Grace Evangelical Free Church April 16, 2023

**2 Chronicles 33:1–13** Manasseh: Old Testament Prodigal

The story of Manasseh appeals to us because it is a perfect illustration of God’s dealings with men and women today. Manasseh had no thought, place or time for God; in fact, he openly defied God. Yet in a wonderful way, like the prodigal in our Lord’s parable, “**he came to his senses**”, and then he “**came to his father**” (**Luke 15:11-24**).

**2 Chronicles 33:2**: “**And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.**”

* **Grammatical Usage:** “**evil**” or in the Hebrew, “ra'” meaning, “wrong, injury, calamity”; “**sight**” or “ayin” meaning, “an eye; knowledge”; “**abominations**” or “toebah” meaning, “spiritually detestable”.
* **Literal Interpretation:** He did what was wrong causing injury and calamity with the Lord’s knowledge, imitating the spiritually detestable practices of the nations that the Lord had dispossessed before the Israelites.
* **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. As we read the first part of the story of Manasseh we find ourselves saying, “Surely there can be no hope for such a wicked man”; but as we read on we discover how wonderful the sovereign grace of God is - that “no one is beyond redemption’s point,” no one is too bad to be saved and transformed - and the grace of God can do just that! Notice how the story of Manasseh divides into three parts.
1. THE MAN GOD LOVED

Who was Manasseh? He was king of Judah, and he came to the throne at the early age of twelve. He reigned for 55 years and died at the age of 67. His father was Hezekiah, of whom we read that he did right in the sight of the Lord (**2 Chronicles 31:20**). So Manasseh had a godly heritage, but there is absolutely no guarantee that because a man’s parents are godly then the man himself will grow up in the fear of the Lord. Hezekiah’s son was Manasseh who turned out to be one of the worst characters in the history of his times. He was a great sinner. In spite of this, God loved him and longed for his salvation. We are sinners, as we learn from **Isaiah 53:6** and **Romans 3:23**, and the penalty for our sin is death per **Romans 6:23**. But God loves us, and in His mercy He calls upon us to repent and turn back to Him (**Isaiah 1:18** and **55:6, 7**). When Manasseh was far away from God, yet God spoke to him (**v. 10**). This is the proof that God loved him and was concerned for his welfare. If God had not loved him He would have left him alone. So what did God do?

1. THE METHOD GOD EMPLOYED

Because God loved Manasseh He did not cast him off, but He did three things:

* He let him have his fling so that he would come to the end of himself. This is exactly what happened to the Prodigal. The father did not override his son’s wish to leave home; he let him go so that he could go his own way and find out for himself that sin does not pay (**Luke 15:12-13**).
* He spoke a word of warning to him (**v. 10**). One of the most solemn warnings in the Bible is found in **Proverbs 29:1**; but do you not see that the very fact that God reproves us is the proof that He loves us and is concerned about us? This was true in Manasseh’s case.
* He afflicted him. Yes, God did it, for this man’s good (**v. 11**; compare **Luke 15: 14-16**). That was drastic action, but it was all with a view to bringing him to his senses. God knew what He was doing, as He did with Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 9:5**). Today, God allows troubles and trials to fall heavily upon men and women in order that they may see the futility of living day after day without Him.
1. THE MIRACLE GOD WORKED

Miracle? Yes, per **vv. 12-13** a miracle indeed! Have you ever seen a miracle? Well, here is one! Think of it: this same man of whom we read earlier in this chapter now sought the Lord, humbled himself before the Lord, prayed to Him and experienced a wonderful restoration and transformation! Given God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, we have the same confirmation in **2 Corinthians 5:17**; **Luke 15:20-24**.

The story of Manasseh reminds us of the testimony of John Bunyan. One day, swearing, blaspheming, godless John Bunyan heard a voice saying: “Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to Heaven, or have thy sins and go to Hell?” John Bunyan, like Manasseh, left his sins and became a valiant servant of the Lord. But consider this question asked of him by the Lord: what does it tell us about God’s way of saving men and women?

* It tells us that God is sovereign in the salvation of a sinner. It was while John Bunyan was away from God, and when he had no thought of God, that God spoke to him. The same was true of Manasseh; God took the initiative and broke into his life (**2 Chronicles 33:10**); He said from Heaven, “**Wilt thou…?**” (**Genesis 3:9**; **Acts 9:3-5**; **John 6:44**).
* It tells us that God calls upon man to repent. John Bunyan needed to leave his sins - and that is what repentance is: it is a change of heart and mind that leads to a change of action (**Isaiah 55:7** and **Acts 17:30-31**).
* It tells us that while salvation is altogether the work of God, man is called upon to make a decision; the human will is brought into action (**Deuteronomy 30:19**; **Joshua 24:15**; **John 5:40** and **Revelation 22:17**).
* It tells us that to say “Yes” to God leads to Heaven (**Revelation 2l:1-7**; **John 14:2** and **2 Corinthians 5:8**).
* It tells us that to say “No” to God leads to Judgment and Hell (**Revelation 20:11-15** and **2l:8**).
* **Conclusion**: Are you a wayward soul? Do you know a wayward soul? The answer for both is found in coming to the Lord, humbly beseeching Him for a call and a touch.