

Delivered from the Grave

Isaiah 38:1-22

Halifax: 4 April 2010

Introduction

Do you know anybody who has had a life-changing experience from a close brush with death?

- Perhaps you yourself have had such an experience.
 - I can think of several people I know that have had such experiences.
 - One of them is a friend named Ken that I knew about 20 years ago.
 - He was a tough military guy—
 - a fairly high ranking officer who wore his rank proudly...
 - He was an avid rugby player and outdoorsman who seemed to have little fear of anything.
 - I remember when he tore his knee up and the doctor who examined him sent him home to recover without doing an x-ray
 - because when he twisted it about as doctors do and ask if it hurt, Ken very calmly affirmed that it did without wincing.
 - The doctor assumed it was just a twist because of his mild response and sent him home to rest it with a promise that it would get better in a few days,
 - but when a further examination was done, the damage was very severe.
 - The doctor asked him why he did not tell him how much it hurt and he said, “I did!”
 - He was also a very bold and faithful witness for the LORD, and often made bold public statements about his faith...
 - such as the time when he was on the military plane and they said something about the plane crashing and he said in a loud voice...
 - “I don’t have any worries about that because I know where I am going if this plane goes down.”
 - And then he sat next to another officer and begin to inquire (still in a loud voice) if he knew where he was going when he died.
 - But one day when Ken was out with a friend kayaking in western Canada,
 - He and his friend had just been joking around about what tough guys they were and he hit some rapids that completely took control of his body.
 - He was under, spinning around, powerless to get himself out—completely at the mercy of the water and God who controls the water.

- He cried out in anguish and terror to the Lord and was suddenly shot out of the turbulent water.
 - He was greatly humbled by the whole event and became a much more humble man.
 - He was still a vibrant witness for the LORD, zealous for the kingdom of God and for the truth, but now he was a much more humble man.
 - His experience with death really changed him.
 - He was already one of the most zealous Christians I knew,
 - but after that experience, there was a new reality about him.
- Sometimes, our gracious Lord brings such things into our lives to sharpen us and wake us up to the things that really matter.
 - We can plod along, even as generally faithful believers who are more or less doing all the right things,
 - but who have lost sight of who God really is!
 - And even if we haven't lost sight, we don't any of us have such a sense of God as might have.
 - Of all the kings of Judah, Hezekiah is among the most praised for His faithfulness.
 - The LORD speaks very highly of him,
 - yet he is the one who was greatly humbled by a dreadful brush with death when he was only in his thirties...
 - a king who had already done much to reform the worship of God.
 - Why did God bring such a difficult thing upon one of the most faithful of the house and lineage of David?
 - Why not choose one of the other kings who was more in need of correction?
 - Why is it so often that the Lord choose the most faithful to suffer such things?
 - The scripture tells us why...
 - Hebrews 12:6: "whom the LORD loves He chastens,"
 - In John 15, our Lord tells us that those who bear much fruit, He prunes—cuts down—so they can bear more fruit!
 - If the LORD sees a faithful man, He is very committed to work in that man—
 - that man is (in fact) faithful *because* God has worked in Him...
 - and He is going to keep working in Him...
 - Let me ask you something.
 - What children is it that the Lord loves?

- Is it the ones who have parents that don't chasten them?
- Or is it the ones whose parents lovingly correct them?
- The answer is obvious, isn't it?
 - A family in our church had their relations ask them why they chastened their children—
 - They said, "You have some of the best behaved, happiest children we have ever seen..."
 - The answer, of course, is because they love their children.
- Our heavenly father greatly loved Hezekiah.
 - And in order that he might bear more fruit,
 - He threatened to cut him off in the prime of life as a chastisement.
 - There are some people that in charity to Hezekiah do not think this was a chastisement.
 - But one thing is sure,
 - Hezekiah definitely thought it was and had the benefit of it as a chastisement.
 - And I am using chastisement in the broader sense,
 - not as Job's friends did when they accused him of hypocrisy and of hiding his sin.
 - but as the LORD uses it Hebrews 12 to speak of the hard things he brings to his children to train them and teach them.
 - Really, we should look at all our suffering as a kind of chastisement...
 - Not necessarily because we have committed a particular sin as Job's friends supposed...
 - but to take us even because we have been faithful persons and to so work in us as to make us more faithful and more fruitful!
 - It is the training of those who are coming out of a life of sin, as we all are, and to the new life that Christ has for us.

