

The Prayer of Manasseh

Proverbs 13:8

One of the most wonderful men who have ever lived is Emet, who now lives in England. He was saved in Boston, and has a wonderful wife and wonderful children. They are struggling over there, of course. Everywhere in Europe they are struggling. But our Father is adding to their number and they are colonizing. They have this old, run-down farmhouse in England. It has been a struggle to get going. In the beginning it was amazing what they had to do to restore it. You should see the work they have done! I have never seen anyone work so hard to get a community going. You know what such a great foundation is for.

Emet wrote me a little note about Pr 13:8. You can look at it many different ways to gain understanding. One translation says:

“Wealth is a ransom for a person’s life, but the poor get no threats.”

You could say a person’s wealth is the ransom for his life and the poor have no threat of being kidnapped. Another translation says:

“The ransom of a man’s life is his wealth, but the poor hears no rebuke.”

This is what Emet wrote: “The man who has retained the value necessary to pay for his own sins in death has true wealth. However, our Master is the ransom for our life. He is our wealth. A man who does not hear (in the sense our Master used the word) rebuke is poor. Certainly when it comes time to pay that ransom (with his own value, or the sacrifice of our Master) he will be shown to be poor. Is that what that proverb means?”

We can learn a lot from the story of Manasseh. You don’t see the “Prayer of Manasseh” in your regular Protestant Bible. But it does tell you why judgment came upon him:

YHWH spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they gave no heed. Therefore the Sovereign 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. (2 Chr 33:10-11)

There he entreated the favor of God, prayed to Him, and God heard his prayer. Then Manasseh knew YHWH was God.

2 Kings 21 talks about some of the terrible things he did and ways he was. He shed very much innocent blood. Manasseh did so many horrible, wicked things, a lot more than picking up sticks on the Sabbath. But somehow he was able to repent and our Father heard his cry. The man in Num 15:32-36 was stoned for picking up sticks on the Sabbath, but our Father spared the life of Manasseh. I guess the man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath was not even sorry for what he did. Evidently he didn't even believe there was a God, so he did not honor the Sabbath. They put him into custody and judged that he didn't have any worth left in him to live.

It is amazing all the things Manasseh had done, but in 2 Chr 33:12-13 it says:
And when he was in distress he entreated the favor of the Sovereign his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. He prayed to Him, and God received his entreaty and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Sovereign was God.

It doesn't say there what he prayed, but in the Apocrypha, which you don't have in your Bible (and not everything in it is right), you can find what he said after he was deported to Babylon.

The Prayer of Manasseh

¹O Lord Almighty, God of our ancestors, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and of their righteous offspring...

They had a lot of offspring that weren't righteous whatsoever. Only the righteous offspring would be known as God's people. They didn't sin against God as Manasseh did. They sinned, but not *against* God in a deliberate way. Manasseh is talking about the righteous offspring of Abraham.

¹O Lord Almighty, God of our ancestors, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and of their righteous offspring; ²you who made heaven and earth with all their order; ³who shackled the sea by Your word of command...

That has to be talking about the chaos that happened after Gen 1:2.

...and sealed it with Your terrible and glorious name; ⁴at whom all things shudder, and tremble before Your power, ⁵for Your glorious splendor cannot be borne, and the wrath of Your threat to sinners is unendurable; ⁶yet immeasurable and unsearchable is Your promised mercy, ⁷for You are the Lord Most High, of great compassion, long-suffering, and very merciful, and You relent at human suffering. O Lord, according to Your great goodness You have promised repentance and forgiveness to those who have sinned against You...

Manasseh knew he had sinned against Him.

...and in the multitude of Your mercies You have appointed repentance for sinners, so that they may be saved. ⁸Therefore You, O Lord, God of the righteous...

He knew he wasn't righteous. He had left his righteousness.

⁸Therefore You, O Lord, God of the righteous, have not appointed repentance for the righteous, for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who did not sin against You, but You have appointed repentance for me, who am a sinner.

"Like I sinned against You," he was saying. Abraham never deliberately sinned against Him. There are different kinds of sins that people can commit.

⁹For the sins I have committed are more in number than the sand of the sea; my transgressions are multiplied, O Lord, they are multiplied! I am not worthy to look up and see the height of heaven because of the multitude of my iniquities. ¹⁰I am weighted down with many an iron fetter, so that I am rejected because of my sins, and I have no relief; for I have provoked Your wrath and have done what is evil in your sight, setting up abominations and multiplying offenses. ¹¹And now I bend the knee of my heart, imploring You for Your kindness...

