

Manasseh A Monument Of The Grace Of God.

Text: 2 Chr 33:9-16

1) Manasseh lost

Suggested Hymns:

2) Manasseh saved

159, 462, 158, 170, 465

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 2 Chronicles 33:9-16, ⁹ *So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.*

¹⁰ *And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen.* ¹¹ *Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon.*

¹² *Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,* ¹³ *and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.*

¹⁴ *After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and it enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah.* ¹⁵ *He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast them out of the city.* ¹⁶ *He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The Gospel lesson for today concluded with the words, ***“Likewise there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”***¹ This “one sinner” is a monument of the grace of God.

Other sinners have read it and rejoiced. Angels read it and sing. They sing at the new creature that comes from the hand of God, the repentant sinner. They sing for joy that the repentant sinner has escaped a terrible doom and laid hold of eternal bliss.

But their song is chiefly a hymn of praise to God, who is so full of grace that, when He sees a sinner fall, He cannot let him lie, but urges him to repentance and faith that he might be saved, — another monument of the grace of God.

There is joy in heaven. That word makes the devil a liar. It is a lie when he says to the sinner, *“Your death-warrant is signed; you are lost.”* It was a half-truth when he said to Cain, *“Your punishment is greater than you can bear.”* The devil *“spoke of his own”* when he pointed out to Judas the rope as the only consolation for him. He tries to hide the greatest power that was ever conceived, the grace of God.

Scripture says in Hebrews 7:25 that Jesus Christ *is ... able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.* And in Romans 5:20, *where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.*

That grace follows the prodigal son, as we heard last Sunday, to the far-off country and urges him to go to his father and to confess to him, ***“I have sinned.”*** That grace enters Simon’s house and lifts the great sinner through her tears to forgiveness. That grace has established a monument for itself in the greatest apostle, once Saul, now Paul.

That grace plucks the criminal on the cross, all but consumed, out of the fire, covers his sin, and invites him to paradise. These are all monuments of the grace of God.

A monument is a permanent reminder of things that should not be forgotten. Monuments are erected for us to see and inscriptions chiselled into them for us to read. The inscription on every monument of divine grace reads, ***where sin***

abounded, grace abounded much more. Such a monument is Manasseh. He belongs in the list of those who sinned greatly and yet found great mercy. May the Lord bless our meditation as we consider, Manasseh - A Monument of the Grace of God.

1. Manasseh A Monument Of The Grace Of God

Manasseh Lost

Manasseh was a son of pious Hezekiah. He was born during the respite years which God gave Hezekiah after he had been sick unto death. Much was expected of him. This godly father certainly did not neglect to educate his son properly, especially since he was born after his miraculous healing and his wonderful delivery from Sennacherib.

Manasseh was twelve years old when his father died,² old enough to remember the piety of his father and the prayers of his mother. If, in addition, his mother was the daughter of Isaiah, as some suppose, we have ideal conditions for a son who would do *right in the eyes of the LORD.*³

But Manasseh did evil in the sight of the Lord. This illustrates what today's article tells us. *"Time and time again we observe in history how one generation will despise God-given truths that a previous generation embraced as precious."*

Manasseh is an example of this. What his father had torn down he rebuilt, and what his father had built he tore down. We cannot imagine a greater contrast between a father and a son than this.

Manasseh himself became an idolater. He built altars for Baal, made wooden images, worshipped the host of heaven (which means making gods of the sun, stars and planets), and walked in all the abominations of the heathen, observing times, using enchantments and witchcraft, choosing familiar spirits and wizards as his guides instead of the prophet of God, shedding innocent blood till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other.⁴ Indeed, Manasseh sinned so much and so abominably that his sins and trespasses were tabulated in the sayings of the seers.⁵

All of this in spite of a good father and a godly mother. The piety of the father does not save the son. The Pharisees said, *"We have Abraham for our*

father.”⁶ Sunday-school and Christian day-school are no cure-alls. “*I was baptised a Lutheran,*” — but what are you now?

The reputation of the father maybe a good recommendation in business; but the faith of the father is no passport into heaven for the son. Often sons of worthy parents are the most ungodly. It is a notorious fact that men who go wrong after a good training are often more wicked than others.

