

## [2 Kings 20:1-6](#)

### A King's Prayer

#### **Introduction**

Let me preface this message on prayer by saying it's not so much about prayer. It's about who God is. God is the hero of this story. The fact that a person can come to God in prayer and say "Our Father in heaven" is because of His grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. It's only and always through Jesus that Scripture states to draw near to the throne of grace with confidence to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need ([Hebrews 4:14-16](#)).

What if you were sick and at the point death? Your doctor tells you - "Get your affairs in order because you're going to die; you're not going to recover." What would you do? Cry? Laugh? Pray? Throw your bucket list in the trash? Ask to get a second opinion from another doctor? What would you do?

I'd like to contend that prayer is a far better choice than all of the other options I just mentioned. Think about it! Prayer is a one-of-a-kind link between God and man. Prayer is important and powerful. Time spent in prayer is time well spent. In fact, prayer makes the difference in everything. Following are three (3) main points to take away from this message concerning prayer and who God is. They are that prayer is about:

- Needing God
- Asking God
- Trusting God

So, here's the text for this message from [2 Kings 20:1-6](#) about king Hezekiah who was at the point of death and sought God's face in prayer.

<sup>1</sup> 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; you shall not recover.'" <sup>2</sup> Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, <sup>3</sup> "Now, O LORD, please remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. <sup>4</sup> And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: <sup>5</sup> "Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD, <sup>6</sup> and I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David's sake."

[2 Kings 20:1-6](#) (ESV)

From the text, it appears Hezekiah's prayer changed God's mind. This ties in so well with Pastor Dan's sermon last week. He said "Prayer doesn't bend God to our will. Prayer bends our will to God." God's plan is unchanging. Prayer is part of God's plan. Hezekiah's prayer didn't change God's plan; Hezekiah's prayer was part of the plan.

## **Historical Background on Hezekiah**

Hezekiah was king of Judah between 715 and 686 B.C. Detailed accounts of his life are given in the Bible's Old Testament books of [2 Kings 18-21](#), [2 Chronicles 29-32](#) and [Isaiah 36-39](#).

According to Scripture, Hezekiah was a man who trusted God and prospered because of God's grace ([2 Chronicles 31:20-21](#)). In fact, his trust in the LORD was like no king in Judah before him or after him ([2 Kings 18:5-6](#)).

In addition, Hezekiah was a man of prayer. He prayed not only to be saved from illness ([2 Kings 20:2-3](#)), but that Jerusalem would be saved from an attack by the Assyrian army ([2 Kings 19:14-19](#)). In that particular prayer concerning the Assyrian invasion, Hezekiah prayed that God alone would be known throughout the earth as the only God and Creator ([2 Kings 19:15](#)).

Hezekiah was a man who recognized God's greatness and majesty. He also recognized his neediness for God in prayer.

### **1. Prayer - Needy for God**

Hezekiah had a desperate need to be healed of his illness and saved from death. He realized this when the prophet, Isaiah, brought word from the LORD that he would not recover from his illness. As was mentioned in the introduction, what would you do if you received such news? Prayer is the only answer. Here's a look again at Hezekiah's being needy for God as stated in [2 Kings 20:1](#).

<sup>1</sup> 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; you shall not recover.'"  
[2 Kings 20:1](#) (ESV)

Whether we'd like to admit it or not, we're just like Hezekiah. We may not be facing death due to a terminal illness, but we are all needy people. Does hearing that cause a recoil in our spirit? Are we asking ourselves "What? Me needy? How can I be needy?" Now, I'm not talking about the sort of neediness where we're without sufficient clothes, food or shelter, although there are many people who are without those things. I'm talking about a spiritual neediness that only God can satisfy in Christ.

Satisfied in Christ means trusting Him for everything. His grace alone is sufficient for everyday living, now and in the future, and even in the most difficult times. Hezekiah's prayer points to trusting in the sufficiency of God's grace alone, which demonstrates neediness. Neediness points to the prayer life of another King. In fact, He's the King of kings and Lord of lords. He's the Lord Jesus.

Here's Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples. Much like Hezekiah, Jesus was in agony. He was going to die. He needed His heavenly Father desperately. Take a look at [Matthew 26:38-39](#).

<sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” <sup>39</sup> And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

[Matt 26:38-39](#) (ESV)

Jesus' and Hezekiah's prayers to God in a time of trial indicated their neediness before the Father. Prayer is all about being needy for God. Humbling one's self before God in prayer makes us realize our neediness. Prayer shows us we are helpless, but not hopeless. God hears the prayers of a righteous person and there is great power as it is working ([James 5:16](#)). If God didn't hear prayer, He wouldn't be God. Prayer would be useless. We'd be talking to ourselves. But prayer is real, meaningful and powerful. Prayer involves neediness; prayer also involves asking God.

## **2. Prayer - Asking God**

Hezekiah was certainly in need of seeking God's face through prayer. He sincerely and simply pleaded his case by asking God to remember him. In fact, his weeping bitterly before God was an indication of his desperation for God's grace and mercy. Here's a look at [2 Kings 20:2-3](#).

<sup>2</sup> Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, <sup>3</sup> “Now, O LORD, please remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

[2 Kings 20:2-3](#) (ESV)

Do you and I realize our desperation for God's grace and mercy? Do we apprehend the fact that God gives generously through prayer? He did that for Hezekiah. He'll do that for you and me. But we have to ask! And we have to ask in faith for God's wisdom, with no doubts, trusting God's plan is always best. Here's [James 1:5-6](#).

<sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

[James 1:5-6](#) (ESV)

During the Easter weekend, my wife, Julie, and I visited some of her family in Pittsburgh, PA. We traveled by air and the trip back included flying through a snowstorm on April 3. She and I concluded in our own prideful wisdom that the trip would not go well due to the adverse weather. Instead of asking God for wisdom in faith and resting in His will, we allowed anxiety and doubt to wash over our prayers.

As a result, we didn't receive God's peace, which Scripture says surpasses all understanding ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)). We also forgot to realize that our Father in heaven knows what we need before we ask Him ([Matthew 6:8](#)). In reality, we lacked wisdom and trust in the One who is sovereign over all things, including snowstorms. In the end, everything turned out better than we expected. That's God's grace! He's a good, good Father. That's who God is!

In our broken, chaotic world, sin gets in the way of prayer because we are sinners, just like Hezekiah. Sin taints the beauty of prayer like weeds taint the beauty of a flower garden. For

example, even after God heard his prayer and healed him, Hezekiah's sinfulness reared its ugly head in the form of pride. Take a look at [2 Chronicles 32:24-26](#).

<sup>24</sup> In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death, and he prayed to the LORD, and he answered him and gave him a sign. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> But Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

[2 Chron 32:24-26](#) (ESV)

After God answered Hezekiah's prayer and healed him, his sinful pride caused him to show an envoy of Babylonians all of the treasures and riches of his household and storehouses. In effect, Hezekiah tainted God's answer to prayer because of his pride. You and I are susceptible to that too. Later on, after Hezekiah's reign as king, all of his material possessions, even his own sons, would be carried to Babylon ([2 Kings 20:12-19](#)). And all of that was according to God's plan and purpose.

In spite of sin getting in the way of prayer, God still bids us come and ask because we have an intercessor. By the work of the Holy Spirit, He intervenes on behalf of the believer in Christ. Even in weakness, doubt and discouragement, the Holy Spirit intercedes according to the will of God ([Romans 8:26-27](#)). So, come to the Father in prayer, needy for Him and asking Him. There's one more thing. Prayer is about trusting God to make the difference.

### **3. Prayer- Trusting God**

God can always be trusted to make the difference in prayer. He always hears and answers the prayers of His people. His answer can always be trusted, whether it be "yes", "no" or "wait". Prayer never goes unnoticed by God. God's answer to prayer will always be for His name sake and for the good of His people. Always! Always! Always! Here's what Scripture says in our text from [2 Kings 20:4-6](#).

<sup>4</sup> And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: <sup>5</sup> "Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD, <sup>6</sup> and I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David's sake."

[2 Kings 20:4-6](#) (ESV)

God not only healed Hezekiah's illness; He added fifteen years to his life. In addition, God delivered Hezekiah and the city of Jerusalem from the king of Assyria. That's the way God does things. He is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think ([Ephesians 3:20](#)). God supplies every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus ([Philippians 4:19](#)). Yes, prayer is the means through which God can be trusted to make the difference in all situations.

But you might be asking yourself, "What about when circumstances don't change or bad situations get even worse? What happens when a "Hezekiah-type prayer" doesn't bring healing? What's going on when it seems God isn't making the difference? Do I need to get my act together and pray harder and longer for God to do something?"

