Your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever You send them, and when they pray to the Lord toward the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, ⁴⁵ then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

Hezekiah knew this! Solomon was his ancestor and Hezekiah had this recorded for him, no doubt. So, Hezekiah knew when he was in trouble personally, and the nation was in trouble nationally, that **he was to seek his God** in the *house* of His God.

The thing that made the temple important and glorious was not its beauty, its value, its importance...no, what made it special is that the Lord decided to make His earthly dwelling in that place. **So, Hezekiah does not go to a building, but to God.**

The same should be true for you...you should **know where to go** when you **don't know what to do**. Where do you go? **You go to the Lord.**

Because of what Jesus did for you on the cross, for those who have trusted Him, you have direct access to God.

Hebrews 4:15–16

¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶ **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

John Phillips

In Old Testament times the ordinary Israelite could not approach the Holy of Holies where God was enthroned, for that was the sole, annual prerogative of the high priest. But we can approach the throne of grace at any time, as often as we wish, whenever we have a need, knowing that our needs are fully known to our priest and will be met with mercy and grace.

And it's not that you simply **know where to go**...it's that you are invited, welcomed, wanted there...

Ephesians 2:18

¹⁸ For **through Him** we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Make sure you **Know Where To Go...** and make sure you *actually go!* The next **action** we see is...

2. Know Who To Ask (2-7)

By God's grace, He has not left us completely alone in life. But *who do you go to when you don't know what to do?* Hezekiah gives us a great example of who we ought to go to.

In **verse 2** Hezekiah sends his counselors to Isaiah the Prophet. By this time Isaiah is an aging older prophet. He been in the ministry for at least 38 years and has proven himself a faithful messenger of the LORD.

So, he is the one Hezekiah goes to. This serves as a great example to all of us, that when we're in a tough spot, we should seek counsel from believers, and especially those that are more *seasoned saints* than we are.

For you that are here tonight, you may not have that person in your life. Pray! Ask the Lord and then step out and ask someone around you. Someone that you are impressed with their walk. *"Oh, I don't want to be a bother."*

This *seasoned saint* **wants you to ask!** Find someone who has been walking with Jesus longer than you have been, and you ask! This is called discipleship.

2 Kings 19:3-4

³ And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day *is* a day of **trouble**, and **rebuke**, and **blasphemy**; for the children have come to birth, **but there is no strength to bring them forth.**' ⁴ It may be that the **Lord your God will hear all the words of the Rabshakeh**, whom his master the king of Assyria **has sent to reproach the living God**, and **will rebuke the words which the Lord your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.'** "

Hezekiah's counselors come and state the scenario to Isaiah, but then they ask him to pray.

I love that he asks for prayer before counsel. At the end of the day, the real solution to what you're going through, the answer to your problem, or the best way forward lies with God, not man. There's nothing wrong with going to man, but we trust ultimately in the Lord!

Isaiah's response proves that he was the right man to go to, look at verse 6:

VERSE 6a:

And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the Lord...

Isaiah doesn't give him his own great ideas or say "I think you should do this or that." Isaiah shares with him God's Word! Being a prophet, he gives a divine revelation to Hezekiah that God was going to take care of the situation.

This is a great model for those that we go to counsel for, we should seek people who will give us counsel and advice **in accordance with God's Word**. God's Word, not man's ideas. God's wisdom, not worldly philosophies.

Earlier in Isaiah's ministry the people were going to the mediums and those consulting spirits to figure out what they should do. Look at what God directs them to do...

Isaiah 8:19–20

¹⁹ And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," **should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?** ²⁰ **To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because *there is no light in them.***

Who do you ask when you're stuck? What do they tell you? Are you receiving worldly or even demonic advice when it comes to the most important matters of your life?

Find someone who will pray for you and give you the Word of God!

What if your specific issue isn't covered in God's Word? Then you find the **Biblical principle** that could help you discern God's will for that situation.

