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“God is Waiting for You”

Isaiah 30-31

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In this message, Pastor Gary examines the account of Judah turning to Egypt for help against the Assyrian army, instead of turning to God for help. It wasn't until they had depleted their resources and exhausted their own efforts that the people of Judah finally turned to God. When they did, God wasn't angry with them nor did he shame his people. He didn't utter a single “I warned you!” or “You should have listened to me!” or “I told you so!” statements. Instead, God had been waiting for them and he eagerly helped them because he is a gracious and compassionate God, and that's how he treats us too! If you've been estranged from God, or if you've become exhausted trying to do life without him, if you've had a hard time trusting God and surrendering to him, then this teaching is for you!

Historical Background

1. Pastor Gary said: “The problem in [Isaiah 30-31](#) is not with Egypt. God [didn't] have a problem with Egypt. God loves the Egyptians. The problem he has is that his own people, the people of Judah, [had] sought Egypt as a savior in the midst of a problem rather than God.”
2. Isaiah prophesied during the reign of four kings of Judah, the last king being Hezekiah, who was the king during the time frame of [Isaiah 30-31](#).
 - a. [Isaiah 1:1](#) - *“The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.”*
 - b. The entirety of the book of Isaiah fits within the timeframe of [2 Kings](#).
3. Pastor Gary said: “Hezekiah was, relatively speaking, a good king. ... He became king when he was 25 years of age, and he reigned for 29 years. [Hezekiah

ushered] in great, sweeping spiritual revival. He [broke] down all of the pagan altars, that unfortunately were allowed to be there during the reign of his father, Ahaz. He [smashed] all of the pagan idols. [His predecessors] had even closed up the house of God, and he [reopened] it. ... [He reassigned] the priests their duties. He [reimplemented] the Feasts, including particularly Passover. He even [reinstated] the principle of tithing. All of [these things] happened during Hezekiah's leadership, and you can read about [these things] in [2 Kings 18-20](#)."

4. [2 Kings 18:7](#) - *"And the LORD was with [Hezekiah]; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him."*
5. The Assyrians were *the* major threat in the world at this time, and the Assyrian Empire including all of what is modern-day Iraq, and parts of Iran and Syria.
 - a. In 722BC the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel.
6. Hezekiah refused to do what his father King Ahaz had done, which was to pay tribute in an effort to appease the king of Assyria.
7. Trusting God means that you do all you can do and then you leave the rest to God.
8. Hezekiah trusted God, but he also did what he could do to protect Jerusalem.
 - a. He fortified the city walls, and he rerouted the water supply from the Gihon Spring, in what is known as Hezekiah's Tunnel.¹
9. When the Assyrians conquered the smaller fortified cities in Judah, Hezekiah, although he was a man of good intentions, who wanted to trust God, became afraid and his trust in God buckled.
10. Hezekiah sent an envoy to Egypt to seek their help, instead of praying and seeking God's help.
11. Pastor Gary said: "You know what [happened]? The Egyptians [came] and they [were] slaughtered by the Assyrians. Do you want to know why? Because God will take out from underneath us every false thing that we rely on, until we finally get to the place where we trust him. God wants to have his rightful place in our lives. We end up scurrying around like Hezekiah and the people of Judah, [who tried] to rely on everything else and everyone else... instead of turning to God. We need to be people who rely on God, who pray to God, who see him as [our] deliverer, [our strength, our rock, our fortress], and ever-present help in times of trouble."

