

DATE: March 20, 2011

TEXT: II Kings 18:1-6

TITLE: "LIFE TRANSFORMING CHANGES"

SERIES: "WHAT DOES GOD WANT TO DO IN YOU?"

Life Transformation Week – a time for spiritual renewal is coming.
What Does God want to do in your life?

INTRODUCTION: It's amazing how much we are creatures of habit and resistant to change. Years ago, a radio announcer on KLOS in Los Angeles, about thirty minutes after a major earthquake, made these conflicting statements: "The telephone company is urging people to please not use the telephone unless it is absolutely necessary in order to keep the lines open for emergency personnel. We'll be right back after this break to give away a pair of Phil Collins concert tickets to caller number 95."

Change can be hard, yet changes can result in life transformation. Are there some changes that God wants to make in your life during these days of life transforming opportunities? A change in passion, priorities or purpose. A change in attitudes or actions. A change in habits or heart.

In the Old Testament, Asa, Jehu, Jehoiad, Josiah, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Ezra and Nehemiah were all change agents. They were people who led spiritual reform and renewal. In these two week prior to life transformation week, we will look at two kings in the Old Testament who led spiritual reform and renewal. The first is King Hezekiah. In his life, we discover some changes he made that were life transforming.

**I. (vs. 1-4) A CHANGE OF PRIORITIES CAN RESULT IN LIFE TRANSFORMATION
"In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign." (II Kings 18:1)**

1. King Hezekiah is referred to in over one hundred references in II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Jeremiah, Hosea and Micah.
2. The history and literature of his reign occupy 17 chapters of the Bible.
3. He came to the throne when he was 25 years of age and reigned for 29 years.
4. Our text says it was "in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel" when Hezekiah became King of Judah.
5. Hezekiah begins his reign under grim conditions, for Judah was reduced to a low state and things were not good.
6. Politically, Assyria was posed to conquer the entire territory between its boundary and the boundary of Egypt.
7. Religiously, the Northern Kingdom had turned from Jehovah to other gods and the southern kingdom, under Ahaz, his father, had followed the same course.
8. The good news is that God can do amazing and life-transforming things in the worst of circumstances.

9. Hezekiah was the son of King Ahaz, a king who reigned in Jerusalem 16 years, and who did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord.
10. The strength of the kingdom had been exhausted by the defects and captivities which it suffered during the reign of King Ahaz.
11. Through the wickedness of his father, Ahaz, true religion had vanished and the people were guilty of the grossest idolatry.
12. We can read the legacy of his father, King Ahaz, in II Chronicles 28.
“...Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord.” (II Chronicles 28:1)
13. Ahaz walked in the way of the kings of Israel.
14. He burned sacrifices and even sacrificed his sons in the fire to other gods.
15. He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places.
16. He took away the furnishing of the temple of God.
17. He shut the doors of the Lord’s temple, trying to stop worship of the only, one true God.
18. He set up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem, calling for worship to other gods.
“Therefore the Lord his God handed him over to the king of Aram. The Arameans defeated him and took many of his people as prisoners and brought them to Damascus.” (II Chronicles 28:5)
19. But, then Hezekiah became king.
20. He was concerned about the things of God.
21. Spiritual things had not been the priority of his father, Ahaz, but it was his priority.
22. Hezekiah was a king who put spiritual things first.
23. He has been called the greatest of the revivalist-reformer kings, surpassing both Jehoshaphat and Josiah in the results of their reformation
- ILLUSTRATION: Earnest Baker, in his pioneering study of Old Testament revivals, said, “Hezekiah began a work of reformation during the first month of his reign, and within two months the whole land was swept with a wave of spiritual enthusiasm.”**
24. Realizing his father, King Ahaz had taken Judah down the same path of disobedience that led Israel to her doom, Hezekiah moved quickly to reverse national policy and bring Judah back to the Lord.
25. He led the kingdom in a different direction than his father had led them.
26. He made significant changes, leading the people into spiritual reform and renewal.
27. He confronted the evil, leading the people to turn away from it.
28. Hezekiah is the first king to be fully compared with David.
“He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done.” (II Kings 18:3)
29. The book of Kings makes a very clear distinction between Judean kings who did evil, leading the people into false worship, and those who were faithful to the Lord, doing right by acting against idolatry.
30. With Hezekiah’s ascent to the throne, there began a period of religious revival, for he made spiritual reform his priority.