"I bend the knee of my heart" – I guess that means that sometimes you don't pray bending the knee of your heart, although you might bend your knee.

¹²I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my transgressions. ¹³I 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...

He really saw it. Everyone who sins and hasn't been forgiven goes there. I looked up the word *depths* and it means the deepest recesses of the earth where sinners go until Heb 9:27 and Rev 20:12-15. This is the first death where everyone must go in the nations until the resurrection, to be judged worthy or unworthy of the second life. Solomon had to go to the depths. He wasn't waiting in Abraham's bosom when our Master Yahshua descended to the depths to take the captives and set them free. He is still in the depths. Everyone who is righteous went to Abraham's bosom. It is still there, but in a separate compartment. Your conscience either condemns or accuses you, as Paul said in Rom 2:14-15.

Solomon's conscience condemned him. He wasn't one of the righteous followers of YHWH. He was no longer what God would call His own, even though his name was Yedidiah. He held our Father up to public shame with all the things he did. So, what is his eternal destiny? I don't know.

...do not condemn me to the depths of the earth. For You, O Lord, are the God of those who repent...

He is the God of those who can repent. Heb 6:4 is speaking about the people in the community, they are believers, but they hold their Master up to public shame by their life. "Oh, He is no Savior. He can't save me."

They hang out in a public place like the bar and everyone knows who they are, hanging our Master up to public shame, as though, like the Catholics do, He is still hanging up on the cross. They hang Him up to public shame as though He never got off the cross.

For You, O Lord, are the God of those who repent,¹⁴ and in me You will manifest Your goodness...

If we aren't manifesting His goodness, we don't belong to Him, I guess.

...for, unworthy as I am, You will save me according to Your great mercy...

Or we can change it here, “Will You save me according to Your mercy?” Some people aren’t able to repent for what they have done. The man in 2 Cor 5:5 was not able to repent, but was handed over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, although he would be saved in the day of Messiah.

¹⁵ *and I will praise You continually all the days of my life.*

We will have to see if Manasseh did that.

For all the host of heaven sings Your praise, and Yours is the glory forever. Amen.

It is an amazing thing about Manasseh, when you think of all the rebellious people who have been stoned, like the child who was stoned to death. Evidently our Father could see something left in Manasseh. The man in 2 Corinthians 5 had no worth left in Him and was hanging our Master up to public shame. It’s all according to how a person senses his guilt, if he has to leave the community. If he has hope, he considers how he can possibly be restored. If Manasseh could be restored, anybody with any worth left in him can be restored. I don’t know how he could give himself over to those things. It seems like kings are tempted more than anybody else.

David Zerubbabel – It seems like his banishment was a form of death for him, a foretaste of it, and in his prayer you don’t see him blaming anyone else. It really spoke to me that He is the God of those who repent. He is not necessarily the God of those who have a good show and do everything right. He is not the God of those who do not bend the knee of the heart.

He was the God of David, who could repent.

David Zerubbabel – That heart has to be formed in us, in me. I know that it has happened many times since I have been in the Body that there wasn’t mercy in me towards someone who had sinned badly. But many times I have been proven wrong and they repented. Sometimes I think that is why we go through all that we do, so that we can be worthy to judge the nations. He is teaching us to have His heart. That is the work that has to go on in us in this age, so that we can have and know our Father’s heart. Our Father heard Manasseh’s appeal. It is beyond our understanding.

David Bekor – Our Father says, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.” People don’t understand Him because He doesn’t judge by the

outward, but by what is in the heart. They only see with their eyes and hear with their ears. But He sees the heart and knows what is going on in there. If someone says in his heart, "There is no God," then there is no mercy. If someone has a fear of God, then there is mercy. We are learning to search the deep things of our own heart. We search one another's heart, too. We dig deep into the heart of the one who seems to be just lead, or muck and yuck, but down in there is gold, if we dig for it.

Amen.

Mevaser – I was thinking that the worth that we retain is the knowledge of God, and of His character. I got a letter last night from someone who was responding to what was written in the new *Intertribal News*. It was the most wonderful note of repentance. He was able to lay hold of that and take a stand. If you don't have that, you don't have worth left, if you don't know something of who He is and what He wants. There is nothing to laid hold of in such a person. He can't repent. I am thankful that His worth, His glory, is growing in us.

That is what glory is, inner worth.

Shemuel ben Sehyah – This teaching about the prayer of Manasseh really spoke to me. I was remembering a time when I didn't know if I could humble myself or not. Repentance has to come from our Father in order for us to get to the bottom of things. I am thankful that we know that He is a God who forgives those who repent.

