



06

SESSION SIX

Hezekiah Prays for His People

SESSION SUMMARY

In this session, we will learn how God's glory is personally beneficial to those who follow Him. Understanding God's glory reveals the certainty with which we can receive His promises. There is never a separation between displaying God's greatness and resting in His love. The ancient story of Assyria's calloused threats against Judah during the reign of King Hezekiah illustrate that God saves us for the glory of His name and for our good. In turn, we make His glory known so others will rest in His grace.

SCRIPTURE

2 Kings 19:8-20,32-37

THE POINT

God saves us for the glory of His name and for our good.

INTRO/STARTER 5-10 MINUTES

Option 1

Names communicate in a profound way. Whether good or bad, names connect to mental images and ideas about what those names represent. Songs like Johnny Cash’s “A Boy Named Sue” humorously illustrate the discomfort that comes when others’ names do not accurately reflect their identity. Perhaps this is why parents stress over the right name when they welcome a new child into the world. Sometimes we even give nicknames to others because certain actions seem to mark them for life.

Being called something like Honest Abe would probably please us, but to be labeled as a Benedict would likely lead to our protest. In the world of sports, it’s a badge of honor to be pegged as a *Babe Ruth*, *King James*, *Megatron*, *Air Jordan*, or *The Rock*.

Even in the church, we’d much prefer to be considered a Barnabas over a Doubting Thomas. To be called a Paul often means you’re a mentor while wearing the designation of Timothy makes you a learner. Names are powerful precisely because they communicate ideas about those whom they identify.

Perhaps this is why God is so intentional about His name. Admittedly, speaking of God means different things for various people, but when understood correctly the name of God uncovers multiple reasons for worshipping Him. Not only do we benefit from understanding all that God’s name entails, but also from making His name known to others.

- **What comes to mind when someone mentions God or Jesus? How will your understanding of who God is shape the way you live?**

Option 2

Superlatives are words that describe something with an exceptional degree of quality. In schools, people are often awarded superlatives such as *kindest*, *most artistic*, *most likely to succeed*, or *most athletic*. Ask students to come up with some superlatives—some they have heard before and some original. After a few minutes, discuss the importance of God’s name and the glory it carries. Just like superlatives often have the power to mark people with a certain label, so does the name of God. His powerful and glorious name marks us with far greater importance than any superlative—His name marks us as His very own. His name secures our salvation eternally.

- **In what ways do people often disrespect the name of God? How can you guard against this in your own life?**

HIS STORY

15-20 MINUTES

THE POINT

God saves us for the glory of His name and for our good.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God** - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Hezekiah** - king of Judah

PLOT

As our journey continues, we turn to the story of Hezekiah and the outside threat Israel experienced from the armies of Assyria. During a time in which many kings of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, Hezekiah stood with confidence in God's ability to protect His people. He asked God to save them not only for their sake, but also for the sake of His name and His renown.

TIMELINE

GOD RESCUES JUDAH

God spares Judah from the Assyrian army.

HOSEA AND GOMER

God's faithful pursuit of an unfaithful people.

JONAH

God goes to great lengths for people to hear the good news of salvation.

ASSYRIA THREATENS TO DESTROY

Because we live in a fallen world, pain and suffering are far too common. Even worse, most people today resist God despite His willingness to bring peace and relief from the calamities around us. The closer our walk with God, the more likely we will also be shunned by the world.

Israel's experience under the leadership of Hezekiah helps us to respond correctly when the world rises up against God's people today.

The Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he heard that the king had left Lachish. Now the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, "Behold, he has set out to fight against you." So he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?'" (2 Kings 19:8-13)

Why is it so difficult to walk as a child of God in a contemporary world? Why do the kingdoms of earth rise up against the people of God? There are two things to keep in mind.

First, Satan has a limited source of power in this world. Since the garden of Eden, war has raged between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). Because creation has been subjected to sin, Satan temporarily functions as "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) and the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). Consequently, the world is a domain over which the devil exercises great, albeit temporary, power (1 John 5:18). Though Christ came to reestablish what Adam lost in the garden by means of a new heaven and earth, at the moment Satan continues to wreak havoc in the world, primarily against the people of God.

