

V. 19 - Only the living praise God.

V. 21 - The remedy for his recovery was stated.

Hezekiah was a great man, he was a distinguished King of Judah. And yet the word of the Lord came to him that he was to face death. Greatness is no barrier to trouble. And death has always looked and searched out people.

Hezekiah was also a good man. He was genuinely good. For twenty-nine years he reigned as king under his administration - the institutions were restored to honor. The idol worship was abolished in the high places, they were brought down. The brazen serpent of Moses was destroyed. Lest it become an object of idolatry. And the temple of God was repaired. He was a thoroughly good man. And yet goodness is no pledge that sorrow may not knock at his door. We remember Job, one of God's best men, had to suffer.

The text is one of the gems of Isaiah, of which the Bible is full. Which seeing, once, you really never forget it. It is like music. And yet you are amazed when you turn to the commentaries and find that some may not even mention this text at all. But it seems remarkable, that here really, in a nutshell is the Gospel. The pit of corruption, the sinking sinner, and the strong arm of the restorer.

And the forgiveness and forgotten sin is cast behind God's back. You remember last Sunday evening we talked about removing sin as far as the East is from the West. And now he says in this verse, that all my sins have been cast behind thy back. So God found in a pit, dejected and despaired. And gave him up. And now, he has a promise

of immortality.

There is a great difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament in many ways. There is no difference in the story of love - in the book of Genesis to Revelation--there is not one difference in the matter of sacrifice. For the Old Testament is a foreshadow of the son of God, who is to come, to die upon a cross. In the Old Testament the law was proclaimed in the rolling thunder. In the New Testament, the Gospel was announced by the angels.

In the Old Testament, if a son were disobedient to his father, he was stoned with stones, until he was dead. But in the New Testament, if he broke his mother's heart or brought down his father's name to shame, and left home - the father continued to love him and wait for his return. And then goes forth to meet him, to kiss him, and put a ring, robe, and shoes upon him. And receives him at home with the gladness, the welcome, and rejoicing.

A lady told me about a preacher she heard once who said that a woman whose son came home drunk lived up in Chicago. The mother took the boy, and said now - you are going to come home this time. But I am going to show you where your friends are going to be and where you are going to go the next time. I am going to take you down to the hog pen. And so she took him down to skid row. Where all the drunks were stretched out. They had all of their problems. And the story goes that, she showed him that place, that he never came home in that condition again.

When Hezekiah faced death, he thinks of it as a pit of corruption. And he counts his escape from it as a definite victory.

In the New Testament, Paul faces death and he says - I am in a straight between two things. For I have a desire to be with Christ. And yet those things, that were depended upon him, he decides to tarry with them is more needful. We find this difference between Hezekiah and Paul. Because the victory won by Christ over death, so that now while still an enemy it is a conquoring enemy. And God uses it to hold his children in close embrace, until the Resurrection morning.

There is something impressive/about this text. It is this - thou hast loved my soul from the pit.

Now this is the spirit of my message. This text is really what the Scripture has to say - it unlocks the mysteries, of all of the future. The humblest servant of God who understands this spirit, the Bible, will simply come to say - God is love.

Dr. Dawson wrote a book - The Empire of Love.

I lived with pride, the house was hung,
With tapestries of rich design
Of many houses, this among
Them all was riches, and t'was mine.
But in the chamber burned no fire
Though all the furniture was gold
I sickened of fulfilled desire
The house of pride was very cold.

Now in his poetry - there came another verse.

I lived with love, all she possessed
Was but a tent beside a stream
She warmed my cold hands in her breast
She wove around my sleep a dream.

And once there was with face divine
Who softly came when day was spent
And turned our water into wine
And made our life a sacrament.

I. LOVE HAS A REAL RECORD

The whole Bible is a record of God's love. When Adam and Eve had sinned and God went walking in the garden, in the cool of the day saying - where art thou. This was love seeking.

When the world was in wickedness and the flood cannot but come, Noah stands proclaiming righteousness. This is love as a barrier to the way of judgement.

When Israel wanders away and God yet seeks, this is love crying with a broken heart.

The Sunamite is a story of love. It was love that sent the mother to Elisha. Or again, the story of Absalom. It was a story that sent the old father to the gates saying, my son, my son. In the story of Jacob, as an aged father grieving for his

children - it was love which rung from him the cry. Me, ye have berefed of my children - Joseph is not. Simon is not. And now you will take Benjamin from me.

When we turn over to the New Testament, we find love dictated in the Parables. Love worked the miracles, dealt with sinners. Drove the Savior to the cross. Sent him to the seashore in the early morning. And sent him back to represent us in Heaven. And love will one day bring him back again with all of his power and might. It is this spirit which must win in the church. And when we have it, victory is sure.