Consider the leaders of unbelievers today and see how many come from good families. In the Old testament think of Samuel’s sons, Absalom, and Jacob’s sons. Shall we quit our Christian training? Certainly Not! Rather intensify it. Train the children even longer than before.

Will such love’s labour be lost? Verses 12-16 of our text tell us of Manasseh’s repentance. It would undoubtedly never have been written had it not been for Manasseh’s early training. God’s seeds sprout slowly at times, sometimes as late as on the gallows.⁷

Manasseh was exceedingly sinful. He built altars in the house of God, altars for all the host of heaven in the courts of the Temple. He placed a carved image in the Temple. He did not go into his private room to pray to his god, and he did not conceal his idol in his closet. He was born with a brazen forehead and lifted his face to heaven with insolence and impudence. He put his idols into God’s Temple, insulted God to His face, and provoked Him to anger.⁸ This is much like Pharaoh who said, “*Who is the Lord that I should obey him?*”⁹

There is no greater rogue than a Christian who has fallen away.¹⁰ His bad conscience drives him to extremes. He becomes possessed of an enmity against God and all godliness. When he curses, he curses aloud. When he preaches, he does it from the housetops. Why, for instance, do modern liberal theologians not keep their unbelief to themselves? Why must they shout it?

They have no rest. They must bring their unbelief into the Christian Church. They deny Jesus from the pulpit. They insult God and carry their idols into the chancel.

Paul had more success among the Gentiles than among the Jews. Mission-work is harder among “former Lutherans” than among the unchurched. There is no excuse for backsliding. God’s Law knows no mitigating circumstances.

Christianity is a matter of the heart and should never be influenced by locality or by the opinion of others. Lot was faithful in wicked Sodom, Joseph in wicked Egypt, Obadiah was faithful in Ahab's court, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were faithful in idolatrous Babylon.

God counts on our faithfulness in trying circumstances even more.¹¹ However, God never excuses sin on account of circumstances.¹² Resist the beginnings. Once the camel's head is in the tent, you will soon be without.

Manasseh led others into sin. That is the height of ungodliness. He caused his children to pass through the fire. He made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err. He had a great opportunity as king to lead his people aright.

As the king, so the people. Manasseh had received a great trust from God, but he misused it. When any of the ungodly went forth to war against God, he led them. Priests of infidelity were proud to say, "*The king is on our side.*" How readily his son, Amon, followed his father into sin! But, alas! Amon did not follow him by later repenting of his sins.

No true Christian lives for himself. It is not a trifling thing to be a church-member. A member of the Church of Christ should be a model after whom others may pattern themselves. He is responsible not only for himself, but also for those who see and hear him. The greater the prominence of the Christian among his fellows, the richer his gifts and intelligence, the greater is his influence as a leader, but the greater also is the destruction he can cause by leading them on a wrong path.

Then there are offences. Your curse word leads others to say, *If he can do it, why not I?* Your dishonesty sanctions his dishonesty in his mind. Oh, that we would always keep our brothers in mind when we live and speak before them!

One word of doubt causes a doubt in the brother's heart, and long after the doubt has vanished from your mind, it still gnaws in his. You as a leader in the Church, to whom others have a right to look for guidance, speak as though there were no harm in the world's fashions and ways.

Let us sift our conduct and speech. We are our brother's keepers. Consider the responsibility of parents, teachers, pastors, elders, leaders among the young people — their "hero." Beware of false preachers. Often they are the most

prominent in the papers. What responsibility to lead others! Again, canvassers with heretical and impure literature.¹³ Manasseh is a lost and condemned sinner.

There is a Manasseh in every one of us. Is it too harsh to say, *We are lost and condemned sinners?* There is the danger of minimising our own faults.¹⁴ Sin is in our heart.¹⁵ The devil likes to tell you, *Your sins are but little lapses.* But the principle the same — disobedience to God.

Whether Adam stole the whole of the Garden of Eden or took only of the fruit of one tree, the disobedience is the same. Little sins required the same sacrifice of Christ as great ones; little sins also condemn; little sins harden the heart more than great ones; whereas great sins often cry for repentance and press a tear into the eye, little ones frequently go unrepented and cause the heart to become callused.