Let's go back to the Garden of Gethsemane and look to the Lord Jesus for the answers. Here's [Luke 22:41-42](#).

<sup>41</sup> And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

[Luke 22:41-42](#) (ESV)

Jesus was in much agony and sorrow. He was going to receive God's full wrath for the punishment of man's sin on the cross. Jesus was needy in prayer, asking the Father to remove that cup of wrath. Yet in the suffering of His darkest hour, Jesus humbly yielded His desires to the Father. Through prayer, He trusted God's purpose and plan to make the difference. And what a difference God made! Because of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, those who receive Him by faith alone through God's grace alone can trust Him, even in life's most difficult trials.

So, don't ever give up on God. Even in the weakest, most feeble, unbelieving moments, don't believe for one minute that trusting God through prayer won't make the difference. Just because circumstances don't change or situations get worse, don't ever think that prayer is ineffective and powerless. Remember this - prayer's outcome is trusting our God, not trusting in the outcome of our prayers.

### **Prayer Truths to Live By**

So, why does the prayer of a king who lived nearly 3,000 years ago make a difference in your life and mine? Hezekiah's prayer should cause us to realize that prayer makes the difference in every situation that you or I will ever face in life. Prayer is about being needy, as well as asking and trusting God to make the difference. Here are important truths to live by concerning prayer according to Scripture:

- Pray constantly ([1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)).
- Pray about everything ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)).
- Prayer is powerful ([James 5:16](#)).

And remember, too, the following prayer truths about who God is:

- I can never be too needy that God won't provide.
- I can never ask too much that God won't answer.
- I can never trust too little that God won't make the difference.

As Pastor Dan Cravillion has mentioned in this sermon series on prayer, God hears the prayers of a righteous person. In other words, He hears and answers the person who has been made right

with God. A person right with God trusts Jesus' blood has cleansed all of their sins and has received Him by faith alone through God's grace alone. That's the good news message of the cross, which is the gospel.

If you're here today and you don't know Christ, you may wonder what you're asking for results in. As Pastor Dan has shared in previous messages; you're basically praying to a brick wall. While Jesus blew open the door to God the Father, he did so for his brothers and sisters. That means access is a family privilege. But here's the great news; today can be your day of adoption.

You can know Jesus as Lord, Savior and Friend right now by repenting of sin and believing in Him. God hears the prayers of a person who turns toward Him and away from sin. That's repentance. God never despises a needy, asking and trusting heart; He hears the cries for the forgiveness of sin. He hears the plea to provide everything for life and godliness. Yes, even the vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. That's the good news message of the cross, which is the gospel.

### **Conclusion**

As we wrap up this message on prayer, Pastor Dan, myself, and in fact all of the elders at La Crescent Evangelical Free Church (LEFC), exhort the church to seek God's face and enjoy Him through prayer. In fact, the main goal of this sermon series is that prayer will be an authentic and passionate desire of our heart. Is that goal really our heart's desire? Do we want to live and own what we're hearing about who God is; that He really is for us when it comes to prayer?

For example, at LEFC we have pre-service and post-service opportunities to pray. Let's utilize those! Nothing is more important than praying with and for others. So, husbands are we praying with our wives? Wives are you praying with your husbands? If not, why not? Single men; do you have another guy or guys as prayer partners? Single ladies; do you have another lady or ladies as prayer partners? If not, why not? And remember, prayer is not something we have to do, but something we get to do. True and humble prayer is important and powerful due to the Christ-exalting work of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is about asking God in faith, even when we don't want to. And if you wrestle to pray, like I do, because of inconsistency and lack of passion, we don't have to feel guilty. Whether it be sinful pride, fear, doubt, anxiety or plain old apathy, remember that God gives generously to those who ask, without reproach. God calls us to a deeper prayer life for the good of His people and for His glory.

Here's some final thoughts. God answered Hezekiah's prayer graciously, and then some. Not because Hezekiah deserved it, and not because Hezekiah was a great king. A king's prayer nearly 3,000 thousand years ago was answered because the King of kings, God Himself, has a steadfast love that endures forever ([Psalm 136](#)). His mercies are new every morning ([Lamentations 3:22-23](#)). The riches of His grace are expressed in His kindness to believers in Christ ([Ephesians 2:7](#)). That's who God is. That's why we can delight in Him through Christ alone. That's why God is the hero of this story. So, let's come needy, asking and trusting Him in prayer to make the difference. Amen.