As we look at this account today of faithful Hezekiah and his dreadful experience in which he was as good as in the grave and then resurrected,

- I want each of you to, as it were, experience this with him...
 - What I mean is,
 - I want you to consider your own that you too have been sentenced to death along with the whole human race,
 - And I want you to realise the seriousness of that sentence and to feel the weight of it...

- And then to consider how Christ has delivered you from that dead,
 - if indeed you have been delivered,
 - and to consider how great a deliverance it is and to commit your way more fully to the LORD as Hezekiah did.

- You are supposed to do this my brothers and sisters, not just with Hezekiah, but with the One he represents—with Jesus Christ...
 - The Bible continually teaches that Christ died for us!
 - He died for our sins—to bear the penalty of them so that we might be pardoned...
 - But did you know that the Bible also speaks about us dying **with** Christ and rising **with** Him when we come to trust Him?
 - He dies for us 2000 years ago, but we die **with** Him when we believe.
 - We die with Him when we believe because we see what happened to Christ when our sins were laid on Him...
 - we see how dreadful it was for Him to die because of our sins...
 - and we are struck with how dreadful it would have been for us if we had to die in our sins... we sense the terror of the Lord...
 - and then we see how He rose victoriously from that sin and that through faith in Him,
 - we share in that resurrection to new life—eternal life forever in God’s favour.

- We are all to experience this dying with Christ and rising again with Him all through our life—not just when we initially believe.
 - It is a life-changing experience with death!
 - It is presented to us here in King Hezekiah’s brush with death, so let us enter into this personally so that we might benefit from it.
 - It is recorded for our edification, so be edified!

I. First, I want you to come face to face with the threat of dying in your sin.

- This was Hezekiah’s Gethsemane where he was handed the bitter cup and told that he was about to experience the wages of sin...

A. The dreadful news came to him by prophecy...by the word of God.

1. The account of this is given in verse 1:

- Isa 38:1: In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’”

- What cold words these were!
 - You must die!
 - You shall die and not live!
 - And this was the very Word of God, spoken with all the authority of God's name by His faithful prophet!
2. And my friends, these same words are spoken to all of us in a way...
- a. The scripture declares to us that in Adam all die...
 - It declares to us that the wages of sin is death.
 - It tells us that the sinful soul must die, and that it is appointed to all of us to die—fallen as we are in sin.
 - That is the word of God, spoken in all His authority to us.
 - b. And of course we see that it is true...
 - however much we may not like it,
 - We see that death does pass upon every person...
 - All must die because God has declared it on account of our sin.
 - c. Our dear LORD Jesus also knew by prophecy that He must die...
 - By His own words of prophecy, He told His disciples that He had come to give His life a ransom for many.
 - On the night He was betrayed, He told them that He would be handed over to His enemies to be crucified.
 - There was no way to get around it.
 - It was the word of God.
3. I wonder if you have considered the weight of this reality that you will die?
- You do not know when our time will come, but we must face the fact that it will come...
 - And like Hezekiah, you are well advised to prepare for death—to set your house in order so that even in your death,
 - you will so have lived that you will still be blessing others because you have laid up for them good treasures through your service...
 - especially for those of your own household.
 - And even more weighty than that,
 - I wonder if you are prepared to meet your God when He calls you?
 - Have you obeyed His call to repent of your sin and to believe on the Lord Jesus,
 - or if you died today, would you die in your sins?

- It is definitely something to think about—
 - the time may come when it is too late.
 - There is nothing in the world that can remotely be compared with the horror of dying in your sin...
 - and all of you need to consider it.

B. You need to take it seriously the way Hezekiah did as soon as the word came to Him.

1. Every one of you needs to face the reality of death, believing that what God says is true...

- There is death, and then the judgement.
- Every one of you needs to be terrified at the thought of what it should be like to go before God in judgement without salvation...
 - It is not something to kid yourself about.

2. You can see what Hezekiah does as soon as he hears of his approaching death.

a. He devotes himself to prayer!

- His prayer is summarised in verses 2-3
 - Isa 38:2-3: Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, and said, “Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.
- His turning to the wall refers to the devoting of himself to prayer.
 - He turned away so as to give his full attention to the Lord in prayer.
 - He did not turn to Isaiah or to the bottle or to mindless pursuits to get his mind off of it...
 - He went straight to the one who held his destiny and wept bitterly before Him!
 - He left off everything else and turned himself entirely to it!

b. This is the right thing to do in such circumstances...