31. He changed the priorities of the people, making spiritual things the number one priority.
32. Whatever you prioritize in your life, you will pursue.
33. Life transformation is the result of a change of priorities.

A. THE PRIORITY OF REMOVAL OF SIN

1. He had to deal with sin issues.
 2. Sin could not be ignored or redefined.
 3. He called sin, sin and confronted it.
 4. In order to do what is right, you must call sin wrong.
 5. You must call sin by its true name and not excuse it or make it something better or more acceptable.
 6. For life transformation to take place, sin must be confronted.
 7. For revival or spiritual renewal, sin must be dealt with.
 8. True life transformation does not happen when you hold onto sin.
 9. He dealt with the sin problems and idolatrous practices of his father.
“He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles...” (II Kings 18:4a)
 10. Sin had actually become part of the religion of the day.
 11. They had built high places, so that anytime you wanted to worship, places for idolatrous worship were available.
 12. He destroyed these high places, which was a kind of convenient religion—
 13. He also destroyed the sacred stone pillars that were a way of promoting prosperity religion in the ancient world.
 14. When folks wanted to have a business venture, they went to the sacred pillar, and they consulted some god in hopes that he’d turn a profit for them.
 15. Hezekiah tore it down.
 16. He also destroyed the Asherah poles.
 17. These were poles erected to the goddesses of the Canaanites.
 18. Within that kind of religion, there were all kinds of sexual immorality.
 19. Hezekiah did not stop there, for a partial removal of sin issues would not bring life-transformation and spiritual renewal.
“...he broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)” (II Kings 18:4b)
 20. If you remember the story, the people of God, during the time of Moses, had sinned, so God sent snakes into the camp. God told Moses to make a bronze snake so when people would look to it they would be healed.
 21. The people were now treating the bronze serpent as a divine relic and worshiping it as a god.
 22. They gave the serpent a name, “Nehushtan,” meaning “Bronze Thing”.
 23. Hezekiah destroyed it, broke it down and attacked sin at the center.
- ILLUSTRATION: Prince of Preachers, Haddon Robinson, preached a message with the title, “When Good Snakes Become Bad Snakes” on this verse. He said, “According to the encyclopedia, there are between**

2,500 and 3,000 different varieties of snakes crawling around the planet, and most of them are good snakes.” His point was to beware of bad snakes...those things that creep in our lives.

24. Tragically, the means had become the end, the snake became the god of their worship.
25. Hezekiah understood that the kingdom he inherited was full of bad snakes, and he decided to make a difference by removing the sin issues.
26. One of the non-negotiables for revival or spiritual renewal is the removal of sin.
27. True spiritual life-transformation does not take place when we hold on to the sin issues of our lives.
28. Hezekiah took a step necessary for revival—he got rid of sin.
29. Those things that were in conflict with true worship and the heart of God had to be removed.
30. There was no room for compromise.
31. Letting go of things in our lives is often part of transformation.
32. Spiritual priorities often require the removal of those things in our life that can interfere with life transformation.

ILLUSTRATION: A few months ago now, I was downstairs in our home with Amanda. She was thinking of moving into the room downstairs at the time. I was nearby while she was in the bathroom and I heard a scream. Now, I have heard cries over the sight of spiders before, but this one was different. She said, “Dad, a black widow.” I had also heard that before, too, but there never was a black widow. I went to look and, sure enough, there is was a very large black widow spider. It was clearly a black widow. There was no compromise. “Dad kill it. Dad get rid of it.”

33. Spiritual things were important enough to him that he dealt with anything that became competition with God.
34. He had to remove the sin issues.

B. THE PRIORITY OF RENEWAL OF WORSHIP

1. Worship of the true and living God had not been his father’s priority, but it was his.
2. His priority was to reestablish worship to the true God.
3. Hezekiah began with the most pressing constructive need, the opening and cleansing of the Temple, which his father, Ahaz, had left closed and desecrated.

