

A HEART FOR THE LORD

“Trusting in the Lord”

2 Kings 18:1-19:19

Main Idea: A heart for the Lord trusts in the Lord.

Trust in the Lord by destroying even good things from God that become idols (1-4).

Like Asa and Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah continued the pattern of faithfulness to the Lord by protecting hearts against the things that pull people away from the Lord: Idols! As idols continued to pop-up in Judah, Hezekiah led in renewed efforts to destroy them. He removed the high places where idolatry was practiced, and he even destroyed an object of precious history in Israel. The bronze serpent was a gift that the Lord had given Israel during their time in the wilderness with Moses. During a time when many Israelites died from snake bites, the Lord provided protection and deliverance to those who would look upon the bronze serpent, trusting in God's power to heal. This historical artifact was preserved. It should have been an object that would remind people of God's grace and mercy, thanking him for his patience and preservation of his people through those years of wilderness wandering. However, the bronze serpent had become a “sacred cow.” It had turned into an object of worship, turning hearts to trust in an object of bronze rather than to trust in the Lord. Courageously, Hezekiah was willing to destroy a historical object – even a good thing that had been given by God – because it had become an idol, drawing hearts away from trusting and worshiping God.

1. Over the last few weeks, we've seen a continual focus on rooting out and removing idols that seemed to constantly plague the Old Testament people of God. Has the Lord revealed to you any idols that were in your heart or home?
2. Even the bronze serpent that the Lord gave Israel had become an idol! Are there things in our churches that can become idols? Things that God has provided and done that somehow become sacred and trusted in and of themselves? If so, what?
3. Are there any good things that God has given you in his grace that you've allowed to become an idol (trust in that thing over the Lord; have placed that thing or person before the Lord)? What do you need to do to destroy it as an idol in your heart?
4. Pray for God's protection against idolatry in our hearts.

Trust in the Lord by . . . (5-6)

- *Holding fast to the Lord (6a).*
- *Following the Lord (6b).*
- *Keeping the Lord's commandments (6c).*

What a testimony about the faith of Hezekiah! He trusted in the Lord like no other King from the Southern Kingdom Judah. Hezekiah's trust (confidence and assurance) was in the Lord God, who made heaven and earth and all that is within them. In his trust of the Lord, there are three specific things in verse 6 that revealed that trust. First, Hezekiah held fast to the Lord. The word for hold fast evokes the picture of someone grabbing a hold of something and not letting go. It carries the idea of cleaving to someone, like a fearful child holding tightly

to a loving mother. Hezekiah held fast to the Lord. He didn't want to be apart from him. He wanted the Lord with him and in his life at all times, so he held fast. Obviously, this holding fast isn't physical. He didn't have his hands on the Lord. Hezekiah held fast in his heart. Holding on to the Lord in faith! In doing so, Hezekiah followed the Lord. In the language of the Old Testament, the word for follow is simple. It means to follow behind or beside someone. Following means that someone else is leading, and for Hezekiah, that someone else was the Lord. He allowed the Lord to be the one who led his direction and his decisions. God was in the lead in his life, and he knew this was the case because God's Word was the direction for his life. Hezekiah kept all the commandments of the Lord. He studied God's Word. He listened to God's Word, and he obeyed God's Word. In all these things, Hezekiah trusted in the Lord! His trust led him to hold fast to the Lord in his heart. His trust led him to follow the Lord every day. His trust led him to listen to and to obey the Lord in his life.

1. Considering what it means to hold fast, how do we hold fast to the Lord? What are some things that help us and protect our hold on the Lord in our hearts? What are some things that fight against and try to weaken our grip?
2. Discuss what it means to follow the Lord. Are you following the Lord in your life? How do you assess if he's really in the lead? What are some ways to protect keeping the Lord in the lead in our lives?
3. Explore what it means to obey the Lord's commands. Can you obey his commands intentionally and consistently without knowing his commands? How do we know what the Lord commanded? Is the command to obey his commands for New Testament believers? How are we able to obey his commands? What does the gospel have to do with obedience to all that God commanded?

Trust in the Lord by truly entrusting to him your life and the lives of those entrusted to you (18:7-19:19).

Hezekiah saw the fall of the Northern Kingdom Israel. He had witnessed and heard about the brutality and the unrelenting power of Assyria. His own kingdom in Judah experienced the pressure and fear of the attacks and threats of Assyria, and no political and human efforts seemed to provide a path to deliverance. Hezekiah's life – the lives and freedoms of the people of Judah – were at risk. Their very existence was being threatened, so what did Hezekiah do? He prayed! Hezekiah brought the final threat before the Lord. He spread out the information as a way of laying it out before the Lord and entrusting it to the Lord. He called on the name of the Lord, looking to God as the Creator and King he is! He asked for the deliverance of the Lord, praying that God would save his people, and he sought the Lord's salvation for the Lord's glory: That all the kingdoms of the earth would know that the Lord is God!

1. Have someone read Hezekiah's prayer aloud. What stands out to you most in the prayer (generally or specifically)?
2. How does this prayer reveal a heart that truly trusts the Lord? Does the prayer reveal someone who knows who God is? Does the prayer reveal someone who knows what God can do?
3. What are the attacks of the enemy in your hearts and homes right now? Discuss, and then go to God in prayer like Hezekiah prayed to the Lord our God!