Psalm 119:104, 130

¹⁰⁴ **Through Your precepts [God's Word] I get understanding;**
Therefore I hate every false way.
¹³⁰ **The entrance of Your words gives light;**
It gives understanding to the simple.

Hezekiah knew he needed to hear from the Lord, so he sent for the one he knew would pray and give him godly counsel.

"Do not be afraid..."

Uncertainty can and often does cause **fear**. Over and over again we are commanded to **not be afraid**, but to trust God in the unknown. This does not speak to the severity of your problem, but the sovereignty of Your God.

Psalm 46:1–3

¹ God *is* our refuge and strength, **A very present help in trouble.**

² Therefore **we will not fear,**

Even though the earth be removed,

And **though** the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

³ **Though** its waters roar *and* be troubled,

Though the mountains shake with its swelling.

Selah

So, Isaiah prays and gives Hezekiah the Word of God...Which leads to our next point, the **3rd action** Hezekiah takes...

3. Know What God's Word Says (8-13)

In **verses 8-9** we read that God sends a distraction to Assyria that causes them to temporarily step back from attacking Judah to go and fight on another front.

But, before they leave to go fight on another front, they write Hezekiah a letter. In **verses 10-13** we get a summary of this letter, let's look at it together...

2 Kings 19:10

¹⁰ "Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: '**Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you**, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."

He tells Hezekiah, and all Judah, not to let the God they **trust** in, to **deceive** them!

Trust: To have trust in, Be confident, Be sure, Be Bold, To hope.

Deceive: Lead astray, Delude, Deceive, Seduce.

This is satan's oldest trick...

He casts doubt on God's Word, God's promises. This exact same word **deceive** is used all the way back in Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:13

¹³ And the Lord God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?"

The woman said, "**The serpent deceived me, and I ate.**"

How did satan deceive Eve? Look back a little more...

Genesis 3:1, 4-5

¹ Now **the serpent** was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “**Has God indeed said**, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?” ... ⁴ Then **the serpent said** to the woman, “**You will not surely die.**” ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Listen, when the enemy of your soul wants to mess you up, **he is going to cast doubt on God’s Word and His promises.** That’s exactly what he did to Eve, that what he has done in our culture, and that’s what he tried to do to Hezekiah.

Somehow the Rabshakeh must have heard what Isaiah told Hezekiah, and his response is to cast seeds of doubt.

2 Kings 19:11–13

¹¹ **Look! You have heard** what the kings of Assyria have done to **all lands by utterly destroying them**; and **shall you be delivered**? ¹² Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have **destroyed**, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who *were* in Telassar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? ”

You see what he is doing? **Doubt...doubt...doubt.** He is giving every reason that Hezekiah shouldn’t believe God’s promise.

Knowing God’s Word will protect you from all kinds of schemes and attacks of the enemy. Your greatest defense in these days is a thorough and intimate knowledge of God’s Word.

Ephesians 6:11, 14a, 17b

¹¹ **Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** ¹⁴ Stand therefore, **having girded your waist with truth**...¹⁷ And take... **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**

Wiles (GK = *Methodeia* – “Methods”): *Trickery, Scheming, cunning arts, deceit, craft.*

It is God’s Word that will give you the ability to see the lies and avoid them! God’s Word will keep you out of all kinds of trouble. And keep you from many pitfalls, wrong turns, and unwise decisions.

I do want you to notice, that when Hezekiah was in the thick of it, that’s when the enemy came whispering lies and doubt. If he didn’t know God’s Word, he would have been tossed like a little boat in a raging sea.

Psalm 119:98

⁹⁸ You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies;
For they *are* ever with me.

When you don't know what to do, you must **Know what God's Word says**. Now we move to the 4th action we ought to take...

4. Know How To Pray (14-19)

This letter from Rabshakeh, that we just read, is full of blasphemy, lies, and doubts comes to Hezekiah. Look at what he does, this has got to be one of the most practical and awesome moments in the entire Bible.

2 Kings 19:14

¹⁴ And **Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers**, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.

He takes it into the temple, spreads it out before the Lord, and PRAYS! He does not make prayer his last resort, but his first resource.