“In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the Lord and repaired them. He brought in the priests and the Levites, assembled them in the square on the east side and said, ‘Listen to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple of the Lord, the God of our fathers. Remove all defilement from the sanctuary.’” (II Chronicles 29:3-5)

4. He opened the doors of the temple and repaired them so worship could take place.
5. Consecration was necessary for the renewal of worship.

6. Consecrate means “to make holy, hallow,” that is, “to set apart someone or something for God’s service.”

7. This was the first step in restoring fellowship with God.

8. Consecration is part of life transformation.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1)

9. Only a true priesthood could offer acceptable worship.

10. He put his whole heart into taking care of spiritual things.

“This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah, doing what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. In everything that he undertook in the service of God’s temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.” (II Chronicles 31:20-21)

11. Putting first things in our life is a daily challenge for each of us.

Matthew 6:33 says, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33)

12. We sing this song based on this scripture from time to time and we refer to this scripture often.

13. Yet, our belief in this scripture is seen in the way we live out our daily lives.

14. Spiritual things cannot be secondary.

15. Are we going to build spiritual things around our world or our world around spiritual things?

ILLUSTRATION: “Never allow anything to hinder you from being in the place where your spiritual life is maintained.” (Oswald Chambers)

16. Is worship something we work around our days, or, do we work our days around our worship?

17. Renewal of worship in our lives must be a priority.

18. A change of priorities can result in life transformation.

19. Are there some priorities in your life God wants to change?

II. (vs.5-6) A CHANGE OF PASSION CAN RESULT IN LIFE TRANSFORMATION

A. PASSIONATELY FOCUS YOUR FAITH ON THE LORD

“Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him.” (II Kings 18:5)

1. The divine evaluation of Hezekiah is very favorable, distinguishing him as the greatest in faith of all Judah’s kings.

2. Hezekiah was a king who put his trust in God.

3. He was focused passionately upon the Lord.

4. He was a king who was distinguished for his faith and trust in God above all others, who sat on the throne of Judah.

5. It was very clear who Hezekiah put his trust in.

6. He did not put his trust in Assyria or in Egypt.

7. He put his trust in the Lord, the God of Israel.

8. The word translated 'trust' here is 'batah,' BAtah
9. It is the common word for 'reliance upon God.'
10. It literally means, "He leaned all his weight on the Lord."
11. He leaned heavy on the Lord and trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel.
"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." (Psalm 20:7)
12. We know much about God yet often lean upon Him so little
13. Passionately trusting the Lord can result in transform our lives.
"Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him." (Psalm 32:10)
- "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe." (Proverbs 29:25)**
- "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you." (Isaiah 26:3)**
14. Hezekiah turned to God with trust.
15. One of the main lessons of Hezekiah's life is to passionately trust.
16. Trusting God had become a lifestyle for King Hezekiah.
17. Later on, when the people were be threatened by the King of Assyria, the field commander said to the people so all could hear, **"Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says, 'The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'" (II Kings 18:30)**
18. The world said, "Do not trust in the Lord, but Hezekiah trusted in the Lord."
"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." (II Chronicles 32:7-8)
19. Hezekiah's confidence in God inspired a like confidence in his people.
20. Hezekiah had a resource of a supernatural army.
21. He trusted God in the times of great crisis.
22. When his world was falling apart, he trusted God.
ILLUSTRATION: * John Knox, Protestant reformer, said, "A man with God is always in the majority." (John Knox)
23. Hezekiah was totally focused upon and relying on God.
24. Hezekiah passionately trusted that God was greater than his problem.
25. He trusted that God was already at work.
ILLUSTRATION: Heard about a farmer who saw a bird building a nest in a heap of braces pruned from the apple tree beside the farmhouse. The Farmer destroyed the nest. The next day, the bird started to work in the same place, but the farmer destroyed it again. The next day, she started to build it in a rose bush beside the kitchen door. The farmer saw it, smiled and left it alone. A while later, all the branches from the pruning piles were hauled off. The farmer saw ahead, knowing that the piles would be destroyed, and helped the bird to find a safe place to lay the

eggs, where they were safely hatched. God sees tomorrow. We can trust the sight and strength of God.

