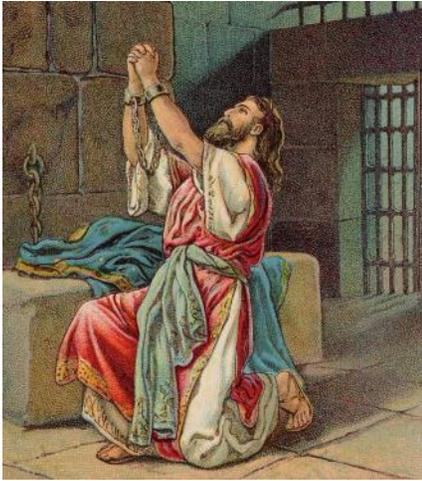


## Meditation on 2 Chronicles 33

By Chantel Bink



Manasseh is one of those guys you have to really stop and think about. For the most part his dad, Hezekiah, was a king faithful to the word of God. He repaired and purified the temple, brought the nation together to celebrate Passover, and destroyed the places of idol worship and sacrifice. Despite his downfall to pride at the very end of his reign, he did pretty well. You would think, then, that his son would follow

his example and lead the same way. Unfortunately when Manasseh took the throne of Jerusalem at the age of twelve, he was far from faithful. He rebuilt the altars of idolatry, practiced witchcraft, and led the Israelites into sin right along with him.

Then something wonderful happened—well, horrible for Manasseh, but wonderful for God—Manasseh was humbled. After refusing to listen to God’s warnings, Manasseh was taken prisoner. Not a kingly, stately type of kidnapping, not one done in private, but a very public, humiliating, and probably painful one. The king of Assyria had him shackled and bound with a hook in his nose and then brought to Babylon. This was enough to make Manasseh turn to the Lord and beg for help. “In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers” (33:12).

As always God knew what he was doing. He knew Manasseh would not turn to him from that comfortable throne room; he had to be humbled before progress could be made and progress was definitely made. Manasseh did a complete 180. After his return to Judah he fortified the city walls, tore down the places of idol worship, and restored altars of the Lord. Israel did not necessarily follow in his footsteps, but his effort and his heart were there.

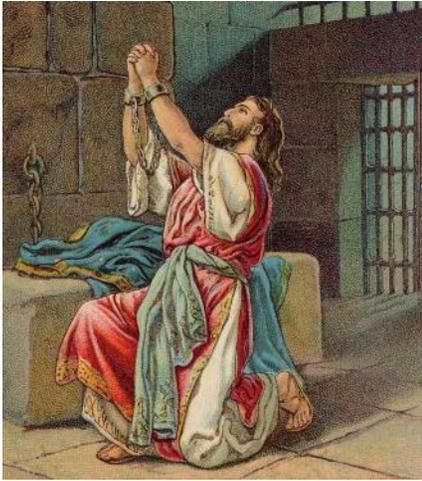


It is the same with us. God knows our hearts and he knows if humbling us will bring about the results he wants, and if that is the case that is exactly what he will do. If you have ever gone before the Lord and asked to be broken, you will truly understand what humility is and what lengths he will go to in order to bring you there. That is when we are the most usable and the most pliable to him, when we are broken. These are the times God will use to change our hearts and our minds. He will reprioritize our lives for us and show us how he wants us to live and the work he wants us to do. Being brought to that level is painful and, often, embarrassing, but God knows what we need in order to make us more like him.

What Manasseh went through must have been absolutely horrible. I cannot imagine being dragged by a hook through my nose in a public city. Humbling? Umm, just a little bit. I may never have that happen to me but I know God has used situations in my life to do the same kind of work. I have dealt with loss, fear, and learned things about myself that are truly horrifying and, therefore, humbling. I have had things I have tried to do completely fail because I did not rely on him, life lessons taught to me that were difficult to understand, and decisions I have made that have backfired right in my face. I have also been completely brought to submission by God’s grace, love, and forgiveness. Humility is a powerful tool. He used it on Manasseh and he will continue to use it on us because it works. In the end, like Manasseh, we have to make the choice of whether or not we will learn from it.

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