- This is how he sought to prepare himself.
- God is merciful and it is right for you to ask him to be merciful to you.
 - Even our LORD Jesus Christ prayed and wept in Gethsemane, and pled that if it were possible, the bitter cup might pass from Him...
 - that He might not have to bear the dreadful curse if there was some other way.
 - Of course there was not another way,
 - but it was right that He should ask and that he should weep.

- He asked and He wept because He knew that God's judgement was real—it was not just a tall tale!
- c. Hezekiah took this threat of death very heavily.
- 1) He felt that his death was an expression of God's anger toward him—
 - It seemed that the LORD was cutting him off in judgement.
 - a) He felt this way because his coming death had been declared to him by prophecy...
 - God often sent prophecies to the wicked kings or nations to declare to them that they were going to die in their sin.
 - Hezekiah was only in his thirties and felt that he had much work to do for the kingdom of God...
 - He had tried to serve faithfully and devoted himself to the Lord's service and you see how he mentions that in his prayer.
 - He had begun a great work of reformation in the land, removing the high places and restoring the worship that the Lord had ordained at the temple with the priests and Levites.
 - He wants to keep on with his work.
 - b) He was also, of course, a son of David to whom the promises of the covenant were made.
 - God had promised to send the Messiah through David's line...
 - Yet, according to many chronologies, Hezekiah did not yet have an heir when this pronouncement of death came.
 - Perhaps Hezekiah thought of Eli and how Eli was sentenced to die along with his wicked sons because of his sins.
 - Was the house of David to be cut off?
 - c) And that's not all.
 - His death also seemed quite untimely because the Assyrian was coming against Jerusalem...
 - It seems that the pronouncement of Hezekiah's death came just before the coming of Sennacherib that we read about in chapter 36 and 37.
 - This seems to be so because in verse 6, the LORD promises to deliver Jerusalem from the king of Assyria.
 - If this had already happened, it would seem strange for it to be promised here.

- So understand that the chapters we are now studying are not in chronological order...
- It seems rather that chapter 38 is explaining what had happened in Hezekiah's life just before the coming of Sennacherib and how God had prepared Hezekiah for it.

TRANS> But the point is that Hezekiah's death seemed to be very abrupt—that he was being cut off before he could say as Paul did,

- 2Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
- I don't think we need to concern ourselves with figuring out if it was right of him to think this...
 - The thing that is certain is that Hezekiah thought this.
 - We know what he thought because we are given a written copy of what he thought when this pronouncement of death came to him.
 - Verse 9 informs us that what follows (in verses 10-20) is the writing of Hezekiah at this time.

2) You can see here that he saw his death as a threat of dreadful judgement...

- even as one being cast away from the LORD.
- a) In verse 10 you see how he looks at himself as being cut off before the time.
 - Isa 38:10: I said, "In the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol; I am deprived of the remainder of my years."
 - This language of being *deprived* of his years suggests that he was being cut off before he had fully lived out his days.
 - Of course God appoints the day of our death, but those who die as a chastisement are said to be cut off before they have finished their course.
 - And look at what he says about Sheol...
 - Sheol is the place of the dead, and most often in scripture it refers to the place of those who are cut off from God in death.
 - That certainly seems to be the case here!
 - Hezekiah looks at it as a place of final separation from God.
 - By speaking of the *gates* of Sheol, he speaks of a place where he will be finally shut up, away from the presence of God!

- b) He makes it clear that this is what he means in verse 11:
- Isa 38:11: I said, “I shall not see YAH, The LORD in the land of the living; I shall observe man no more among the inhabitants of the world.”
 - Like that fearful Psalm—Psalm 88,
 - He speaks as one who is dying in his sin being shut up in the place where he will never be able to thank God,
 - never be able to repent,
 - never be able to know the joy of salvation!
 - When some of the Psalms and Ecclesiastes speak of death in this dark manner,
 - it is speaking of those die in their sins.
 - Fifteen years later when Hezekiah dies, there is no mention of any terror in it...
 - nor is there in the death of David and others...
 - We see them rather being said to be gathered to their people.
 - The terror and dread that Hezekiah has here is the dread that he is about to die the death of the wicked.
- c) You see in verse 12 that he attributes the cause of his death to both himself and to the Lord.
- To the LORD as the judge who takes away His life...
 - to himself as the one who by sinning has brought about God’s judgement.
 - Concerning his own part, he says,
 - v. 12: “I have cut off my life like a weaver.”
 - as when the weaving is finished and the thread is cut...
 - And at the same time, He says of the LORD...
 - v. 12: “He cuts me off from the loom, from day until night you make an end of me,”
 - The phrase “from day until night” means within the span of a single day...
 - He sees that it is God who ultimately gives and takes away life