26. We strain so hard, trying to catch a glimpse instead of trusting the one who can see clearly.

27. Are you leaning heavy on the Lord and trusting in Him?

28. Are there some things you need to trust the Lord with?

B. (v.6) PASSIONATELY HOLD FAST TO THE LORD

“He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses.” (II Kings 18:6)

1. Here, the Hebrew word is ‘dabaq,’ which means ‘cleave like ivy on a tree trunk.’
2. Hezekiah had a tenacious cleaving to the Lord.
3. This phrase conveys the picture of a believer who hangs on for dear life to the God he has trusted, in the face of obstacles, distractions, and temptations.
4. He is the believer who will not let go, like Jacob who wrestled with God.
5. He did not just trust for an item or day, but held fast for the day.

ILLUSTRATION: I remember one time that I was holding Amanda’s hand and walking. Shortly, Mom came along and she held Sharon’s hand.

6. Hezekiah did not let go of the Lord’s hand.
7. He did not grab hold of another, but passionately held on to the Word of the Lord.
8. He did not abandon biblical authority, but held to the commands of God.

C. PASSIONATELY FOLLOW THE LORD IN OBEDIENCE

“He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses.” (II Kings 18:6)

1. He did not veer off, but followed the Lord faithfully.

“This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah, doing what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. In everything that he undertook in the service of God’s temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.” (II Chronicles 31:20-21)

2. God, I will follow you regardless of what I am going through.

ILLUSTRATION: One theology professor, Leonard Sweet, tells, “One of our students received an appointment from a bishop, and the student did not feel the placement exactly suited his abilities. I overheard him complaining about it to another student, and then the other student said, “You know, the world’s a better place because Michelangelo did not say, ‘I don’t do ceilings.’” Her comment stopped me dead in my tracks. I had to admit she was right.”

3. If you and I are going to follow the Lord and be faithful to the ministry God is calling us to, then we had better understand that.
4. The world’s a better place because a preacher named John Wesley didn’t say, “I don’t do preaching in fields.”

5. The world's a better place because Moses didn't say, "I don't do Pharaohs."
6. The world's a better place because Noah didn't say, "I don't do arks and animals."
7. The world's a better place because Rahab didn't say, "I don't do enemy spies."
8. The world's a better place because David didn't say, "I don't do giants."
9. The world's a better place because Peter didn't say, "I don't do Gentiles."
10. The world's a better place because John didn't say, "I don't do deserts."
11. The world's a better place because Paul didn't say, "I don't do correspondence."
12. The world's a better place because Mary Magdalene didn't say, "I don't do feet."
13. The world's a better place because Jesus didn't say, "I don't do crosses."
14. And the world will be a better place only if you and I don't say, "I don't do ..."
15. Instead we are to say, "I will follow you passionately, Lord, wherever you lead."

ILLUSTRATION: *"Trust and obey, for there's no one other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey." (John H. Sammis)**

16. He kept the law of Moses throughout his life, in contrast to Solomon who, in his old age, held fast to foreign wives and broke the law.

17. He did not turn from them.

18. Hezekiah turned to the Lord with whole-hearted obedience.

19. He put his whole passion into obeying and serving the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: **Check words, add verses and put on screen)

With my whole heart Lord, let me love you

With my whole heart None above you

Praise and love you With my whole heart

With my whole heart Lord, let me hear you

With my whole heart ever near you

Praise and love you with my whole heart

Help me hear you with my whole heart

With my whole mind Lord, let me love you

With my whole mind none above you

Praise and love you with my whole mind

With my whole mind Lord, let me hear you

With my whole mind ever near you

Praise and love you with my whole mind

Help me hear you with my whole mind

With my whole life Lord, let me love you

With my whole life none above you

Praise and love you with my whole life

**With my whole life Lord, let me hear you
With my whole life ever near you
Praise and love you with my whole life
Help me hear you with my whole life**

III. (II Kings 20:1-3 & 19:14-16) A CHANGE IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE CAN RESULT IN LIFE TRANSFORMATION

A. PRAY TO A GOD THAT CARES ABOUT YOU PERSONALLY

1. Life transformation begins with communication with God.
2. Prayer can be truly life-transforming.
3. Hezekiah was a king who put prayer into practice.
4. He addressed cares and concerns with prayer.
5. Prayer is a necessity for spiritual renewal and life transformation.