Rather we should as Scripture says Psalm 32:5, ***I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."***¹⁶

If we would compare ourselves with Manasseh, we need only go into our private room, my soul and I, and talk to each other. We need only direct our ears to the wall of our heart and listen; examine the filthy corners of our soul; probe the unspoken words that lie within our heart; go to the bottom until our little sins become so great that we realise that they, too, have killed the Son of God. Then we shall find a Manasseh in every one of us.

2. Manasseh A Monument Of The Grace Of God

Manasseh Saved

Manasseh was lost in sin, but he shall be saved. God does not desire his damnation.¹⁷ He calls him to repentance. We read in our text, ***And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen.*** God threatens to send such evils that both ears of those who hear it shall tingle; to wipe Jerusalem as a man wipes a dish.¹⁸ God sends the severest chastisements. Jerusalem is taken, Manasseh is bound with fetters, and is carried to Babylon.

No less does God desire us to repent. He calls us by the same Word. Often He sends auxiliaries to His call, the husks to the prodigal son, bitter shame to the great sinner, a cross to the criminal, blindness to Saul, a rooster crow to Peter,

sickness, death, and depression to us. By means of these God knocks at our door.

And now we see what God can do. No longer the proud Manasseh, no longer a blasphemer; we now see him on the cold floor of the prison, on his knees and praying to God. Manasseh's repentance is sincere. He comes to the Lord just as he is.¹⁹ He has no excuses to offer. His sins are his own. He greatly humbles himself before the Lord, as his sins are great.²⁰ He trusts in the mercy of *the LORD his God*.²¹

Undoubtedly he himself caused his many sins and transgressions to be entered into "*the book of the kings of Israel*." They were his confession.

Read the "*Prayer of Manasseh*" in the Apocrypha. Whether this apocryphal record is genuine or not, the sentiment of that prayer was Manasseh's prayer, especially the last part, *I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my transgressions. I earnestly implore You, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me! Do not destroy me with my transgressions! Do not be angry with me forever or store up evil for me; do not condemn me to the depths of the earth.*

For you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent, and in me You will manifest your goodness; for, unworthy as I am, You will save me according to your great mercy, and I will praise You continually all the days of my life. For all the host of heaven sings Your praise, and Yours is the glory forever.

Manasseh became a monument of the grace of God. Spurgeon wrote, "*This greatest sinner, this man who trampled on his father's prayers, who had wiped from his brow the tears which had been shed there by an anxious parent, who had stifled the convictions of his conscience and had gone to an extremity of guilt, in bold, open, and desperate sin, yet this man was at last, by divine grace, humbled and saved.*"

God accepted him. Our text says, ***[God] received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom.***²² God forgave his sins. God restored him to the throne.

Manasseh showed an active faith. He offered peace-offerings and thank-offerings. These typified the Messiah. Manasseh believed in the Saviour. He built again what he had torn down, abolished the idols which he himself had

carved, removed the desecration which he had wrought in the Temple by cleansing it and established the true worship again.

He admonished Judah, whom he had seduced, to return to the service of God, and took a lively interest in the welfare of his people. And so there was joy in heaven.

This monument of the grace of God was erected for us. Let us read it. Will we, in turn, be monuments of God's grace to those who shall come after us?

Let us conclude with this word of Scripture, 1 Timothy 1:15-16, ¹⁵ ***This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*** ¹⁶ ***However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.***²³ Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Luke 15:10

² See 2 Kings 21:1-18

³ 1 Kings 15:11

⁴ 2 Kings 21:16

⁵ 2 Chronicles 33:19

⁶ Matthew 3:8

⁷ Luke 23:42

⁸ 2 Chronicles 33:6

⁹ Exodus 5:2

¹⁰ 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Luke 11:26

¹¹ Revelation 2:13

¹² Proverbs 1:10

¹³ Matt. 23:13; 18:6

¹⁴ 2 Kings 8:13; Luke 18:11

¹⁵ Prov. 22:15; John 3:6

¹⁶ Psalm 51:5-7

¹⁷ Ezek. 33:11; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; Matt. 23:37

¹⁸ 2 Kings 21:10-15

¹⁹ Psa. 51:4

²⁰ Psa. 32:5

²¹ Dan. 9:18; Luke 18:13

²² John 6:37; Isa. 42:3

²³ See also Isa. 1:18