- And clearly, he does not see Him as a gentle shepherd welcoming him into paradise,
 - but rather as a ferocious lion coming to break his bones!
 - You see that in verse 13...
 - Isa 38:13: Like a lion, So He breaks all my bones; From day until night You make an end of me.
 - He repeats again that in the space of a single day, the LORD will make an end of him!

d) In verse 14, he confesses his great anguish!

- He is so distressed all he can do is make unintelligible sounds like bird...
 - screeches and squawks and moans...
- He is looking earnestly to God, but He has no more strength in him.
 - His life is passing from him and he confesses,
 - v. 14: "O LORD, I am oppressed"

3) And then he cries out for salvation...this wonderful prayer of salvation!

- At the end of verse 14, he says,
 - v. 14: "Undertake for me"
 - Which is literally, "Be my surety!"
- What a great salvation prayer!
 - Someone becomes your surety when they take up your cause as their own.
 - Hezekiah has no resources to save himself, so he is asking that Lord to undertake for him!
 - "Come and take up my cause!"
 - This, of course, is the very thing that our LORD Jesus did when He came into the world!
 - He Himself became our surety!
 - He took responsibility for our sin debt and paid it all by His own suffering!
 - Hezekiah's prayer anticipates the coming of Jesus Christ.

3. Oh my friends, have each of you come to see what it is to die in your sin?
 - a. Has the horror of it gripped you so that you hold fast to God's salvation in Jesus Christ?

- Have you seen what sin did to Him?
 - He who is the very Son of God?
 - Have you seen how it made Him sweat blood in Gethsemane because he knew the terror of the Lord?
 - He knew the horror of what it was to bear the shame and curse of sin before His Father in heaven!
 - To be cut off from Him!
 - Do you understand this horror?
- b. If you would know God's salvation, you must know something of the horror of God's judgement...
- You must die with Jesus through faith,
 - realising that when God's wrath came upon Him it was the same wrath that you deserve and would experience apart from Him.
 - Hezekiah was rightly terrified at the very thought of dying in his sin...
 - And his terror rightly led him to call on the name of the LORD!
 - To cry out to Him for mercy!
 - To plead with him that he would undertake for him and be his surety.

II. And now I want you to see how God graciously answers the cry for salvation!

- I want you to see this so that you will trust the LORD too.
 - What a kind and gracious God He is, so full of mercy and compassion!
- A. Go back again to the 4 and see what the LORD does in response to Hezekiah's prayer...
1. He sends His gracious word of promise and He does His gracious work!
- You see how it says that the LORD sent His word to Hezekiah in His distress to assure him that He will save him!
 - Isa 38:4-6: And the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying, "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.'"
 - Just as He sent a prophetic word to say, "You are going to die," so now He sends His word to say "You are going to live!"
 - He promises him fifteen years!
 - And it was not just the fifteen years—it was that God's wrath that Hezekiah had felt was lifted off of him!

- He was already as good as dead under the sense of God’s wrath and curse...
 - but now even though he is to die in fifteen years,
 - it will be before His gracious prayer-hearing God rather than cut off from Him!
 - This is a glorious resurrection for Hezekiah!
 - By God’s mercy, he was brought from death to life!

TRANS> O brothers and sisters! Isn’t this just like our gracious God?

2. There is so much for us in these gracious words of God to Hezekiah!
 - a. First, in the very fact that God also sends His word of promise to us in our sin...
 - He tells us that in Adam all die,
 - but then He tells us that in Christ all shall be made alive!
 - He tells us that the wages of sin is death,
 - but then He tells us that the give of God is eternal life!
 - This is His word of promise to all of you who believe!
 - He says to Isaiah—“Go and tell Hezekiah!”
 - And He says to His ministers of the gospel, “Go and tell all the world what great things I have done for you!”
 - The Trinitarian God is excited to bring the word of promise to His elect people—to comfort them and to say,
 - “Rejoice! Your prayer has been heard!”
 - “Be of good cheer! I have seen your tears!”
 - “I have heard your groaning!”
 - “I have come to deliver!”

