

BAD NEWS?

Read [Isaiah 38:1–22](#)

How do you react when you receive bad news? A wrong reaction, I'm sure you've noticed, can make matters worse.

I can remember reading a true story on MSN.COM news that should illustrate the point of bad news. Mrs. Monroe of Darlington, Maryland, learned what can happen when we make the wrong move when confronted with bad news or difficult circumstances. This mother of eight came home from the grocery store one afternoon to find five of her children in the living room playing with skunks! These skunks had somehow found their way into her house—bad news indeed. Things might have turned out okay if Mrs. Monroe had kept her cool and calmly directed the children to lead the skunks back outdoors. Instead, she panicked and screamed, and that was her mistake. She scared the kids and the skunks—and you know what skunks do when they're afraid! Our reaction to bad news and difficult circumstances can make all the difference.

How do you react when you receive bad news? King Hezekiah of Judah received some bad news. He was deathly ill when the prophet Isaiah came to him, and Isaiah's message was not what Hezekiah wanted to hear:

¹ **“In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'”**
[Isaiah 38:1b \(NASB\)](#)

This was the height of bad news: being told he was going to die. And it wasn't news that came from a doctor or lab technician or any other human, but from God himself. It was very bad news.

Hezekiah's reaction to it saved his life. As the prophet left his room, the Bible says, *“Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD”* ([Isaiah 38:2](#)). Here's what he prayed:

³ **“And said, “Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.**
[Isaiah 38:3 \(NASB\)](#)

What happened? God sent Isaiah to Hezekiah again, this time with a better message:

⁵ **“Go and say to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, 'I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life.**
⁶ **“I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city.”**
[Isaiah 38:5-6 \(NASB\)](#)

God promised Hezekiah more years, and he promised to protect Jerusalem from the enemies that threatened her.

God's word came true. Hezekiah was healed. Isaiah told the attendants to "***Let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boil, that he may recover***" ([Isaiah 38:21](#)), and this application of natural medicine brought about Hezekiah's healing (which, by the way, is evidence that doctors and the medical profession are God's partners in his healing work). And Jerusalem was spared invasion in Hezekiah's lifetime.

What brought about these wonderful answers to prayer? I believe the key is found in the words, "***Hezekiah turned his face to the wall***" ([Isaiah 38:2](#)). By turning his face to the wall before he prayed, Hezekiah was indicating that he was looking to God for help. He was beyond the help of people. Being king was not going to help him out of this problem. It was God or no one. That wall became a ***meeting place*** with God for Hezekiah. God saw and responded.

When bad news strikes, how do you respond? Think about a recent occasion when bad news came to you—when tough times popped up. How did you respond?