**Cross And Crown Christian Outreach**

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**The Battle Starts With You**

**“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. -** 2Chr. 32:7 NIV

That King Hezekiah was a king that won the hearts of his subjects and had the approval of Jehovah was not in doubt. The people of both Judah and Israel experienced great turn around in their fortunes as the King led them back to the worship of the true God – 2Chr. 29:1-36. They prospered under his regime as the doors of the temple were re-opened for them to worship and they were properly indoctrinated on their roles in the worship of Jehovah, especially with regards to the Priests and Levites – 2Chr. 30:2-19. Their obedience to the directives of their king was something that earned them good rewards from Jehovah – 2Chr. 30:1-31:1. Hezekiah also had the approval of Jehovah when the bible acknowledged that he did what was right before the Lord, at a level comparable to the performance of King David – 2Chr. 29:1. That was always going to be a high rating as King David was one king whose conduct, with regards to worship, Jehovah considered as the epitome and so remained the standard by which all kings who came after him were to be assessed by. The basis for his high rating was captured in verses twenty and twenty-one of the thirtieth Chapter of the second book of Chronicles (2Chr. 30:20-21), and enumerated as follows;

1. He ensured that all he did was what was good and right before Jehovah.
2. He remained faithful to Jehovah as his god.
3. He wholeheartedly worked in the service of God’s temple by obeying laws and commands.
4. He sought his God and no other god always.

Ordinarily, one with such a high rating by Jehovah will not be expected to experience a situation that could be so overwhelming as the battle that the king of Assyria waged against him. Going by the expectation of today’s Christian, such battles should have been nipped in the bud by Jehovah, after all He is a caring god, so that his beloved can experience peace, but the reverse was the case.

The bible notes that it was after King Hezekiah had done all these great things to the glory of God and the comfort of his people that Sennacherib, king of Assyria decided to wage war against him and Judah, as he laid siege against the fortified cities of Judah with the aim to conquer them for himself – 2Chr. 31:1. The king took the decision not to roll over in defeat as he too came up with strategies to protect his land and his people. He dammed the water supply to make sure that those who had laid siege against his people were not made comfortable – 2Chr. 32:2-4. He repaired broken walls, built additional walls as reinforcement to improve security and organised his military officers with the aim of succeeding in the battle ahead - 2Chr. 32:5-6. Having done all these, as revealed in the scripture that is the foundation of today’s Devotional, he encouraged his military to be strong and courageous letting them know that they need not be afraid or discouraged because of the vast army that the king of Assyria was parading, as the power they have with them was greater than the power that Sennacherib and his army wielded – 2Kgs. 6:15-17. What Sennacherib had according to Hezekiah was only the arm of flesh unlike the stretched arm of Jehovah which is available to help them fight their battles – 2Chr. 32:7-8.

The Christian today need to accept the fact that having a great relationship with Jehovah will never confer immunity against activities of individuals whose main interest will always be to deprive the Christian of those same benefits that their good relationship with Jehovah has earned them.

The majority of those challenges is the result of the desire of people to want those good things but for some reason or the other are not able or willing to make the necessary sacrifice or take the necessary steps to acquiring them. Instead of seeking knowledge from successful people on how to attain such objectives, they will rather use underhand tactics to get them from those that have them or worse still, make attempts to destroy them. That remains the foundation of the battles that many Christians, who have been blessed by Jehovah, are experiencing today.

For the Christian experiencing this form of challenge, the approach of Hezekiah should be the template to be followed in order to overcome such challenge. Hezekiah, in his own situation did not waste time expressing any form of disappointment with Jehovah for allowing such challenge to come into his life, rather he set out a plan on how to confront the enemy, with the belief that he was able to overcome since he has Jehovah on his side. The successful Christian should always expect attacks, aimed at destroying whatever evidence of divine blessing or prosperity they possess and as they begin to enjoy such blessings, should always strategise on how to ensure that such possible attacks are unsuccessful. It will be completely naïve not to do so because it will be comparable to having an item of great value and not arranging for its security.

Whether prepared or not, once the challenge to prosperity manifests, the proper approach is four-fold using the Hezekiah template;

1. Ensure that the integrity of the initial protection is intact. Though the Christian was always praying generally against such attacks, there will be the need to re-arrange the prayer point with specific focus on the current challenge. A wrongly worded prayer point is like no prayer and worse still could even be an antagonist to one becoming victorious in that challenge. Your prayer before the challenge was in anticipation of a challenge but what is required at such moments is specific prayer points aimed at the particular challenge.
2. Enhance the protection by adding more levels of security that will reflect the new challenge. There may be the need to increase time spent in prayer and the activities involved with prayers. There may be the need to include periods of fasting and other spiritual activities that will enhance one’s effectiveness in the spiritual realm.
3. Seek and re-position the right personalities that will provide genuine support in order to overcome. There may be the need to seek the support of like-minded people in prayer and counselling. Those who share the same ideas and belief and are willing to render support in other to achieve victory. Most battles need such human support to enhance the chances of victory.
4. Build the confidence of all in the unseen support of Jehovah by making them focus less on the seen ability of the challenge. Just as these human support is very critical for victory, they can also be the reason for defeat if they do not share the faith level of the one who seeks victory. They can easily fall by the way side, when confronted by the enormity of the challenge, especially when people begin to question their allegiance to you and your objectives. The sudden withdrawal of support in the middle of the battle can be sufficient to erode the confidence that one has built in Jehovah. The need for Elisha to make his servant see that those with them were more than the army of Aram that came against them is a good example in this regard – 2Kgs. 6:1-17. It was only after this moral boosting action that Elisha proceeded to battle the enemy in the company of his servant.

This four-pronged approach will always position the Christian to enjoy the Grace of God eternally as any other approach, including attempting to blame Jehovah for permitting such uprising, like most Christians do today, will only lead to defeat and loss of the goodness of God. As an acknowledged child of God who is already manifesting the reward of been faithful to Him, you must always anticipate the challenge of people who aim to either destroy this goodness of Jehovah or want to have it for themselves like Sennacherib desired. Jehovah will definitely fight on your side, but not without your willingness and preparedness to physically confront such challenge as that is what will demonstrate the confidence that you claim to have in Him. May God grant us the bravery to confront the challenges to His glory in our lives, in Jesus name. Amen.