ILLUSTRATION: I heard about the lady who was feeling that it was inappropriate to ask the Lord for a husband, so she prayed, “Father, I’m not praying for myself. But, would you please send my mother a son-in-law.”

6. Prayer is just being honest and open with God.
7. Things went from bright to bleak.

ILLUSTRATION: May 2, 1863. Near Chancellorsville, Virginia, 45,000 Confederate troops, under General Robert E. Lee, faced a northern army twice their number. Lee and his lieutenant general, ‘Stonewall’ Jackson, held conference, after which General Jackson took 25,000 southern troops, marched the length of the northern army’s front, and came late in the afternoon to a position due west of the northerners. Jackson’s troops seemed to rise out of nowhere, as they smashed into the exposed right flank of the northern line. One federal corps was routed; the whole right half of its battle line was disrupted. Darkness and the tangled woods kept the Confederates from capitalizing on their triumph. However, it was a plan that went right, with all the advantage of a luscious surprise. And, yet, that night, General Jackson was shot down by his own troops. He and a small group of riders were scouting the lines. They were riding back into the southern lines, but southern troops had not been told that such a party was out. Hence, in the dark, Jackson & Co. were taken for northern troops and fired upon. In little more than a week, Jackson would die from complications from his wounds. (Chancellorsville – a brilliant victory in the afternoon and a tragic loss at night.)

8. Hezekiah faced several problems.

“In those days Hezekiah become ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, ‘This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.’ Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord. ‘Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and

**with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.’
And Hezekiah wept bitterly.” (II Kings 20:1-3)**

9. “In those days” seems to be a general statement referring to some time in the reign of Hezekiah.
10. He knew how to pray about the personal issues of his life.
11. One of the personal issues of his life was his sickness.
12. When he was about 38, the Lord told him through the prophet to put his house in order because he was going to die.
13. In his prayer, he said he had walked before God, been faithful or true, served with a whole heart and done what was good.
14. Hezekiah needed to be certain that not only were the affairs of state in order, but that he and his house were on proper terms with God.
15. In his personal crises, he went to the Lord in prayer.
16. Things had to be worked out with God.
17. From the standpoint of Hezekiah, it was his prayer that made possible the divine healing.
18. With openness of heart, he went to the Lord with something he did not understand.
19. The God he prayed to was a listening God.

“He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.” (Psalm 91:15)

20. God heard his prayer and extended his life.
21. Instead of death, there would be recovery; instead of a funeral, worship; instead of defeat, deliverance.
22. God cared about Hezekiah.

“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.” (Psalm 55:22) .

23. God cares about the things we care about.
24. God cares about the tears of our hearts.

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” (I Peter 5:7)

ILLUSTRATION: History records that there was a musician and composer who was in deep trouble. He was heading for financial disaster. He drove himself pitilessly, only to recover from one failure after another, and so his health began to fail. By 1741, he was swimming in debt and would surely land in debtor’s prison. But, he received a commission from a Dublin charity to compose a work for a benefit performance. He went to work, rarely leaving his room, hardly stopping for food, never out of his house for three weeks. Three parts and the orchestration – 260 pages of manuscript- were finished in 24 days. So, Georg Frederic Handel produced *Messiah*. At its premiere, *Messiah* raised 400 pounds and freed 142 men from debtor’s prison. One of his biographers claimed that “*Messiah* has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan. More than any other single musical production in this or any county.” (Patrick Kavanaugh, “The spiritual lives of the Great Composers.”) And, Handel’s fortunes turned for the

better. But, it hadn't looked like that in April 1741, when he gave his farewell concert.

25. Just when it looked like it was time to say farewell, God was going to turn things around for him.

“Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him: ‘Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord.’” (II Kings 20:4-5)

26. We pray to a God who personally cares about us.

27. A God who can turn things around when we call to Him.

28. No one wants you to experience life transformation more than He does, for He cares about you personally.

ILLUSTRATION: **

“What a friend we have in Jesus,

All our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry.