It made me really thankful, for there have been times when I didn't see our Father for who He was, and didn't discern the Body, and I knew I wasn't being heard. I knew I didn't have forgiveness, and I asked for it, and He gave it to me. He granted me repentance. I don't want to go on and forget that He has forgiven me so much and that He loves me. I am thankful for what we have heard and that He is a God who forgives those who repent. I don't ever want to be proud or hang onto anything. I want to be someone our Father can use and that He can work with me and speak to me and convict me.

Jesse – True humility is to bow the knee of the heart. It is not performance. It is said that our Father gives grace to the humble a thousand times out of a thousand. Manasseh truly humbled himself. He saw David's heart and He saw Manasseh's heart. He saw they bowed the knee of the heart. The truly humble are the ones our Father looks to.

Nun – The weight our Father places upon a person is more in the response of the heart. Emet said that the man who is truly wealthy looks to our Master for his ransom (Pr 13:8). The one who is truly poor can't hear rebuke, can't confess his sin, but is proud. As a King, Manasseh was tempted to a greater degree. Even in all of that, our Father placed more weight on his response than what he had done.

Our Father wants to know the heart above all things. After Manasseh had plummeted Israel to ruin and made them a prey to their enemies, when he was finally confronted and had no escape, he utterly humbled himself, utterly. He said, "I know what I deserve, to be among those who have departed. I can't even lift my head to heaven. I feel the weight of these shackles. O, Father, have mercy; you are the only hope I have." It was really true judgment. He knew that is what he deserved and our Father had mercy and granted him repentance.

I really liked what Emet said, for in the end Manasseh was not a poor man, he was wealthy. He saw that he was not to be numbered among the righteous offspring, but actually he had the heart of the righteous offspring. That spoke to me.

Yedidiah – What we are hearing reminds me of Psalm 51 where it says that the sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite heart. If someone is grieved about his condition, our Father reaches out to that tender place in the person's heart. It is such an amazing thing.

Ha-êmeq – It is amazing how you hear. Some people hear the stories in the Bible and say, "I can go out and do whatever I want, then I will say, 'I am sorry,' and I will make it in, like Sampson did." But Shimshone cried out in the prison and our Father heard him, but allowed him to die. He didn't allow him to go on and prosper after that. David and Manasseh went on, but they were pretty much dead men in their own hearts – to the bad they had done. The men in Nineveh that Yonah preached to went on, humbled, and Pharaoh went on, proud.

When Yoneq was reading about Manasseh, it almost makes you mad, "Do you see what he did? And then there is the man who picked up sticks and got stoned!" It is hard to understand unless you see how it was explained this morning. It is so wonderful how we can know our Father's heart and it doesn't make us want to take license and go out do evil things. It makes us want to humble ourselves.

If you grew up Christian, you always heard about deathbed confessions. Therefore you calculate, “I will live my life just as I want to and then repent when I am in bed and go to heaven, but... what if I die instantly in a car wreck? Then I won’t be able to.”

Havah – Pride comes before a fall. What I learned this morning, if there is humility, you can repent for anything, but if you are proud, you can’t repent for anything. In death, some people will blame their sin on others for a thousand years and then have to go to the second death. When Shaul was confronted with his sin, he said, “Oh, I sinned,” but the kingdom was torn from him.

When David was confronted with his sin, he said the same words, but somehow it was different. “I have sinned,” David said, but the heart was different. Our Father promised him that a ruler from him would be on the throne forever. You can look at the words and see that the hearts of the two were weighed, not their outward performance. I am thankful that our Father gave us clear understanding about this. It is so amazing to see His character.

Yowceph Rodriguez – It struck me when Yedidiah read from Psalm 51. I looked up and it says, “A psalm of David...” and then the first thing it says is, “Have mercy,” and “blot out my transgressions.” He sinned, but he was deeply struck by what he had done. He wanted to change. The cry of His heart was “I have sinned against you. Wash me clean.” He knew he could cry out to our Father and that He could make him whiter than snow. Then in verse 10 it says: “*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*” The most precious thing to him was his relationship with our Father, just to know Him. And our Father saw that heart in David that wasn’t in Shaul.

Dodavah – What I saw this morning was that our Father’s mercy has no limits. The only limit is the extent that we humble ourselves. It struck me that He could actually forgive someone who was that bad. It makes me thankful that we serve such a wonderful God.

Kepha – Manasseh and David took personal responsibility for what they had done. Many are going to do otherwise, blame their parents and blame society. It is not a repentant heart to blame others, even our parents. I appreciate how Manasseh said that, “I did it, it was me. No one forced me to do that.”