

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The Story – Chapter 16

Hebrews 12. 4-11 - God Disciplines His Children

“⁴ In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵ And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and *do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶ because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.*” ⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? ⁸ If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline —then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! ¹⁰ They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

2009

Number of years NK endured 1
evil king after another -

ENOUGH

Failure → Expulsion

- **Broke covenant**
- **Were chosen to be a blessing to all nations**
- **Now - to be delivered to the nations that compromised them**
- **Assyria destroyed capital & deported thru out Assyria**
- **Northern Kingdom would never again be a nation**

1. Why were the Israelites deported to Assyria?

- 2 kings 17.7ff

2. What is written of Hezekiah as King of Judah?

- **2 kings 18 - 19**

3. Why did Sennacherib go to Hezekiah?

- 2 Kings 8. 17-37**

4. What was Hezekiah's response & why did he do what he did?

- **2 kings 19**

5. What is mentioned about Isaiah in The Story?

- **Isaiah 6**

6. Read and compare what is going to happen

- **The Story p 225 - 226**
- **Isaiah 13**

7. Page 227-230 tells the Good News to come. Read & note what's to happen along with Isaiah 14; 49; 53.

- He spoke about the future**
- Coming Messiah**
- Jesus — Birth**
- His ministry**
- His death**
- He is the most quoted prophet in the NT**

8. Who succeeded Hezekiah and what kind of Kings was he?

- **Manasseh**
- **Betrayal and compromise**

Key Lessons from Gods Upper Story - # 1

God wants to use us in His plans

But

He does not have to

Isaiah 2. 6-12

“⁶ You, Lord, have abandoned your people, the descendants of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and embrace pagan customs. ⁷ Their land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to their chariots. ⁸ Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made. ⁹ So people will be brought low and everyone humbled — do not forgive them. ¹⁰ Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from the fearful presence of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty! ¹¹ The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled and human pride brought low; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. ¹² The Lord Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled)”

Jesus needs people to do His work in the world, but the choice is ours to make

Our first lesson is that it is a privilege to be included by God and to be used in His kingdom, but it's never a given

He owes us nothing

If we continue to choose our own selfish way, God will, in the end, give us what we deserve

Meanwhile - just to the south

- In Judah, godly King Hezekiah was nervously watching these world-shaking events on his northern border
- Hezekiah stands out from all of the other kings of Judah for his efforts to remove every vestige of idolatry in the land
- He rebelled against the new Assyrian king Sennacherib
- What other nation had been able to stand against the Assyrian might?
- Had not the Northern Kingdom already fallen
- They appealed to the populace

Key Lessons from Gods Upper Story - # 2

Our enemies will always

*Taunt us and direct us toward
the path of least resistance*

Their reasoning will sound fine
and it will be tempting to give in
It will sound rational and appear
easier

Proverbs 9. 17

“Stolen water is sweet”

Satan would like nothing more than for us than to squander our efforts and take the path of least resistance

Jesus on the subject:

“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

Matthew 7:13-14

JUST WHEN HOPE SEEMS LOST

JUST WHEN IT SEEMS DARKEST

JUST WHEN YOU ARE RUNNING OUT OF OPTIONS

THAT

*IS PRECISELY THE POINT WHERE
FAITH BEGINS*

*THE SAME FAITH THAT LED HEZEKIAH TO PURGE
THE LAND OF IDOLS IS THE FAITH THAT LED HIM
TO TRUST THAT 185,000 ASSYRIAN SOLDIERS
WERE NO MATCH FOR THE LORD.*

Maybe – right now you are under seige

- It is one thing to read and study scripture
- It is another to have it in your heart and to believe it –
 - unquestioningly

Key Lessons from Gods Upper Story - # 3

What moves the hand of God?

Prayers And Purity

2 Chronicles 29. 36ff

In the very first month of the first year of his reign, Hezekiah reopened the doors of the Temple of the Lord and repaired them. He summoned the priests and Levites to meet him at the courtyard east of the Temple. He said to them, "Listen to me, you Levites! Purify yourselves, and purify the Temple of the Lord, the God of your ancestors. Remove all the defiled things from the sanctuary. Our ancestors were unfaithful and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord our God. They abandoned the Lord and his Temple; they turned their backs on him. These men called together their fellow Levites, and they purified themselves. Then they began to purify the Temple of the Lord, just as the king had commanded. They were careful to follow all the Lord's instructions in their work. The priests went into the sanctuary of the Temple of the Lord to cleanse it, and they took out to the Temple courtyard all the defiled things they found.

What is hindering our prayers?

- Look within – is there sin in the camp
- Remember Achan (Joshua) took spoils
- What sin have we not confessed
- What is separating us from God's blessings

Key Lessons from Gods Upper Story - # 4

Despite the miracle

*Judah was still
Taken into
captivity*

Isaiah was sent to tell them they had blown it

three key problems God saw in their hearts

1 – Rebellion against God

The people did not know God

Isaiah 1. 2-3

“Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”

three key problems God saw in their hearts

2 – Empty Religion

Isaiah 1. 11 & 13

“The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?” says the Lord. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your evil assemblies. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.”

three key problems God saw in their hearts

3 – Social Injustice

Isaiah 1. 21 & 23

“See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her— but now murderers! Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow’s case does not come before them. ”

Notice the natural progression

Rebellion against God will inevitably lead to empty worship. God will not be mocked

It is an abomination to worship God with insincerity, and to go through the motions with an unpurified heart

And what follows?

The social structure just disintegrates into chaos.

**self-centered people oppress and
mistreat others**

**God-centered people love and
serve others**

Lord we have heard Hezekiah's call to purification – please cleanse me from my impurities. I pray for the people in this room today who are on the edge – on the precipice, running low on hope, hearing our common enemy tempting us with the easy way out. Show us more than the horses and chariots that seem to surround us. Show us the same angels that delivered Elisha, the same determination that conquered the Assyrian army, ready to deliver, to save, to stand watch over us. Today I proclaim again that I trust in the power of the Lord my God. In the name of the One whose wounds have healed me, Amen!