

The Next Challenge 2 Chronicles 32

The Next Challenge Introduction

- When I was a child, I changed schools between kindergarten and first grade.
- By mistake they put me in a second grade class.
- Predictably I was lost.
- In a few days they figured out what was wrong and put me in the first grade where I did well.

- Life is a progression of challenges.
- You don't start out at the top. You have to climb the ladder.
- If you want to run a marathon you have to work up to it step by step.
- You enter college after going through school grade by grade.
- In the military you work your way up through the ranks.

- Our spiritual growth parallels our physical growth.
- We move from the new birth on to spiritual maturity.
- Consider what Luke says about Jesus in Luke 2:40 & 52.

- Hezekiah was a good king who accomplished many good things in Judah.
- Each challenge made room for the next.
- His biggest challenge of all probably came when the Assyrians invaded the land.

Faithfulness doesn't protect us from challenges. It prepares us for future challenges.

Assyria Invades Judah 32:1-8

- Hezekiah's acts of faithfulness are recorded in Ch. 29 – 31.
 - He cleansed the Temple, since his father worshiped idols.
 - He restored the Temple worship to its original forms.
 - He celebrated a huge Passover.
 - He organized the priests.

 - *Obedience sometimes leads to greater testing, for our good and the glory of God.*
 - Warren Wiersbe
- Some of Hezekiah's work in diverting the water sources is still visible to this day.
- Afterward, the water flowed into the Pool of Siloam, where Jesus told a blind man to wash in John 9.

- The Siloam Inscription
 - "The tunneling was completed... While the hewers wielded the ax, each man toward his fellow... there was heard a man's voice calling to his fellow... the hewers hacked each toward the other, ax against ax, and the water flowed from the spring to the pool, a distance of 1,200 cubits..."

- Hezekiah provides a perfect example for us because his faith led him to both diligent work and diligent prayer.
- He exercised his faith on both the physical and the spiritual levels.

- *Note that Hezekiah was a man of prayer and faith, who did not neglect means.*
 - James M. Gray

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Sennacherib Blasphemes God 32:9-19

- Sennacherib severely misunderstands both God and Hezekiah.
- He mistakes the God of Israel for just another idol.
- He believes Hezekiah was committing sacrilege, when he was restoring the nation's worship to its original, purest form.

- For more details of the mockery of the Assyrians, you can review 2 Kings 18 & 19.
 - *As for Hezekiah, the Judean, I besieged forty-six of his fortified walled cities and surrounding smaller towns, which were without number ... He himself I locked up within Jerusalem, his royal city, like a bird in a cage.*
 - Sennacherib (705 – 681 BC)

The Lord Saves Jerusalem 32:20-23

- 32:20 The worst thing about this attack in Hezekiah's mind was the fact that the Lord was blasphemed.
- As king he was obliged to defend Jerusalem.
- As an Israelite king he felt the sting of the Assyrians' blasphemy.
 - *Oh that we were possessed with a similar zeal for God, so that we might look at sin as it affects Him, and lament over the awful wrongs which are continually being perpetrated against his holy, loving nature! What an argument this would give us in prayer!*
 - F. B. Meyer (1847 – 1929)

- This section is a brief summary.
- The details are even more amazing.
- We find them in 2 Kings 19:14-38 and repeated again in Isaiah 37:14-38.

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The Next Challenge Conclusions

- Our challenges, whether physical, financial or interpersonal can and should spur us to prayer positive action.
- We act as God's agents in this world as he uses us:
 - to bring about change
 - Initiate progress
 - right or address the world's wrongs

 - *If annoyances and troubles and sorrows, great or small, do nothing else for us, they would be clear and simple gain if they woke us up, for the half of men pass half of their lives half-asleep.*
 - Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)

- Life is a progression of challenges.
- Our spiritual growth parallels our physical growth.
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- We might pray that what was true of Jesus in Luke 2:40 will also be true of each of us.
- And _____ grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him (or her).

- Hezekiah's example shows us that prayer and action are not opposites.
- He was diligent to bring about religious reform in Judah.
- He was diligent to do what he could to defend Jerusalem.
- He was also fervent in prayer.

- What if we were to approach our situations the same way?
- We would be diligent to pray about our jobs, our classes, our families, friends and our coworkers.
- We would also be among the best employees, bosses, students or teachers around.
 - *Hezekiah's response to his situation gives us practical and spiritual lessons: practical, because he took concrete steps when facing the imminent danger of the Assyrian army; spiritual, because he did not place his confidence in these preparations but in the Lord who would decide the outcome of the battle. ... Let us pray and act!*
 - *Nupanga Weanzana*

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