

Do What's Right – Is 36:1-7; 2 Kings 18:1-8

Is 36; Having just kicked off a new ministry year last week with the theme **Delight**

Yourself In The Lord . . .

I want to take a few minutes before we get to the message, and share with you some of the things going on around here that are *cause* for great delight (**Intro**)

1. **Salvations** – last weekend alone we saw 29 people pray to receive Christ; 27 on this campus, and 2 at the West Campus
2. **Harvest Kids** (logo) – under the leadership of Grady Adkins, we officially changed the name of our Children's Ministry to Harvest Kids, and we're thrilled with it

We also launched a new curriculum called Orange; It's a Bible-based curriculum that teaches kids topically, while placing the event or person . . .

In the **chronology** of the Scriptures with graphics like this

And then there's the emphasis on family involvement, and monthly movie posters, and some new teaching methods, and drama; Once again, cause for great delight

3. **Feed the City** – just happened last weekend, and I want to show you this video to give you a taste of what went on (**FTC Video**)
All cause for great delight

And then there's one more that's not really cause for great delight, but great prayer

4. **Parking** – about a week ago, we received a letter from Midland telling us that we can no longer use their lot as of Nov 1st
Which we knew was a risk when we bought the building

And the reason for the letter, is that Midland was bought by a publicly traded company based in Sweden, and they simply don't want the risk

And I suspect that they just don't want anything to do with a church

So while we explore other options, would you pray?

Pray that they would change their mind – that's the best option

And then pray that the owners of the Michael's shopping mall would lease us spaces

And that Rave would do so as well, if we need it

All of these would require a *shuttle*, but we're okay with that; And that's not uncommon in larger churches; But we need the parking spots

Pray – Lord, thank you for all the things that are cause for great delight among us; We love it, and it makes us want to delight in you even more; And we will (**Title Slide**)
And would you help us with our parking situation? Would you give us favor in the eyes of key decision makers, and bring a solution? We trust you, and know you know

➤ With all that in mind, we're going back to our study of Isaiah this weekend; But since it's been well over a month since we've been there, I want to refresh your memory w/ . . .

The Big Picture

Isaiah is the author and prophet here

And he preached in the late 700's BC for about 60 years; Covering it all – from warning and judgment, to sin, restoration, and salvation

And did so in the midst of a Godless society

One that was dominated (**Map – ESV Study p.1236**) by 6 major players – Syria, Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Israel, and Judah; Israel and Judah being . . .

Separate nations at that time, with Israel in the north and Judah in the south

And as I've mentioned before, there are **4 Major Dates** or events that form the backdrop to Isaiah's message, and help us understand it

1. 735BC – Ungodly Alliance

That's when the northern kingdom, Israel, formed an ungodly alliance with Syria, the nation to their north – in hopes of warding off the A-ssyrians to the east

None of which pleased *God*, b/c they weren't *supposed* to form such alliances with godless people like the Syrians

And it did no good b/c in 722BC the Assyrians overthrew them anyway; That's . . .

2. 722BC – Assyrian Overthrow

When they attacked and conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, leaving only Judah intact in the south

But that didn't last long, b/c about 20 years later they started in on the cities of Judah, only to fail at the gates of Jerusalem in the . . .

3. 701BC – Failed Attack

And that gave them relative peace until the Babylonians overthrew Assyria about 100 years later, and eventually did the same with Judah

Demolishing the temple in Jerusalem, and carrying God's people into captivity

4. 586BC – Babylonian Captivity

It was forced relocation and imprisonment that lasted 70 years, before the Persians overthrew the Babylonians, and the Israelites were allowed to return to Jerusalem

Those are the 4 Major Dates (**Summary**) that frame The Big Picture

➤ And the account that's recorded here in Is 36, is the **701BC Failed Attack** – one of the biggies; One of the pivotal points in the history of God's people; Is 36:1-7

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. [2] And the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh [like a general] from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field. [3] And there came out to him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder [3 officials of Judah, who reported directly to the King].

[4] And the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours? [5] Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me? [6] Behold, you are trusting in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

He's referring to their previous alliance w/ Egypt that Isaiah addressed in chapters 28-31, and essentially says the same thing he did . . .

It's not good, and you're going to suffer for it

And then in v7, the Rabshekah anticipates their response, saying – *But if you say to me, “We trust in the LORD our God,” is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, “You shall worship before this altar”?*

- The first thing I want you to see here, is – **The Setting**
Which Isaiah gives us himself, starting with the date – *the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah*; Which scholars tell us is 701BC, based on both the *biblical* record . . .
And the *extra-biblical* record; Like clay tablets and a rare obelisk here and there

In any case, it's 701BC when Sennacherib – *came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them* (**Map p1303, ESV Study Bible**)
Came up, not from the south as we normally think of it, but from the coastal plains in the north, to the hills and elevated cities of Judah in the south
He came up, and *took them* it says – he laid siege to them; Starting with Lachish

And once that was well in hand, he sent his army and henchmen to start the process with Jerusalem; Making contact w Hezekiah's men (**Map p788-89 ESV Study Bible**) . . .
By the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field (2b)
Which is most likely somewhere right in here, opposite the Gihon Spring on the east side of Jerusalem; That's the setting – the time and place