Hezekiah's prayer is recorded for us and is very instructive, it can be a pattern to all who are going through hard times or for those who simply don't know what to do next in life.

1. Recognizes God's Glory

The first thing he does is recognize and declare the glory, power and authority of God!

2 Kings 19:15

¹⁵ Then **Hezekiah prayed before the Lord**, and said: "O Lord God of Israel, *the One* who dwells *between* the cherubim, **You are God, You alone**, of all the kingdoms of the earth. **You have made heaven and earth**.

The unknown, fear, anxiety, troubles, decisions, or trials...these all seem so very big when we're focused on them. Hezekiah is sure to set his trouble next to his God. We should do the same.

Why is this important?

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for **he who comes to God must believe that He is**, and *that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Jesus taught us to pray, ***“Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your Name.”***

2. Realizes the Real Problem

For Hezekiah, the real problem was not the threat of invasion...that was the *fruit* issue. That was what the problem produced. The *root* issue was that they had mocked the glory of God.

2 Kings 19:16

¹⁶ Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

He essentially says, *“God, they are mocking You.”* Are there other problems? Of course. But to Hezekiah, the biggest problem is that they are mocking his God.

3. Requests Help

2 Kings 19:19

¹⁹ **Now therefore**, O Lord our God, I pray, **save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone.**

His prayer is for the glory and honor of God. He prays that God would help them. not so that they would be safe, that too, but so that all the world would know that the God is the One True God.

Hezekiah ***didn't know what to do, but he knew how to pray.*** In so doing, we learn how we can pray when we don't know what to do. Not only can we pray, but we can pray boldly knowing that God hears and knows and cares.

Joseph Scriven

*O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!
Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.*

This leads us to the 5th and final action we take...which may be the hardest of all...

5. Know When To Wait (20)

Hezekiah prays. And then he must do that terrible 4 letter word we all hate so much...**wait**. But God's Word has a lot to say about waiting, especially when it comes to waiting on the Lord.

Proverbs 20:22

²² Do not say, "I will recompense evil";
Wait for the Lord, and He will save you.

Psalm 130:5

⁵ I **wait for the Lord**, my soul waits,
And **in His word I do hope**.

Psalm 25:3

³ Indeed, **let no one who waits on You be ashamed**;
Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.

I think sometimes the term **waiting on the Lord** can seem ambiguous or hard to define. Biblically speaking, **waiting** on the Lord is different than *waiting* in line or *waiting* for something you ordered.

Waiting on the Lord is an active process of seeking God as you patiently **wait for Him** to act on your behalf. If you want to know how that looks, look at our first 4 points from tonight. To God to God, Pray, Seek His Word, and seek wise counsel...all a part of **waiting on Him**.

2 Kings 19:20

²⁰ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: '**Because you have prayed** to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, **I have heard.**'"

It's not immediately apparent that Hezekiah and all Judah had to **wait on the Lord**, but the truth is that we know at a minimum the deliverance did not come on the same day he prayed. He had to lay hold of all the verses we just read. All the verses about **waiting on God**, persevering in trust that God will come through!

You can read God's full response in verses 21-34 on your own, for now, skip down to verse 35:

2 Kings 19:35–37

³⁵ And it came to pass **on a certain night** that the angel of the Lord went out, and **killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand**; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. ³⁶ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home*, and remained at Nineveh. ³⁷ Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer **struck him down with the sword**; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

Notice: “*on a certain night...*” We don’t know how long Hezekiah had to wait, but we do know that God moved and acted in His own perfect time.

There will be times in your life where you feel like *God is late* or *He missed the perfect time*.
But God is never late, He never misses the mark, He never “drops the ball.”

Psalm 27:14

¹⁴ **Wait on the Lord;**
Be of good courage,
And **He shall strengthen your heart;**
Wait, I say, on the Lord!

Throughout your life you will have many situations ***When You Don’t Know What To Do***, but in the passage before us tonight we learned from Hezekiah **5 actions** we can take when that happens.