



Watchman prayer alert

On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed a watchman...
—Isaiah 62:6

First Bradenton

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A Bold Request

Only the city walls and the iron will of a strong king prevented the massive invading horde from overtaking Jerusalem. Standing atop the wall and assessing the odds, the advisors saw the well armed infantry sprawling in all directions just beyond the city wall. The noise of the taunts and battle bravado, the smell of their horses and campfires, and the sight of the terrifying mass was enough to strike fear in the stoutest of men.

Yet, the king's command was firm, "Do not answer them, even with a single word."

Where was the king? Hezekiah had marched straight to the temple where he fell to his knees and spread out the letter from the Assyrian emperor before God Almighty. The king pleaded to God to intervene in the hopeless situation and deliver his people from the hands of the greatest conqueror of his day.

What about you?

Has your situation ever felt hopeless? Have you wallowed in frustration? Have you wondered if a solution was even possible or if you were doomed to remain in the difficult position? What is your solution? What will you do?

King Hezekiah of Judah could have talked it over

with his advisors. He might have retreated to his barns to inventory his horses and chariots or to his storehouse to count his gold. He could have tried to form an alliance with neighboring kingdoms. He could have surrendered to captivity in Assyria. But he did not.

Instead, he looked to the only advocate who could move in a miraculous way to deliver his people from certain death. He went straight to the throne of God.

What would David do?

David faced many challenges during his reign, and he recorded his thoughts for us. Read Psalm 39. Then, we will look at it together.

In the first several verses we learn that David is facing the wicked and he's frustrated. We also discover that he's chosen silence as his coping method. That means he's not whining or complaining. The trouble, however, was that silence didn't suppress his grief. The longer he held his peace, the more his anger developed.

I [David] said, "I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle while the wicked are in my presence."

I was mute and silent, I refrained even from good, and my sorrow grew worse. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned, (Psalm 39:1-3)

It was at this point that David chose the same option Hezekiah chose many generations later. David looked to God. David made a surprising request. He asked God to show him the big picture. He understood that his entire existence was extraordinarily temporary. He asked God to make his days profitable and to let him understand the brevity of life on earth.

Then I [David] spoke with my tongue:

"Lord, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; let me know how transient I am.

"Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Selah.

"Surely every man walks about as a phantom; surely they make an uproar for nothing; he amasses riches and does not know who will gather them." (Psalm 39:3-6)

After making his astounding request, David (like Hezekiah) told God of his circumstances and asked God to intervene in a miraculous way so that he could enjoy life (smile) once again.

[David continued.] "And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish.

"I have become mute, I do not open my mouth, because it is You who have done it. Remove Your plague from me; because of the opposition of Your hand I am perishing. With reproofs You chasten a man for iniquity; You consume as a moth what is precious to him; Surely every man is a mere breath. Selah.

"Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; Do not be silent at my tears; for I am a stranger with You, a sojourner like all my fathers. Turn Your gaze away from me, that I may smile again before I depart and am no more." (Psalm 139:7-13)

We can pray like David

Just like David and Hezekiah, we can take our impossible situations before the throne of God. We can also ask God to show us how brief this life is so that we can effectively impact our world.

We can spread our hopeless situations before God and beg Him to intervene on our behalf. We can ask for a miraculous resolution so that we can enjoy the remaining years that He has given us.

Jesus made a bold request

More than any other man who ever walked on this earth, Jesus faced the ultimate impossible situation. As God, He willingly chose to lay down His life on earth so that all of humanity could return to the sweet fellowship with His Father. At the same time, Jesus was fully human when He made that choice. In His humanity, He experienced the same frustrations, fears, griefs and physical pain that we all have known. It was in His most vulnerable time that He also approached the throne of God and made a bold request for resolution.

Jesus prayed, *"Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."* Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation." (Luke 22:42-46)

I have never prayed so fervently that I sweat drops of blood, and you probably haven't either. Jesus was exceptional. Even though He was God, He was still human. Even knowing what had to happen, Jesus still prayed that He would not have to go through with the brutal torture and death. Then He surrendered to the sovereign will of God. And thank you, Jesus, that you were willing to conquer your fears so that You could conquer death and the grave. Jesus' victory was the only way we could ever be reunited with God.

We can pray like Jesus

We are not likely to be asked to make the ultimate sacrifice, but He does ask us to daily lay down our lives and take up our cross. He asks us to submit our own will to Him. He asks us to be willing to put the needs of someone else before our own. Like Jesus, we can ask God to take the difficult circumstances away from us as long as we are willing to submit to the plans that He has for us.

It is interesting that an angel came to Jesus and strengthened Him. It seems to me that if I prayed a desperate prayer and was visited by an angel, the strength from that encounter would be enough to carry me. But that was not the case. The encouragement and strength bestowed by the angel allowed Jesus to persist in prayer to the point that he sweat drops of blood. After the fervent prayer, Jesus arose and stepped into the His destiny.

We must not pray half-heartedly. Jesus taught us to persist in prayer. Stay the course. Even if the angels come to minister to you in your prayer time, do no give up the prayer until you have the confidence from God Almighty to face what is waiting for you.

The result of a bold request

Each man made his bold request of God, and God answered as He chose. In Hezekiah's case, he asked for a mighty deliverance from a swarm of Assyrian warriors, and God answered. In a single night, God's angel slaughtered 185,000 warriors in the Assyrian camp. Interestingly, God spared Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. He fled the ghostly camp around Jerusalem and returned to Nineveh where he stayed. Can you imagine that king who saw almost 200,000 of his men cut down by a spiritual being in the middle of the night? No wonder he ran home and never left Nineveh again. Ironically, the mighty warrior was felled in the temple of a false god by his own sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer. Hezekiah's prayer provoked a decisive response from God and a miraculous delivery for the people of Jerusalem.

We are not told which situation David faced when he made this request in Psalm 39. We do know



that David faced many impossible situations, and we know that God delivered him from every one. David's life is governed by a patchwork of prayers, many of which are recorded for our benefit. It is safe to assume that God did show David the brevity of life and did relieve him from the adversity that he was encountering when he made his request.

Jesus asked that the cup of suffering to pass from His hand or for the ability to accept the will of God without wavering. While Jesus' suffering was tremendous and His torture was brutal beyond all our reckoning, God did give Him the fortitude to walk as a lamb to slaughter. And God granted Jesus the most magnificent victory of all time. Jesus walked into the realm of death itself and reclaimed the title deed for humanity. The bold prayer of Jesus ensured victory for God and humanity.

What impossible circumstance are you facing right now? Will you ask to see the extent of your life or earth and comprehend how short your time is? Will you lay your options at the feet of Jesus? Will you ask for His perfect will to prevail? Then, you will see God move in a powerful way in your world.

Friends

Government

Work/School

My Needs

Family

Salvation

Miscellaneous