The frail daughter of General and Mrs. Booth, had sung her hymns and told her story. To a crowded meeting in Paris, France. Fallen men and women had only mocked her. But this provoked her to a new love. She told her story once more. And they still refused to yield to her - and she walked through the crowd, to the rear. Where a fallen girl, with marks of sin upon her face, bending over her - she took the poor face in both hands and kissed her saying - My dear sister, I would to God, I could love you to Christ. The girl was startled. Pure lips like those had not touched her cheek in many a year. She rose to her feet and staggered to the front and dropped on her knees, and rose up saved. And she became a Salvation Army Officer.

If you were to ask her how she came to Christ, she would answer - I was loved up from the pit. It was love that brought that girl out of the pit. And that is exactly what Mezekiah said happened to him. That in love, my soul, you have delivered it from the pit of corruption.

II. LOVE CALLS

Love not only has a record - but love calls. The very nature of this text is that love called Hezekiah up out of the pit and corruption. And love calls today. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. And Jesus so loved to do his will - that he cried - lo, I am in the volume of the book. It is written of men. I delight to do thy will.

Paul so loved the service of God and the souls of men, that he counted it a joy to suffer and die - if any men could know Him.

I read the statement of a great author - in which he said, when selfish interests are followed solely by individual or corporation, disaster will surely come. He said, have you noticed the Lord's Prayer. In it the words, I, my, and me do not occur. The individual praying for himself - apart for others has no part in this prayer of Jesus. It is our Father, give us our daily bread. The petitioner cast his lot in with the rest and wins his blessing. There has never been such a call as today for service.

Jane Adams, Chicago, referring to the suffering and the poor of the city - was broken-hearted. If you had talked with General Booth about the downtrodden in London, there never had been such poverty as in that day. And there was a great day to show the spirit of Jesus. Children were denied the comforts of life, and men middle-aged were worn out with increasing toil. And women were old before their time because of the burdens they had born. And young girls were hurt in their lives by toil. For the support of themselves and of others. Even in our day, we have much of this. And all of these things are calling for our ministry - which should be extended in the name of Jesus. There never has been a time to live and to love as this day as in which we live.

III. LOVE'S EXAMPLES

In the record of love, we always find examples. In Christianity, we find the best examples. And sometimes today we find that Christ is misrepresented. Or he is misinterpreted. I can hardly believe that that is true. If so, the remedy would be easy. Being a Christian, after one has accepted the Divine Plan, in regeneration implies that the sort of living in which the spirit and the method of Christ are reproduced accurately.

His ideals were the highest. The desire for me was not that which is good. Or that which is best. And his constant aim was to present to them in his own living, which it is possible for us all to attain unto, did we but walk with him and become united with him by faith. He adapted himself to everybody with infinite skill. He entered the homes of the rich with blessing. And he took time for the homes of the poverty. With the same benediction - he saw the need of women. And his treatment of them was beautiful. Whether she was clothed in riches or poverty - or whether she poured precious ointment on him or bowed at his feet as a guilty sinner. He was really at his best when a woman was taken in sin - and came before him for his condemnation or his forgiveness.

But you will notice while the world would stone her - Jesus offered her forgiveness.

He loved little children - and indeed, all classes of people felt the touch of his power. The blind beggar received his sight. Rich Zacchaeus secured salvation for his entire household. Nicodemus had the offer of the new birth. Peter had his name changed and his whole nature. Every day and every night, Jesus moved with compassion. There are examples of love.

J. Wilbur Chapman said - during the Christmas Season of 1907 - he took his children to New York to go and watch the Salvation Army's distribution of gifts to the poor. Because he wanted his children to see the other side of Christian work. He asked that he might come to the Headquarters, and if possible, have a special place reserved for him. That he might plainly witness the bestower of these gifts upon the unfortunate. He said that almost as far as the eye could reach, the line of the poor was stretched along the street. Then they filed into the Armory and made ready for the coming and walked down a pathway divided by board rails. Piled high to the ceilings were the baskets for the poor. He said the Salvation Army played stirring music. The Salvation Army officers stood ready to pass out the baskets - while the Commander of the Army - Eva Booth waited after coming from a sick bed to do what she could to make the occasion memorable.

Car fare was given to the aged and warm clothes to the needy. Baskets were passed out upon which the hands of the Commander had been placed. And as the poor received them, the sight was never to be forgotten.

One large Negro kissed her hand. Another aged man bowed, to kiss the hem of her dress. And at last, there came a woman - beautiful of face but bent of form. Her gray hair waved about her temples. She had the marks of refinement - but there was evidence of poverty in her clothes. She addressed the Commander in French. And from her received a response in the same language. And then overcome with emotion, she dropped upon her knees to kiss the foot of the Commander. As she stood, raised, above her - every eye that witnessed it was full of tears. The impression made was profound. And this was but the expression of love on these servants of Jesus.

