



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

June 16, 2013

Pentecost 4

Sermon Text: [2 Chronicles 33:1-6, 10-18](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [2 Chronicles 33:1-6, 10-18](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 40](#)

Second Lesson: [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 7:36-50](#)

### **The Believer Has Faith That Trusts in God After Repentance**

Trusts that all evil has been forgiven

Trust that moves us to change

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow redeemed:

Did you ever notice how the “ick” factor in life has changed? Think of the things that make you go “ick”, things that are abhorrent to you. Think of how they have changed from maybe your grandmother, your grandfather, your great grandmother, your great grandfather. Some of the things where they would have said, “That’s evil. You don’t talk about that kind of thing.” Those are “ick” things. We see them every night on television. We see them all the time. So we are kind of desensitized to it. We don’t notice it as much as probably great grandma that would come back and watch television with us. It makes you want to throw a brick through the TV by the end of the night.

That’s true. I don’t deny that at all. But the stuff I read to you about Manasseh today, I think great grandma and you both kind of go “ick”. Manasseh did some stuff that was just awful, wasn’t it? You read that list and you just shake your head and think, “What in the world was this guy doing?” I have to believe the one that jumps off the page at you this morning is that he offered his children in the fires at Ben Hinnom as a sacrifice to a god. How could anybody do that as a parent? How could anybody do that who is supposed to be the shepherd of God’s chosen people? To put up all those false altars, to do all those kinds of things, it’s just terrible, isn’t it?

This morning as we think about how terrible Manasseh was, I don’t want you to leave today thinking that guy was just awful. I want you to leave thinking about how incredible our God is, how unlike you and me our God is. Our God forgave Manasseh. We read that. Our God forgives and remembers our sin no more. Think of the things that you know of that are abhorrent in your eyes that other people have done to you or they have done to others. Think of mistakes which people have made in the past which are sins. Think of how hard it is at times for you and me to forgive them or to at least not keep them in our back pockets so we can bring them out and use them again. One of the things we will hopefully learn to do today is to learn to forgive like our God has forgiven us.

Manasseh...do you remember him? It’s not a king we talk about a lot. We talk about David. We talk about Solomon. We talk about his dad from time to time, good king

Hezekiah. We talk about his grandson from time to time, good king Josiah. He was a king of Judah, which is the Southern Kingdom, the two southern tribes. Manasseh was a king that when he took over as king, the northern tribes of the kingdom of Israel was gone. They had been carried off by the Assyrians in 722. I think he took over by the 80s, somewhere in there I think it was.

Notice that he gets on the throne by the time he was 12. Are there any 12-year-olds here? Dad, can you imagine him being king over anything? If you read the numbers of the Hebrew kings, it appears as though his father, Hezekiah, was co-regent with Manasseh for 10 years. So from the age of 12 to the age of 22, Hezekiah, who we call good king Hezekiah, who had done all these reforms, who feared the Lord and served the Lord, was co-regent, trying to give Manasseh on-the-job training. If you remember, God had told Hezekiah, "Your life is going to be demanded from you." Hezekiah prayed, and God added 15 years. So maybe this was his way of getting ready for that time that he knew was coming. He has this on-the-job training. He had a good role model. Good king Hezekiah. Yet, when Hezekiah dies and it appears then that when Manasseh takes over, altars to the starry hosts inside the temple, altar inside the temple courts and inside the temple itself, he does away with the temple sacrifices to the Lord in the courtyards. He dedicates the sacrifices to these false gods. He sacrifices his children. He practices divination. He goes to a sorceress and different things like that. He does all the stuff that God says to never do. He does it. I have to believe the people were kind of divided on this issue.

If you notice, he was king for 55 years. David wasn't king 55 years. Solomon wasn't king 55 years. Manasseh was the longest king that ever served over God's people of Judah. During this time, he was a vassal of the Assyrians and it seemed like they were granted favored nation status and trade and they prospered and things were going really well. So there was a group, probably the priests, that were thinking this guy was awful. "God, strike him down with lightning, and do it quick." Then you have the everyday person that is looking at their...I don't know if they carried a back pocket wallet or whatever back then, but they are looking at that stuff thinking, "Manasseh is great! Life is good. The gods are pleased with us. He has us on the right track worshiping all these false gods." Can you see the danger to God's people? God allows prosperity, and that prosperity is a curse to them spiritually, not a blessing.

