

"A Few Good People"

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Reading

2 Kings 20: 1 – 6

Hezekiah's Illness

In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover." Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, "Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the ruler of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD. I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.' "

I am very grateful for the opportunity to share in sermon with you this morning. I want to begin by thanking you for your prayers for me during my recent hospitalization. I am a firm believer in James 5:16 that says, "the prayer of a good person has a powerful effect." I am indeed here by the grace of God and thankful for people who take a moment out of their day and call my name in prayer.

I want to share with you one of my favorite biblical stories, and it is about King Hezekiah. The text says that Hezekiah was sick to the point of death. The prophet Isaiah visits him and delivers the message from God, stating, "get your house in order because you are going to die, you shall not recover." What a brutal, harsh word from the Lord – although truthful. Can you imagine Hezekiah, already being sick, then hearing this disturbing word from the Lord via the prophet? Can you imagine him trying to figure out what to do?

What has your response been when you've been in dire situations? How do you react? How do you respond? I thought about myself when my back has been against the wall. What have I done in the past? What is my reaction? To be honest and transparent, I've gotten mad. I've been angry. I've been distraught. I've tried my best to figure out how to fix it. How to change my situation. Some of us throw adult tantrums. Some of us give up. We give in. We give out. We throw up our hands. And ask, "Lord how could you allow this to happen? I've been serving you. I've worshipped you. I pray. I treat people right." Ah, here it is ... "I'm a good person."

Note: The message from here to the end has been edited from Rev. Ward's notes and has a different flow from what has come before.

Good behavior is not always equal to a good heart. Hezekiah had a heart for God. Heart equals commitment; commitment means closing the backdoor on your relationship. Commitment displays itself in difficult times. Hezekiah turned his back to the wall and cried out to God. God honors commitment. He saw Hezekiah; He heard him; He changed his situation.

Here's my conclusion, based on the storyline of one of my favorite movies, "A Few Good Men," starring Tom Cruise and Demi Moore and with a stellar performance by Jack Nicholson. My favorite line is not Nicholson's "Do you want the truth? You can't handle the truth!" My favorite line is from Tom Cruise to one of the soldiers about to be dishonorably discharged: "You don't have to wear a badge to have honor."

Amen!