It is the spirit which the church must have, and above all, it is the spirit which

the preachers of the Gospel must have. And ever saint of God must have if we are to win.

There is a story of a boy in the state of Indiana who was sent to the city of Indianapolis. He was hopeless as far as learning was concerned. But finally, became the object of love by a Doctor who took the little boy under his wing. He took him in a room and got down on the floor beside him. And over and over again, he repeated the letters of the alphabet. There was no sign of awakening intelligence. At last, however, after weeks and weeks of toil had been given - there came a sign and then another, and still another. And later, actually the child stood on a platform in the city. And was able to recite the 23rd Psalm and sing a hymn. And it was one of the influences that led a young man into the ministry. For the young man said, if a physician with only the ambition to exhibit his skill - could take a little child like that, what could be done if someone filled with the spirit of God and the love of Christ who wanted to help a suffering humanity in his community.

IV. LOVE'S FIELD

It is a great thing to know that love works out here in the world. Whether in the shop, the factory, the store, or the office - wherever we are. Often we hear a physician who is unwilling to begin his operation or his surgery without prayer. Indeed, when a man comes to the point that he does not want to enter into any great movement or crisis without Heavenly counsel.

I cannot conceive of anyone wanting to go out into this world without love.

No one could understand why a father on the Colorado Railroad blinded with drink, holding his two little boys, by the hand - stood in the way of an approaching express train. And the train struck him and killed him and his boys. You know, there are many fathers today who are holding onto the hands of boys, and their lives are so sinful - that they are just leading them on the way to destruction.

How marvelous it was down in N. C. years ago before the days of World War I when a covered wagon was left for a moment as the man entered the store. Somebody shouted, your team is running away. He rushed out, grabbed the lines, was thrown to the ground - and he grabbed a spoke of the wheel and finally he caught the end of the wagon. Bleeding and bruised, drew himself in. And the team was stopped. Someone said to the man, you almost lost your life trying to stop the run away horses. And he said, why did you do it. And then he gathered up in his arms a little child who had been sleeping in the wagon. He said, (I have saved my boy.)

We need fathers like that, who will desperately be in earnest to save their boys. This is being Christian. We need mothers whose every thought is for her children. After she has found Christ, there is every desire that she wants to make them ready for Heaven.

How many cares does the mother's heart know

Nobody knows but mother

How many joys from her mother's love flow

Nobody knows but mother

How many prayers by each little white bed

How many tears for her babies has she shed

How many kisses for each curly head

Nobody knows but mother.

Or it may be like the little sister, who had a Christ-like spirit and love. Who bears her burdens without knowing that they are burdens. There had been a parade and they had followed the procession in the street. Until the little brother grew too tired to walk home. And so the sister gathered him up in her arms, and started back. Staggering under the load, and somebody stopped her and said - he is heavy for you - isn't he? She replied with a smile, no sir, he is my brother.

Somehow I wish I could tell you this story about Jesus that you might win him - that he might fill your soul. And make your life a real expression of his truth. Hezekiah said that it was within love that my soul was delivered from the pit. And I have cast all of my sins behind his back.

I want to close with this story - in the South, Sam Davis, a Confederate Scout who suffered death as a spy. It was in November, 1863, that he was captured. He was taken to Pulaski, Tenn. and thrown in a jail. Then he was taken to General Dodge and searched and valuable papers were found upon him. He was told that this was a serious charge and that he must tell where he got the information. He said, I know he is serious - but I will take the consequences.

He had a chance to escape but he would not tell. General Dodge, you are doing your duty - and I will do mine. If I die, I will die like a soldier. When the morning came - they gave him 15 minutes to change his mind. But he said, if I had a dozen lives I would give them all rather than betray the trust. Sam Davis died. He wore an old overcoat which he gave to the Chaplain and asked to be sent home.

When Wilbur Chapman was preaching in Nashville, Tenn., the daughters of Confederacy

was in session. A gentleman took the old overcoat of Sam Davis and unwrapped it in the presence of Southern women. Ladies, this overcoat belonged to Sam Davis. He wore it. The last morning of his life. One woman who knew him came forward. Ran her fingers over the coat and burst into tears. Sobbing in memory of the noble life. The coat had to be taken away for the emotion at the sight of it was too great.

This is the story of Jesus. It is infinitely more pathetic - if we could really see it. He was cradled in a manger. Wrapped in swaddling clothes. He lived at Nazareth and worked at a carpenter shop. He went to the River Jordan - was baptized of John. He then began to travel from place to place. He suffered the reproaches of those who did not understand him. He preached around Galilee and brutal men assailed him. He came down and worked in Judea. And he suffered through Gethsemane. And great sweat drops of blood fell from his brow. For us, he hung in agony upon Calvary and his heart broke. And I want to tell you this story - that I may win you. That he may send you forth to love in his name. And thus to win back the lost to himself.