Secondly, seeing the backdrop of evil in the world helps us to understand that every hardship and suffering we face is not necessarily about us. Granted, Satan walks around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). He is the serpent of old, anxious to accuse believers (Rev. 12:10). But his attacks are also part of a much larger war that is not primarily about the individuals affected by the hardships created.

When Assyria came against Hezekiah and Israel's southern kingdom, the primary target was "your God in whom you trust" (19:10). When the Assyrians listed the other nations and the gods that were unable to save them, they became instruments of Satan used to mock the name of Yahweh by lumping Him into the same category. Through these mouthpieces, Satan mocked the notion that God was able to deliver His people (18:22-24). He even suggested that the pagan gods of surrounding countries approved and commissioned the attack due to Hezekiah's efforts to reestablish the worship of Yahweh as the only true God.

Ultimately, this is why the kingdoms of the world rise up against God's people. It is not because we are significant. And it is not because our happiness or unhappiness can alter the course of the ancient war between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. God's people are mocked, tempted, targeted, and persecuted in order to call God's name into question. Our lives are a battleground for God's glory and Satan is anxious to prove that the God we serve is no different than the false gods of dead religions.

- **Why do you think the Assyrians focused on Israel's trust in God, making Him seem deceptive?** (*p. 40, PSG*)
- **What stands out to you about their taunting? Have you ever experienced something similar—being taunted or ridiculed because you trust God? What happened?** (*p. 40, PSG*)

HEZEKIAH PRAYS THAT GOD WOULD DELIVER AND EXALT HIS NAME

Can you imagine the pressure Hezekiah must have felt? Despite his efforts to honor the commandments of the Lord, he found himself in a desperate situation with no apparent solution. Unless God intervened, certain destruction awaited Judah. But notice how Hezekiah responded to hopelessness he faced.

Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said: "O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone." (2 Kings 19:14-19)

Unlike those who came before him, Hezekiah was a righteous king who feared the Lord. Earlier in his reign, he led Judah to tear down pagan altars that offered tribute and worship to false gods. The pressure from Sennacherib, king of Assyria, now forced Hezekiah to depend fully on the one true God's power for deliverance. Already, he had sought the counsel of Isaiah the prophet (19:5-7) and was assured of God's deliverance. Now, Hezekiah put his faith into practice by taking the Assyrian threats to the temple and calling out to the Lord in prayer.

Obviously, Hezekiah asked the Lord for the salvation of Judah (19:19). But note also the strong emphasis on the integrity of God's name. Divided into three parts, his prayer magnified the power of God, stated the problem facing the nation, and then appealed directly to God for help.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

God's Glory

The glory of God is His manifest work, the way He represents His perfect character through His activity. It also refers to His excellent reputation and is given as one of the reasons we are to praise His name. Another sense of the word is the inherent beauty of God, the unbearable brightness and beauty of His being as He radiates His own attributes and characteristics for all to witness. The Scriptures speak of humanity as having "fallen short" of God's glory (Rom. 3:23) because we have rejected the purpose for which God created us—to glorify Him.

Angered by the fact that Sennacherib mocked the living God (19:17), Hezekiah desired all the kingdoms of the earth to know there is but one true God (19:19). Contrary to the pagan nations that previously fell to Assyria, Israel's God was not made of wood or stone. The king was eager for the exaltation of his God as much as he was for the deliverance of his people.

GOD DELIVERS FOR THE SAKE OF HIS NAME AND THE GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE

The response Hezekiah received from the Lord is a reminder that God is eager to hear us when we pray with a kingdom agenda.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard." (2 Kings 19:20)

Not only is God willing to hear us when we cry out to Him, He is also willing to intervene on our behalf for the sake of His name.

TIMELINE

JOEL

A prophet who warns God's people about the Day of the Lord.

JEREMIAH

God's calling and presence overcomes obstacles in the mission.

THE NEW COVENANT

God promises to indwell His people.

“Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.” And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place. (2 Kings 19:32-37)

With their backs against the wall, the only hope for Judah’s victory over Assyria was God’s action on their behalf. Then, just as Isaiah predicted (19:7), Sennacherib fell in defeat as God fought to preserve His people. God eagerly protected those who belonged to Him. The sudden death of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers not only speaks of God’s power, but also shows His relentless determination to take care of His own. Whether it’s the execution of a multitude or the execution of His own Son, God stands ready to do whatever necessary to save those who humbly seek the kingdom of heaven.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Now that Christ has fulfilled the promises God made to David by establishing the eternal throne of His kingdom (Luke 1:30-33), all who are in Christ should anticipate the same allegiance from God that Old Testament Jews enjoyed because of their heroic king. Just as the kingship of David guaranteed the preservation of Israel, so also the kingship of Jesus assures us that we are eternally secure in Him. Because of His sacrificial death on the cross, God the Father gave Christ the Son a name that is above all other names (Phil. 2:9-11) so that God’s magnificent glory will be eternally manifested through Him.

YOUR STORY

10-15 MINUTES

GROUP QUESTIONS

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- **What are some ways Satan is wreaking havoc in the world today? What does it say about us if we, as children of God, are content and at peace in the world?** *Answers will vary.*
- **What is your first reaction when bad things happen in your life? How will seeing hardship through the lens of God's glory change how you handle life's challenges?** *By focusing upon God's glory in life's challenges, we are reminded that (1) God has a plan and is in control, and (2) God is actively at work for our good.*
- **What do these verses teach you about prayer?** *We pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10) precisely because of our conviction that nothing is more satisfying than making God's name known through the growth of His kingdom.*
- **How should you approach God with your requests?** *Answers will vary.*

HIS STORY

God's Story of Redemption, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

YOUR STORY

Where your story meets His.

YOUR MISSION 10-15 MINUTES



HEAD

Admittedly, we don't enjoy being around people who live for themselves while neglecting others. However, God's pursuit of His glory is fundamentally different from the narcissism that plagues so much of humanity. Because no person or thing is more glorious than God, a failure to promote Himself would be idolatrous. Not only that, but like a lighthouse that leads those under its brightness to safety, God intentionally draws attention to Himself because salvation and abundant life are impossible apart from the light of His goodness. There is always a unity between the provision we need and the glory God deserves. When God promotes His glory, it results in the good of His people.

- **Why is the Lord eager to be victorious for His people? What does this tell us about His love for us, and His desire to see His name exalted?** *Answers will vary.*
- **How do we personally benefit when God makes His glory known?** *Answers will vary.*



HEART

When our understanding of life's purpose is centered on God rather than ourselves, our focus is free to shift away from receiving gifts from the Lord to simply making His name known. Like Hezekiah, we should seek the Lord's activity in our lives as a testimony to His goodness and grace. Our ambition, above all else, is to bless the name of the Lord forever (Dan. 2:20).

- **Why should the praise of God's name be the ultimate desire of our hearts?** *Answers will vary.*
- **How do we make less of God in our lives when we focus on His gifts rather than on Him alone?** *The created gifts of God, while good, are simply that—created. When we focus on the gifts more than the Giver, we are essentially saying that there is more satisfaction in them than in the God who gave them.*



HANDS

Because God's glory is first and foremost, the children of God should live to make God's name known rather than for the advancement of their desires or agendas. God does not exist for us; we exist for Him. Because we are created for God's glory (Isa. 43:7), aligning ourselves to this purpose brings freedom, peace, and joy. When we die to our own agendas and the promotion of our own names, our lives become beacons of glory that point back to the One who is more glorious than any other (Matt. 5:16).

- **What are some ways we can reflect God's glory in the way that we live?** *Answers will vary.*
- **How can you seek to make God's name known in your own life this week?** *Answers will vary.*

► ADDITIONAL INFO

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the following additional resources:

- **Leader Training Videos**
- **One Conversations**
- **Midweek Studies (to access your Midweek Study, go to lifeway.com/TGPFAL16Chron)**
- **Circular Timeline Poster**
- **App (for both leader and student)**



Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at

GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

And for ***free online training*** on how to lead a group visit

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