¹ <http://www.biblicalarchaeologytruth.com/hezekiahs-tunnel.html>

12. Hezekiah and the people of Judah found the Egyptians to be *“utterly useless.”*²
13. [Isaiah 31:1](#) - *“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.”*
14. It’s hard to believe, but the people of Judah didn’t want to hear what Isaiah had to say!
 - a. [Isaiah 30:10-11](#) - *“They say to the seers, ‘See no more visions!’ and to the prophets, ‘Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions. Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!’ ”*
15. [Isaiah 30:15](#) - *“This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.’ ”*
16. Pastor Gary said: “They wanted to do it their way. They didn’t want to wait for God. They said, ‘We got this, God.’ [You] know what is so amazing and wonderful about our God in heaven? ... God said, ‘Then I’ll wait for you. ... [Eventually] you’ll get sick and tired of being sick and tired, and eventually you will have exhausted all of your resources, you will have tried everything, [but] eventually you will turn to me. And when you do, I’ll be there. I’ll be there waiting for you.’ That’s the loving heart of [God].”
17. Hezekiah then resorted to the very thing that he vowed he would never do, which was to repeat the sins of his father, King Ahaz, by paying the Assyrians to go away and leave them alone.
18. Pastor Gary said: “I’ll translate the [Scripture concerning what he gave the Assyrians.] [Hezekiah gave] eleven tons of silver and one ton of gold. The market value today would be between \$35 and \$40 million dollars. And do you know what’s even more tragic? [In [2 Kings 18:13-16](#) we read that] Hezekiah stripped the gold off of the temple of God and gave it to the Assyrian king. He stole from God and God’s house to pay off the king of Assyria. And you know what? That still didn’t work!”
19. In [2 Kings 18:17-37](#), we read about the way the Assyrians verbally assaulted Hezekiah and the people of Judah, and how they tried to discourage them from turning to God for help.

² [Isaiah 30:7a](#) - *“... Egypt, whose help is utterly useless.”*

God Longs To Be Gracious To You, To Show You Compassion,
And He Blesses Those Who Wait For Him

20. **Isaiah 30:18** - *"Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!"*
21. Pastor Gary said: "Isn't [this] a great verse? When we get to the bottom of ourselves and we've exhausted every other thing trying to do life ourselves, and trying to fix life ourselves, finally we get to the end of the road and we turn to God. He doesn't shame us! He doesn't say, 'I told you so!' He just says, 'I've been waiting for you.'
22. **Nehemiah 9:17c** - *"But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love."*
23. **Psalms 86:15** - *"But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."*
24. **Joel 2:13b** - *"Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love..."*
25. **Isaiah 30:19-21** - *"O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, **your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'**" (Emphasis added)*
26. Pastor Gary said: "Why from behind? Why isn't God out front and leading the way? ... They were hearing God from behind because they had turned their backs on him. ... Some of you are hearing God from behind because you've turned your back on him, but I want you to know that he longs to be gracious to you. There's a longing in the heart of God to be gracious to you, and merciful and forgiving. ... [It's like] saying God can't wait to get up in the morning (this is obviously figurative language) to find you so he can show you compassion. And blessed are all who wait for him. ... [This] is what God is saying to some of you. You've been running from God for too long. You've tried things yourself, [but] how well [has that gone?] You've tried to fix things. You've relied on other things and other people without turning to God. He's been the last on your list! [Finally], you get to the place where you realize you have nowhere to turn but [to God]. And God is there waiting [for you]."

27. Hezekiah finally decided to pray!

- a. **2 Kings 19:14-19** - *“Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: ‘O LORD, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; listen to the words of Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God. It is true, O LORD< that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by men’s hands. Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O LORD, are God.’ ”*

28. God answered Hezekiah’s prayer in a remarkable way!

- a. **2 Kings 19:35-36** - *“That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning - there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Isaiah 30:1-5; 31:1-3** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Provide an overview of the historical background of King Hezekiah and the Assyrians. (See #1 through #6)
3. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s definition of trusting God. (See #7 above)
4. How have you seen the Lord work in your life in response to trusting him in different situations in your life? (See #8 above)
5. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they either failed to trust the Lord in a time of difficulty or times when they tried their own remedy or remedies without success. (See #9 through #13 above)
6. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they’ve rejected godly counsel, the Word of God, etc. (See #14 through #16 above)

7. What are some of the ways you've experienced the grace, compassion, and blessing of the Lord in your life?
8. Read and discuss [Isaiah 30:18](#).
9. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning [Isaiah 30:19-21](#). (See #25 and #26 above)
10. Read and discuss [2 Kings 19:14-19, 35-36](#). (See #27 and #28 above)
11. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).