

Sermon 28: The Destructive Yet Complicated Reign of Manasseh: 2 Chronicles 33:1-20

Text: 2 Chronicles 33:1-12 "Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses. So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken. Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers..."

Summary: God's mercy on Judah's most evil king reminds us that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

Part 1: The story of Judah's greatest villain:

- **Judah's most villainous king: 33:1-9**
 - **The length of his influence: 33:1** "Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem..."
 - **The depths of his depravity: 33:2** "But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel..."

- **His disdain for the sacred: 33:4-5** "He built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD..."
- **His infamous personal behavior: 33:6** "He caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger..."
- **His complete arrogance in God's presence: 33:7** "He set a carved image...in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever..."
- **A basic summary of his life: 33:9** "So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel..."
 - "Worse..."
 - "Whom the LORD had destroyed..."
- **Manasseh's humiliation: 33:10-11** "And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken. Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon..."
- **Manasseh's repentance and God's mercy: 33:12-16**
 - **When he was afflicted he humbled himself: 33:12-13** "And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom..."
 - **He knew that the LORD is God: 33:13** "Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God..."
 - **He removed the idols: 33:15** "And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD..."
 - **He repaired the altar: 33:16** "And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings,
 - **He commanded his people to serve the LORD: 33:16** "And commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel..."

- **Judah's lingering problems: 33:17-20** "Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the LORD their God only..."

Part 2: The contrast between two accounts: 33:12-16 "And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God. Now after this he built a wall without the city of David...**15** And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD...**16** And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel..."

- **The primary contrast:**
 - **1 Kings 21** gives no information about Manasseh's repentance and God's grace.
 - **2 Chronicles 33** makes this a highlight.
- **The reason: for this contrast:**
 - **1 and 2 Kings** were written to demonstrate that God's judgments against Israel and Judah were entirely just.
 - **1 and 2 Chronicles** were written to demonstrate that despite Israel's apostasy, His promises to them would not be reversed, and He would work through them for His glory.
 - God is just.
 - He is also rich in mercy.
 - He will always remain faithful to His word.

Part 3: Important lessons we should never forget:

- **We must guard against drift during transitional periods:**
 - We are often very sensitive about teens and young adults.
 - We need to be wary of other transitional periods of life.
 - Sickness, disappointments, the aging process, children moving out.
- **We must pray for our leaders, because nations tend to follow their ways.**
 - We elect our leaders but we have limited options.
 - We get what we deserve.
 - What we get impacts a lot about the movements of our culture.
- **God is just but also very patient:**
 - We should never presume against God's justice.
 - We should guard against putting God's actions on trial.
 - There is still hope for those who seem to be past hope.
- **He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble:**
 - Warn those who scorn Him.
 - Comfort those who humble themselves before Him.

- Remember how kind He has been to you.