TRANS> And this brings us to a second lesson from these words...

- b. That God is a God who answers our prayers—
 - Even when all we can do is screech and squawk like a silly bird...
 - He regards our tears and our cries and He answers from heaven and He delivers us from death.
 - Whoever calls upon the name of the LORD will be saved!
 - All through scripture God is seen hearing the cries of His people, regarding the groans that can’t even be classified as prayers...
 - It was the groaning of Israel in Egypt to which He responded...

- It was the groans of our LORD Jesus on the cross to which He responded when at last He heard and raised Him and all of those He represented from eternal death!
 - The Spirit does not always give us words, but He at least gives us groans and our gracious heavenly Father hears them and responds to them!
- What an encouragement to pray!
 - Get on your knees and cry out for your own salvation, for that of your children, for that of your loved ones!
 - Believe what God says when He pronounces judgement and let it drive you to earnest prayer—
 - like Hezekiah—like Jesus!

TRANS> And now I want you to notice a third thing for us in these words to Hezekiah...

- c. Notice how the LORD presents Himself as the “the LORD God of your father David.”
 - These words are very significant because God made a special promise to David.
 - He promised by covenant that He would bring salvation through his seed.
 - And He made this promise as Yahweh, (the LORD)
 - Yahweh is His gracious covenant name by which He had made promises of a kingdom that would never fail—
 - of an everlasting throne and a kingdom of pure righteousness that He would bring forth.
 - By mentioning David to Hezekiah,
 - the LORD is showing that He has not forgotten His covenant promise to David for the salvation of His people!
 - The mercies of David were as sure as ever and they could be rested in...
 - How much more for us brothers and sisters, now that the Son that God promised to David has actually come—
 - and His taken His place at the right hand of God to reign forever, having purged us from our sins by the cross!
 - The promise of mercy is sure to us if we are in Christ because the promise to Christ is sure!

- God will not turn away from His promise to our David—to Jesus, and so He will not turn you away if you come to Jesus.
- Your salvation is as sure as the deliverance of Jesus...
 - You are raised with Him in His glorious resurrection to the sure promise of eternal life.

TRANS> And this leads to the next thing for us to see in God’s gracious words to Hezekiah.

- d. That the promise to Hezekiah extends to all of God’s covenant people...
- Just as the promise to David did and just as the promise to Christ does.
 - 1) The LORD not only promises that He will undertake for Hezekiah to save his soul from death and the curse that he so feared...
 - He also promises to deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrian! (verse 6)
 - As I mentioned before,
 - this chapter seems to have occurred just before Sennacherib came up against Jerusalem with all his power and his threats and his arm and his confidence!
 - 2) And you can understand how useful all this was to Hezekiah!
 - He desperately needed to be reassured that when this menacing army came against him, God would act for Jerusalem!
 - I believe that the reason Hezekiah was able to stand so firmly when the Assyrian came is because God had prepared him by this near death experience!
 - Do you see how useful it would have been?
 - The God who brought him to the brink of death and delivered him when he prayed is the same God that would deliver him from Assyrian!
 - There was no reason for Hezekiah to doubt Him after this experience with deliverance from death!
 - Do you see the application?
 - After we have been raised with Christ from so great a death and have seen that in Him, we are fully justified and delivered,
 - how fully we can trust God for whatever else He has promised!
 - Just as the LORD demonstrated His mercy to the whole kingdom by delivering King Hezekiah,
 - so by delivering king Jesus from the grave,
 - our gracious God demonstrates His mercy to His whole kingdom! to you and to me and to all who believe!

- e. And finally, I want you to see how the LORD adds a sign to confirm His Word.
- Look at verse 7-8
 - Isaiah 38:7-8: "And this is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken: Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.
 - What a sign this was!
 - The LORD worked a great wonder so that His servant would know that His word was sure!
 - We don't know just what God did to make the shadow cast by the sun go backwards, but we know that He did it!
 - How this sign would have strengthened Hezekiah's faith!
 - Understand that the LORD does not give signs to *produce* faith, but to *strengthen* faith that was already there!
 - It was a gracious act of our gracious God to make His servant confident!
 - Isn't this just like our LORD?
 - He makes amazing promises to us, and that ought to be quite enough for us, but He knows our weakness and He wants to reassure us...
 - So He gives us signs to confirm His word!
 - He did it for Noah with the rainbow...
 - He did it for Abraham with the birth of his son when he and his wife were as good as dead...
 - He did it for Israel under Moses with the Passover and with the parting of the Red Sea and all the miracles that Moses did...
 - He did it through Joshua and through the prophets...
 - And finally He did it through Jesus who healed people and raised the dead and gave bread from heaven...
 - and who rose from the dead...
 - and who sent forth His apostles who worked all kinds of marvellous signs before the people that could not be denied!
 - And now he gives us signs as a pledge to us that the washing we have from Christ by the Spirit is real,
 - He gives us the sign of baptism...
 - And to assure us that our forgiveness and nourishment through His cross is real,