Then the time comes when the Lord's patience runs out with Manasseh. God is an incredibly patient God. He is more patient than my wife, as hard as that is to believe. He is patient beyond understanding. But it ran out. He became angry. Perhaps he sided with the wrong king when there was a rivalry in Assyria. You read about some of that in history and that might have been why all of a sudden he got some new jewelry. The Assyrian king had a ring put through his nose and his lip. They put a rope through it and they led him back to Babylon. This is what you read about in the Assyrian kings. If you were even expected of rebelling against the king, you get to go live in the palace with the king, or in the capital city, but it wasn't living in luxury. From everything you read about the Assyrians, which were a nasty people, they made the life miserable for guys that were suspected of rebelling against the king.

So there is Manasseh, ring through his lip. Glory days are gone. He is not living the high life anymore. He's probably being tortured. He's probably suffering. He cries out to God in his distress and says, "Lord, I knew you. My father taught me." I have to believe these are some of the thoughts going through his mind. "I abandoned you. I have sinned against you."

We don't have the prayer of Manasseh recorded for us. We don't have it to anymore extent. You can find one in Wikipedia, but I think it was written much later. I don't think it was Manasseh. But I have to believe he said "I've really screwed up. I've sinned against people. Lord, forgive me." We are told that God did forgive him. God restored him.

Then in Chronicles it tells us about how he extended the walls, how he did this, how he fortified the kingdom and how he served God in response to this and got rid of the altars and these different things. The people still sacrificed offerings on the high places, but now they said these are for the Lord, even though that still wasn't what God wanted them to do. Manasseh served the Lord and served him faithfully.

If we are talking about the life of the believer, the believer has faith that trusts God after contrition and repentance. For you and me, as we look at our own sins, we rejoice in that and we believe that, right? We know our sins, our sins of thought, word and deed. We know who we are and what we've done. We believe and rejoice that Jesus lived and died in our place and took away those sins. We believe that we were clothed with Christ's perfection at our baptism. We are now in God's eyes holy. He doesn't see our sins. He sees the perfect life of Jesus in our place. God has forgiven our sins because Jesus lived perfectly in our place and died in our place. We rejoice in that.

But sometimes when the "ick" factor is kind of high in our sins and we know the sins that we have committed, Satan comes and tries to get us to believe that God won't forgive us or God couldn't forgive us. Sometimes, when we have done things that others know about, sometimes it's our fellow Christians that give us the impression that God can't forgive you and you shouldn't be forgiven. That's a struggle for us, isn't it?

Can you picture yourself living in Manasseh's time? If you loved the Lord and loved his promises and you see that ring go through his lip and he is led away, are you kind of high fiving each other and saying, "It's about time you let him have it Lord"? Or are you saddened that the king had fallen that far from God?

We sang in our opening hymn how often we wander from God and we are pharisee and think we are so great that God is lucky to have us. In the life of a Christian, Satan leads us to bounce back and forth between those two extremes. We have rejoiced that we are forgiven. Sometimes we wonder though when others doubt it. But I think the greatest challenge in your faith and my faith at times is to live as though other people who have committed what we consider "ick" sins have been forgiven by God and that there is no more pound of flesh to be demanded from them. That's kind of hard to do, isn't it?

I've seen it happen. I've seen Christians who know that they are forgiven by their Lord, yet they are constantly reminded by their fellow believers that all those things you did in the past, you're not really as good as I am, and I've seen the pain it costs. I've seen the doubts it brings into people's faith.

We can believe that we are forgiven. But it's a little harder to believe that God would forgive someone else like he forgave us. That's why you and I, as Christians, don't want to be like Simon the pharisee that we read about in the Gospel. We want to believe not only that we have been forgiven, but that my brother and sister in Christ also has been forgiven and God remembers their sins no more. If someone who was convicted of some horrendous crime would come and sit in our pews and worship with us, would you look at them sideways, or would you rejoice that they know their Savior and they love their Savior? That tension is what the Gospel was all about today. We shouldn't have that. We believe that God forgives us because of Jesus.

As we rejoice in our forgiveness, you and I want to continue to grow, not only in our love for God, but our love for one another and stop beating each other up with our previous sins and start pointing each other more and more to Christ and the assurance that those sins are completely and absolutely taken away. If someone is caught up in a sin and they're not repenting, our job then is to admonish them and lead them to the prayer of Manasseh, "Lord, forgive me." But once they have said, "Lord, forgive me for the sake of Jesus," our job is to assure them that they are forgiven. In reality, isn't that a wonderful thing? Then we aren't looking at ourselves saying, "Why aren't you more like me?" We are all looking at God and saying, "Can you believe what an incredible God we have who loves us and forgives us in spite of how awful icky we might have been?"

Live in that confidence. Amen.