- But it doesn't answer the questions that the next few verses raise (**Summary**)
In fact, they leave you kind of scratching your head as to what he's talking about
Like in v4 when the Rabshakeh says – *On what do you rest this trust of yours?*
What trust? And in v5, what *mere words*? And what rebellion?
And in v7, what *high places and altars* did Hezekiah remove?
All of those things beg for an answer; And they're found in 2 Kings 18, one of the *historical* books of the OT
- This is one of 3 places that this account is recorded in Scripture; The 3rd is 2 Chron 32
And 2 Kings gives us the background as to why the Assyrians attacked Judah in the first place, and why the Rabshakeh said what he did; 2 Kings 18:1-8

In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign [715BC]. [2] *He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah.* [3] *And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD* [**Do What's Right**]

There it is; That's the point of this entire account – both here in 2 Kings, and in Isaiah
Do what's right; Hezekiah's a shining of example
That's why it's recorded 3 times in Scripture

He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD according to all that David his father had done [David wasn't his real father, but his figurative one, his forefather; His real father was Ahaz, who wasn't much a father at all by his example]. [4] *He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah* [Asherah were poles and idols

depicting the goddess Asherah that some of the pagan people in that day worshipped; And the places they did so, were called high places]. *And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan).*

- That's nice; Remember the bronze serpent in Numbers 21? The one that Moses mounted on a pole and told the people who had been bitten by snakes . . .
That if they wanted to live, if they wanted to be saved from their grumbling, they needed to look at it as an act of repentance; And they did
Trusting the one who *made* the serpents, not the icon
Trusting the *living* God, not some lifeless object

Unfortunately, the generations that followed got it all messed up; Worshipping the icon, instead of their Savior; The idol, instead of the one who made it
So that 700 years later, Hezekiah said enough is enough, tore the thing down, and destroyed it so that they would sin no longer
He rooted out anything that even tempted them to sin; There's a lesson

- And then it says in v5 . . .
[5] *He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him.* [6] *For he held fast to the LORD* [his devotion and commitment didn't wane]. *He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the LORD commanded Moses.* [7] *And the LORD was with him; wherever he went out, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him.* [8] *He struck down the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.*

Therein lie the answers as to why the Rabshakeh said what he did in Is 36
On what do you rest this trust of yours? God; *He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel*
And the rebellion to which the Rabshakeh referred, centered on Hezekiah refusing to conform to the pagan ways of Sennacherib (7b)

The result of which, was God's blessing; And leads us to that principle we see over and over again in Scripture
And the principle we've seen several times in the last few months; Do what's right . . .

B/c obedience brings blessing (2 Kings 18:1-8)

In v3 it says he did what was right; In v4 he removed what was wrong
In v5 he trusted God for the results; In v6 he held fast in his commitment, and kept the commandments; He was obedient through and through; Consistently so

The result of which, was 4-fold, all from v7-8:

1. **He experienced God's help** – or as the author of 2 Kings says it, *the LORD was with him* (7a); Influencing situations for his glory, and Hezekiah's good
2. **He prospered in his endeavors** – that's the next phrase; *Wherever he went out, he prospered*; He did well; He flourished
3. **He successfully resisted the powerful** – *He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him.* (7b)
4. **He won in battle** – striking down the Philistines in v8, and defeating the enemies of God's people to the east; That was the result of Hezekiah's obedience (**Summary**)

➤ And we can expect the same – if *we* do what's right; If we're obedient
We *too* will experience his help; His nearness/influence on the situations of our lives
We *too* will prosper in our endeavors; Maybe not all of them by his choosing, but
certainly more than if we *weren't* obedient
We *too* will be able to resist the powerful; Including those people or even governments,
who ask us to sin or want us to be complicit in theirs

And we *too* will win in battle; Whether it's an emotional battle with those who
oppose us, a physical battle of exhaustion, or a spiritual battle with the powers that be
If you do what's right, you can expect God's favor; You can expect God's blessing

And you may not even know you received it
He may bless you by keeping you from harm you know not
He may bless you by removing a person who opposed you, without ever knowing it
You may not be cognizant of God's blessing due to your obedience, but it will be there

➤ But don't expect to win a popularity contest; And don't expect it to be easy
Doing what's right is rarely easy; Especially when you're in the midst of those who do
what's wrong; Or those who don't see it
And the more you're swimming upstream in that respect, the less fondly you're going to
be thought of

Can you imagine Hezekiah's plight that way? He took away people's *worship* – the things
they considered sacred; And destroyed their *places* of worship
Busting up a 700 year-old icon
And he called the people to a standard of holiness they hadn't followed for decades
No, I'm pretty sure he wasn't a finalist for man of the year

But he was for man of the *century*; Look at v5
*There was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who
were before him.*
Referring to those who reigned in the southern kingdom, after the split 200 years earlier

That's quite a distinction; But it came with a price; Including an attack on his home, and
his integrity, and his motives

And your obedience will too, if *you* do what's right (**Summary**)
But do it we must; No matter how unpopular, no matter how difficult, no matter how
hard, no matter what; Do what's right
B/c obedience brings blessing; And that's just where it starts

Prayer – We praise you God for the blessings of obedience; The blessings of living right
The blessings of doing the right thing; Help us I pray
And use our *tithes and offerings* now to further your work – we delight in giving, and
we delight in the result