Everything to God in prayer.” (Joseph Scriven)

B. PRAY TO A GOD WHO IS POWERFUL

29. There was an enemy.

30. The king of Assyria was threatening Jerusalem.

31. The powerful army of the Assyrians had taken the outlying fenced cities and came to the very gates of Jerusalem.

32. Hezekiah received a troubling letter saying that Hezekiah's God would not deliver Him.

33. What do you do with the things that trouble you?

34. Hezekiah poured out his soul's concern to his heavenly Father.

35. King Hezekiah received a letter from the king.

“Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord.” (II Kings 19:14)

36. The Hebrew word for 'letter' in verse 14 is plural, indicating that the letter was lengthy, probably written in Aramaic on several leather or papyrus scrolls.

37. Hezekiah read the letter and then he did something unique and powerful with it.

38. He handed over the letter to Jehovah.

39. He let God read his mail.

40. Hezekiah prayed about the things that troubled him.

41. He took that letter to the Lord and spread it out before Him.

42. One of the great privileges we have as Christians is the privilege of spreading the things that trouble us out before the Lord.

43. Whatever it is troubling us, we can lay it down before the Lord.

44. There is Someone we can go to with our troubles.

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

(Hebrews 4:16)

45. Hezekiah recognized that the situation was too great for him and for the human resources of his people.

46. He did not turn to foreign alliances but to the God who could help.

47. He went to the One that could help.

48. He went to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before Him.

49. He held nothing back but spread it not before the church but before the Lord.

“Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving; present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6)

50. He prayed and it was the most important activity in which he could engage.

51. He knew God was big enough to help.

“And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord; ‘O Lord, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.’” (II Kings 19:15)

52. The God he prayed to was big enough.

ILLUSTRATION: When the Allies arrived and liberated Paris in 1944, church bells, silent during German occupation, now erupted in a cacophony of joy. But the bells of Saint-Philippe du Roule did not ring. Apparently, many parishioners called Canon Jean Muller that Thursday evening to urge that the church’s bells join the chorus. On the following Sunday, Muller thanked all who had called him to ask him to ring the church’s bells. Then, he said: “I should also like to remind you of something you all forgot in your excitement that day. There are no bells in the belfry of Saint-Philippe. The bells of Saint-Philippe did not ring because it had no bells.”

53. The nation’s other gods could not rescue them from Assyria because they were not gods.

54. God is God over all.

55. Hezekiah was praying to the God who was real.

56. The bells of heaven rang loudly when he called to the Lord

57. Prayer reaches the Almighty God.

ILLUSTRATION: * “The power of prayer is not in the one who prays but in the one who hears it.” (Unknown)

58. While Hezekiah slept that night, the One who never slumbers nor sleeps sent forth His angel who instantly destroyed 185,000 of the Assyrian army.

59. The enemy fled and the king was ultimately killed at the hands of his own sons.

60. A life of prayer is transforming.

61. Are you praying about the things in your life that need transforming?

62. Prayer is life-transforming, for prayer changes you.

63. He laid it all out before the Lord.

64. What are the letters in your hands that you need to lay out before the Lord.

65. The things that trouble you.

66. The things that get in the way of life transformation.

CONCLUSION: Are there some changes God wants to make in your life that would be life-transforming. God-centered changes bring Spiritual renewal

ILLUSTRATION: Someone once asked famous British evangelist, Gypsy Smith, "How do you start a revival?" Smith replied, "If you want to start a revival, go home and get a piece of chalk. Go into your closet and draw a circle on the floor. Kneel down in the middle of the circle and ask God to start a revival inside the chalk mark. When he has answered your prayer, the revival has begun."

He was simply saying, "Revival begins with you and me."

I. (vs. 1 – 4) A CHANGE OF PRIORITIES CAN RESULT IN LIFE TRANSFORMATION

A. THE PRIORITY OF REMOVAL OF SIN

B. THE PRIORITY OF RENEWAL OF WORSHIP

II. A CHANGE OF PASSION CAN RESULT IN LIFE TRANSFORMATION

A. PASSIONATELY FOCUS YOUR FAITH ON THE LORD

B. PASSIONATELY HOLD FAST TO THE LORD

C. PASSIONATELY FOLLOW THE LORD IN OBEDIENCE

III. A CHANGE IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE CAN RESULT IN LIFE TRANSFORMATION

A. PRAY TO A GOD THAT CARES ABOUT YOU PERSONALLY

B. PRAY TO A GOD WHO IS POWERFUL

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March 20 2011.doc