- He gives us the sign of Lord's Supper.
- He does this because of our weakness, to assure us of His promise.

TRANS> What a gracious God we have—

- He comes to each one of His elect when they see their desperate condition and cry out to Him for His saving mercy!
 - What a God He is!

B. How ought we to respond to all this?

1. Well let's go back and look at Hezekiah's writing and see how he responds!

a. Don't you love it right there at the beginning of verse 15!

- When we left Hezekiah before, all he could do was squawk and screech like a bird in his distress...
 - but now he is without words for the very opposite reason!
- He is speechless before God's marvellous grace!
 - v. 15: "What shall I say?"
 - What can we say to the God who is delivered from so great a death in Jesus Christ?
 - to the God who sent His very Son, the Son of God, to bear the curse for our soul?

b. Notice, Hezekiah says that God has done:

- He has both spoken to me and He Himself has done it!
 - Just like at creation, so at resurrection—
 - God speaks and then He acts!
 - Hezekiah is saying,
 - "He has promised and He has acted—and I just don't know what to say!"
 - Our praises and our words of thanksgiving are never adequate!

TRANS> But look, Hezekiah resolves that he will do something in response to what God has done

2. He resolves that he will now live out the grace-engendered grace-empowered life that the LORD has given Him!

- a. He says, “I shall walk carefully all my years (now he has some years!) in the bitterness of my soul”... or better,
 - “on account of the bitterness of my soul...”
 - He is going to be different person after this experience of death followed by new life!
 - He is going to live in the fullness of the life that God has given him,
 - not half-heartedly, not carelessly, not dragging along!
 - No, that will not do!
 - God has given him new life by grace and he is going to live it!
 - He has sensed the bitterness of life without God and He wants nothing of that—never again!
 - Do you see brothers and sisters—what you have in Christ...
 - In His death, if you have died with Him, you see where sin takes you—you see how it destroys you and cuts you off from God...
 - If you are a Christian, you know the bitterness of death with Christ—your sins have gripped you and you have seen where sin leads...
 - But now you are raised with Him to walk in newness of life!
 - To give and serve and to stop whining and complaining!
 - To live as one who was on the brink of ruin and has been rescued to live again!
- b. Hezekiah acknowledges that the LORD is the only source of this new life!
 - Look at verse 16...
 - Isa 58:16: “Oh LORD, by these things men live...”
 - by what things?
 - by God’s promise and God’s acts for our salvation!
 - We live by His promise and by His gracious working in us!
 - Do you know the power of His word and His work in your own life?
 - Hezekiah speaks of his personal experience with it as v. 16 goes on...
 - Isaiah 58:16: “And in all these things is the life of my spirit; so you will restore me and make me live”
 - It is a grace engendered, grace empowered life...
 - It is life as the gift of God...
 - Transformed life by grace!

- Glory be to his name!

TRANS> And you see further how...

c. Hezekiah acknowledges that even the chastisement itself was for his good.

- As painful and as terrifying as it all was, it was good for Him to be afflicted, it was good for him to die with Christ...
 - Verse 17 says: Indeed it was for my own peace That I had great bitterness; But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.
 - The word *peace* is *shalom*.
 - It speaks of completeness, of wholeness, of soundness...
 - This is what we are told about chastisement in Hebrews 12:11:
 - Heb 12:11: no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.
 - It brings peaceable fruit, it brings wholeness and righteousness.
 - It brings you to end of self so that you might live through Christ...
 - It is death with Christ that is followed by resurrection to eternal life.
 - Do you see yourself as Hezekiah describes?
 - Do you really?
 - As delivered from the miserable pit of corruption by the loving act of God?
 - As having all your sins cast behind God's back?
 - Isn't that a great expression?
 - He takes your sins and he just tosses them away!
 - They are nailed to the cross of Christ and swallowed up in His death to atone for them...
 - They are no longer on your record because He took them all away in the river of His blood and left you clean.
 - You are free now to live unto God!
 - You were cut off from Him, but now you are delivered and forgiven by His mighty power and loving hand!

