



## **feeding . . . gathering . . . carrying . . . leading. (Isaiah 40:11)**

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August 4, 2013

**Dear church family,**

Thank you so much for listening to me share how much King Hezekiah has come to mean to me over the years. While I've learned so much from this godly king, this was the first time I've looked at his life as a model of discipleship.

As I shared on Sunday, I've been challenged by Bo's messages on Luke's narrative, specifically, on the requirements of true discipleship. And I've also been evaluating my life through the lens of Psalm 1:1, to make sure that I'm readily removing any habits that will cause me to walk in the counsel of the wicked, to stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

Reading Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 29-32; 2 Ki 18-20 & Is 36-39, showed me a man who urgently sought to remove any and all impediments to a relationship with the Almighty God. This is how the word summarizes his reign, "He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There is none like him among the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. And the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook." (2 Ki 18:5-7)

Hezekiah started his reign by immediately consecrating the temple of the Lord, removing the defilements from the Lord's dwelling place, making a sin offering for the nation and reinstating temple worship. His desire was to lead not only himself, but the entire nation of Judah back to worshipping the one true God. I saw this urgency in his desire to consecrate the nation as a necessary first step for any disciple longing for a deeper and meaningful relationship with Jesus. We will never truly know Jesus until we remove the idols in our lives that prevent us from fully submitting to him. Once we commit to doing the necessary work of removing the defilements in our lives, the Holy Spirit swoops in to aid and to "strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him". (2 Chr 16:9). We don't have to live in a state of compromised fellowship with Jesus. If there are areas in your life that He's calling you to remove, do so NOW, procrastinating any further is procrastinating in obedience.

We should remember that obedience in our discipleship does not guarantee a life without trials. However, through these trials we have a God who will fight our battles for us if we choose to rely on Him. Sometimes we revert back to our own "tried and true" methods of dealings with trials; these methods are temporary fixes. If we really want to deal with the problem permanently, we must turn to the Lord and absolutely trust in Him. As I mentioned in the message, the enemy will challenge us and we will have to assertively answer questions that the enemy will throw at us during these times:

- In whom are you basing your confidence?
- Where does your strategy and strength come from?
- Are you trusting in chariots and horses
- Is the enemy deceiving you?
- Is the enemy persuading you to not trust in the Lord?
- Are you listening to the voice of the enemy or the voice of your Lord?

I suggested that the best way to fight back is to seep ourselves in the word of God, meditating on it day and night

and making it our delight. Jeremiah 15:16 proclaims that “*When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight.*” Then we will have the same ability to proclaim just as David did in Ps 18:31-40 that there is no God besides our God who arms us with strength and keeps our way secure. He trains our hands for battle, provides a broad path for our feet so that our ankles do not give way, and humbles our adversaries before us.

Finally, I cautioned us to not fall into becoming self-centered disciples. I am sadly disappointed with the end of Hezekiah’s story. He hears a devastating prophesy about the future of his nation and yet seems more concerned with his well-being. Hezekiah’s is more enamored with his wealth and status than he is about interceding for the next generation. We have to be mindful of God’s grand purpose for mankind, that all may come to know Him as “the only true God, and Jesus Christ” whom He sent. (Jn 17:3). If we become meshed in shortsighted thinking, we begin to believe that God’s purpose is our wellbeing. We are here to serve the Lord, so let’s make sure we sync up to his purposes. After all, I know I want my legacy to be as one who was led by God in triumphal procession to spread everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ (2 Cor 2:14) to my generation and the generations to come.

Joyfully Yours,  
Eileen

<http://www.christour shepherd.org/pastlet.htm> (and follow links to download MP3 audio of sermon)