

Calling the Bride

“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” – John 8:32

“It’s too late for me,” he said. “I’ve done too many bad things for the Lord to forgive me.”

This statement arose from a man we were ministering to at one of our outreaches. We tried to convince him that when we repent, and receive Jesus by faith in His atoning death and His resurrection from the dead, our sins are removed and He gives us the gift of eternal life and a brand new beginning. No one is ever beyond His mercy when we recognize that we have sinned and we need Him.

I hoped and prayed that our ministry to this man that day changed his heart and his mind. He took our words and wandered away in silence.

I believe this man is a representative of many who are imprisoned with the same view.

If you are one of those individuals who feels that you are beyond the reach of God’s forgiving grace, I want to share with you an example from the Scriptures of God’s willingness to forgive even the vilest of sinners.

This example is taken from 11 Chronicles, chapter thirty-three, verses one through nineteen.

The Scriptures paint a picture for us of one of the most evil kings in the Bible’s record of the history of God’s people. Manasseh was appointed king of Israel when he was twelve years old. Manasseh’s father was the good king Hezekiah, but his son did not follow his dad’s example. The list of Manasseh’s crimes is extensive. God had cast out the evil influences of the pagan nations surrounding Israel, but Manasseh embraced the abominations that the Lord had condemned, and brought that wickedness back into Israel’s camp with zealous delight.

We are told that he rebuilt all the pagan altars that His father had destroyed, (II Chronicles 33:3). He defiled the LORD’s sanctuary with altars to “the hosts of heaven,” demon entities, (verses 4, 5). He restored the worship of Baalim, which incorporated fornication and perverted sexual sin as part of its rituals along with the sacrifice of children. He practiced witchcraft, consorting with familiar spirits and wizards (male witches), which is strictly forbidden by God, and warranted the death penalty according to Moses.

The perversion and idolatry he caused Israel to practice, brought the whole nation into sin – “worse than the heathen whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel” (verse 9).

When archeologists were examining the remains of

Manasseh’s Story of Repentance

these civilizations that God had eliminated, the consensus among those experts was not, “Why did God destroy them?” but, “Why did He wait so long?” The practices the archeologists discovered were so vile, they marveled at God’s allowing them to continue for so long. This again is evidence of God’s unwillingness that any should perish and His mercy is even extended to those who are extremely wicked – for a season.

We are told that Manasseh’s sins were worse than those pagan nations, which makes it hard to fathom the depths of degradation that had been permitted to reign within God’s holy Jerusalem.

God in His mercy, sent His prophets to try and bring His people to repentance, but they refused to listen (verse 33). Consistent with the Biblical pattern, Manasseh’s sins opened the door for Divine chastisement. God withdrew His protection and God allowed Israel’s enemies to consume them and they were attacked by the King of Assyria.

Manasseh was taken captive, and it was in the darkness of his God ordained captivity, that the evil heart of king Manasseh was genuinely broken.

God knows what it takes to bring the straying ones back into His embrace. We are shown that when Manasseh “was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him: and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplications...” (verses 12,13).

God saw that Manasseh’s prayers of repentance were sincere and genuine. Biblical repentance requires a willingness to turn from sin. Motivated by a healthy fear of God, the man who was bound by the chains of his own wrong doing, was miraculously set free and restored.

The Scriptures do not give us the details of Manasseh’s release and the reasons why the victorious Assyrian king decided to release his prisoner and restore Israel. God may have used some of the techniques he orchestrated upon Pharaoh, or He may have demanded Israel’s restoration in terrifying night visions to the Assyrian king. Whatever means the LORD used to accomplish His goals were viewed as miraculous to Manasseh and the final result was he knew at last that the God of Israel is the true God and deserving of all worship and devotion (verse 13).

Motivated by God’s act of forgiveness and mercy, and a miraculous deliverance coupled with a renewed reverent fear of God, Manasseh reversed his behavior, removed all

the remnants of his idolatry from God's house and restored the people back to pure worship.

Manasseh died restored and totally forgiven, in spite of the depravity of his sin.

The point of Manasseh's story of repentance is this – if God can forgive an evil dude like Manasseh, He is more than willing to forgive you; if you, like Manasseh, are willing to repent and let God break the chain of your bondage and give you a new beginning.

Jesus' sacrifice for our sins was ordained from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8) and it is upon the merits of that perfect sacrifice that forgiveness was meted upon Manasseh then, and for us today.

God is reaching out to you with His arms of mercy in His Son, Jesus, who is the Image (Colossian 1:15), of the God who loves you. There is no sin so vile that it cannot be removed and forgiven when it is acknowledged and confessed at the feet of our risen Savior.

The apostle John assures us that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" – just like Manasseh. (I John 1:9).

A Personal Message from Jesus to You

Follow Me,- Matthew 4:19

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by Me. - John 14:6

Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. - Matthew 11:28-30

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you: not as the world gives, I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. – John 14:27

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. - John 16:33

And, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.- Matthew 28:20

An Icy Ride

...Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation- II Corinthians 6:2.

It was winter in New England and the church parking lot was slick with ice, not an unusual phenomenon for that time of year. The worshippers filed into the sanctuary for the morning service. Among them was a group of friends who had invited an unsaved young man to join them that particular Sunday.

It happened that the pastor was preaching a very strong salvation message. At the end of the service there was an altar call and the friends asked the young man if he would like to go forward to receive Jesus and the gift of salvation.

"No, I'm not ready now," the youth replied. He told them he was planning on living his life the way he wanted. There was still a lot of worldly fun left for him to experience.

After the service the youth wandered out into the parking lot. As one of the cars was about to leave, he thought he'd enjoy a quick thrill by an icy ride across the parking lot; so he grabbed hold of the car's bumper and took off behind the vehicle. It was great fun for a bit – until the car stopped suddenly and the young man's head slammed into car. He was killed instantly.

Jesus talked about a cold, icy outer darkness (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30) that is reserved for those who choose to reject His offer of warm, loving acceptance for eternity. If we decide to refuse Him, is the brief sojourn of our lives on this planet without Him worth an eternity shut out in the cold?

It's your choice and He's offering it to you right now, at this moment. You may not have another chance. This life could stop suddenly and then it will be too late. Now is the day of salvation.

Believe

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house. - Acts 16:31

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. – Acts 4:12

The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is the word of faith, which we preach; that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. - Romans 10:8,9

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.- John 3:16

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; But that the world through Him might be saved. – John 3:17