3. So now it is yours to live for the glory and praise of your gracious LORD!

a. Sheol would have kept you from that life forever...

- Look at verse 18:
 - Isa 58:18: For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; Those who

go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.

- How terrible—just think of it—to be cut off from the living God, under His wrath and curse forever with no way of escape,
 - no way to enjoy Him and serve Him...
 - And perhaps worst of all, with “no hope for your truth.”
 - Completely severed from any hope of deliverance!
 - To many that seems overly severe of God, but who are you to judge?
 - God is the judge!
 - And when we once see His glory, we will be fully convinced of the justice of our sentence.
 - and that will haunt us all the more.
 - Those who die in their sins are shut away from God and from any hope of deliverance...
 - The gates of Sheol are so very final!

b. But how different it is for those whom God has delivered and given life to!

- It is for us to praise God with that new life—to give ourselves for His glory!
 - Verse 19: The living, the living man, he shall praise You, As I do this day;
- If God has given you life in Christ, you are no longer dead, but Christ lives in you...
 - Though you were dead, yet now you live and that new life, if it is indeed the life that God gives, is a life that praises Him...
 - Can you say with Hezekiah that the living man will praise God,
 - “as I do this day?”
 - Hezekiah was so thankful that he was able to praise God because he knew the alternative!

c. And it is a life that you pass along to your children...

- In the second half of verse 19, Hezekiah says,
 - Isa 58:19: The father shall make known Your truth to the children.
- He is so excited about the life he has...
 - Like Jesus who came up from the grave and came with gladness to tell the good news to His disciples—that in Him was life...
 - And now we are told that He gathers His children together to sing praise to God in the church...

- He calls us together and tells us of the salvation that has been accomplished and calls us to return thanks and praise!
- So, every one who is delivered from death by the LORD is thrilled to tell his children about our gracious LORD....
 - “My dear children, just look at what He has done for you!”
 - How good He is!
 - Let us praise His name together and rejoice in His salvation!
- This meant so much to Hezekiah...for he nearly died childless...
 - But now he has the hope that he will have an heir to whom he can declare the wonders of God’s grace.
 - This why believers love to have lots of children!

TRANS> So you see that the response of Hezekiah to God’s rescue of him from death is a life for the glory and praise of God!

- And now he concludes with a vow that as king, he will see to it that God is praised in His house according to His commandment.

Conclusion

In verse 20, he says, “The LORD was ready to save me...”

- The Hebrew phrase here carries the idea of the tendency or direction of the Lord...
 - It could be translated, “The LORD is all out for my salvation...”
 - Even as Hezekiah had prayed in his desperation that the LORD would undertake for Him—would be His surety—would look after his need as if it were the LORD’s own...
 - so now he testifies that the LORD is indeed all out for His salvation.
 - That is want the LORD is all about for His people...
 - He has gone to such extreme lengths of matchless grace!
- “Therefore,” he says, “we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.”
 - God had appointed the singing of praise in the temple, and as king, Hezekiah is going to see that this is done as God has appointed...
 - Here is what we are told in 2 Chronicles 29:20 ff
 - 20 Then King Hezekiah rose early, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD.
 - 21 And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the LORD.
 - 22 So they killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. Likewise they killed the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar. They also

- killed the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar.
- 23 Then they brought out the male goats for the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them.
 - 24 And the priests killed them; and they presented their blood on the altar as a sin offering to make an atonement for all Israel, for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering be made for all Israel.
 - 25 And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the LORD by His prophets.
 - 26 The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.
 - 27 Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel.
 - 28 So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.
 - 29 And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped.
 - 30 Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.

May we now come as the LORD has commanded us now that Jesus has been revealed,

- and rejoice before Him in the assembly, giving thanks to Him and singing praise to His name!
 - Let us first give thanks by prayer in Jesus' name,
 - Then let us come first to the table to remember His offering for our sins and look to Him to bless us by His sacrifice...
 - and then let us sing praise to His name with one voice because of what He has done.
 - And let us continue in this all the days of our lives.