

Conversion of Manasseh

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 December 2012

Preacher: Rev. Calum Iain Macleod

[0 : 00] Well, friends, shall we turn back to the chapter we read together, 2 Chronicles, chapter 33. We want to look at the account the chapter has for us of King Manasseh, but we can read again in verses 12 and 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 entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem, into his kingdom.

You notice these staggering words, Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, he was God. I'm sure when we turn to 2 Chronicles to read from the chapter, it's one of these things that we maybe aren't very familiar where these books are in the Old Testament.

Because they're not books that we generally read very often for different reasons. Maybe when you hear of 2 Chronicles or 1 and 2 Kings, you switch off.

Maybe it's something that you're not very familiar with. And that is true for so many of us. A lot of the Chronicles are lists of names, pieces of history, and details that, for the most part, we don't maybe see much relevance for our lives today.

[1 : 31] But if, because of that, we would choose not to read from the books of the Chronicles, we really would miss out on so very much. Not least of which, such a chapter as this, about King Manasseh.

Now you may have read in 2 Kings about this man, Manasseh, king of Judah. And you'll have noticed there that his life is spelled out in very clear terms, very negative terms, with no reference to a turnaround in his life.

And for that reason, 2 Chronicles 33 is so very important, so very precious, because it shows us there came about in this man's life a change.

And it was the change in the kind of man that I don't think we would generally ever expect to have been the subject of such a change. Bringing it up to our own times today, you think of some people, maybe they're not going to church, maybe in your own family, maybe in your own home.

People you're praying for, people you're burdened about. But you think in your heart, well, they may never, ever be saved. You think about how they're living, you think about what they've done.

[2 : 39] You maybe think about what they're probably doing at this very time, this very night. And you think, well, there's little hope for them. I would like, friends, with God's help tonight, for us to look at what happened to King Manasseh, to see that there is never really, in one sense, a lost case.

If there ever was a lost case among the kings of Israel and Judah, it was King Manasseh. He was very much following the line of King Ahab of Israel. And men like that, who lived such notoriously God-rejecting and God-defying lives, that you would just write them off.

And think, well, there is no chance. They've gone too far, and there is no way for them to come back. And tonight we want to see for ourselves, not just to look at Manasseh, but maybe not even just to think about people we know and pray for.

But maybe it's the case for yourself tonight. Maybe you're someone who hasn't come to the place Manasseh came, where he knew that Jehovah was God.

You know that he is God. You're in church tonight. You read the Bible that is referred to as the Word of God. We sing the praises of God, and we pray to God. But maybe your knowledge of him goes no further than that.

[3 : 52] It's mere notion. It's a mere idea in your mind. What we need to have, and what God alone can bring us to have, is a saving, personal, real, relational knowledge of himself, such as Manasseh had.

He knew all about God. He didn't care to think about him, though. But something happened in his life that brought him to know that the Lord was God.

And tonight we want to look at this account in three sections. The first is Manasseh's provocation. The second is Manasseh's providence.

And the last is Manasseh's prayer. Just to bring a little bit of background, just one or two things. Manasseh was, as you know, the son of King Hezekiah.

He was born in a time when there had been a great revival, we might say. A time of spiritual blessing in Jerusalem and throughout Judah.

[4 : 55] It was a time of positive experiences of the presence and of the blessing of God. And you would think that in times of blessing, surely they cannot come to a complete or sudden halt.

But such was the case with King Manasseh. Hezekiah had been blessed with an extension to his life. You remember he was very ill and he pleaded with God.

And through Isaiah the prophet he was told God would add unto his life another number of years.

And at the end of his life, we're told when he died, Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

This was a crucial period in the whole existence of the kingdoms in Israel. There had been three stages really. There had been a united kingdom under King Saul, then under David, and then under Solomon.

But following Solomon with Rehoboam, there came what we tend to refer to as the divided kingdom. Where the kingdom split into two, the north and the south. And at this point, the kingdom of what we tend to call Israel centered in Samaria.

[6 : 07] At this point, it had been taken away by the Assyrians. They had been repeatedly warned by God through the prophets that unless they turned from the way they were going, they were going to be removed. And at this point, when Manasseh comes along, they had been removed.

And what happens now is there's no longer a divided kingdom of Israel and Judah. There is one single kingdom, and it is the kingdom of Judah. It has its base, you might say, in Jerusalem.

And this man, Manasseh, is reigning in the single kingdom. And from a time of blessing, spiritual blessing under Hezekiah, his father, there comes a time of severe and thick and almost unbelievable darkness.

Because this man, King Manasseh, really brought into Israel and made the state religion of Israel something that is very much akin, if not actually outright Satanism.

Satanism under different religious and ritualistic forms. Just look at some of these things. This is his provocation of God. He introduced, or reintroduced rather, fertility worship.

[7 : 17] He did things that his father had put an end to. Hezekiah's reforms were partly to do with ridding the land of this dark and satanic cult and ritual that had been so much a part of the past, of the nations, indeed, that God had driven out of Israel.

Well, Manasseh reinstates all of this. Fertility worship. He sets up sites, shrines, and brings about, you have it here in, recorded for us here, that verse 3, for example.

He built up again the high places which Hezekiah, his father, had broken down, and reared up altars for Balaam and made groves, and so on. He instituted, well, it really is a fertility worship.

And what it means is if you engage in a certain form and ritual that was very sinful in many ways, you were sharing in what the fertility gods wanted you to do.

And by sharing in what they wanted you to do, they in turn would grant you fertility. So if you wanted your land to be full, if you wanted your animals to be abundant, if you wanted your family to grow, if you wanted everything to be fruitful and abundant, well, you had to enter into this ritual and to this religious system.

[8 : 36] It was something, friends, that just gave vent to all the sinful desires of the sinful heart.

People who wanted to respect no boundaries in marriage, people who didn't want to care about a relationship between man and wife, well, they would just do whatever they wanted to their heart's content under this banner of religion.

So it would please the natural man. By reinstating this, King Manasseh not only showed what his heart was all about, but he did something that he knew would keep his people on board, people who were fallen and sinful.

Give them a religion that allows them to do whatever they want, and they'll have it. But notice also, not only was this fertility worship reinstated, but also astral worship.

He worshipped the stars of heaven. We are told it's something that he did. He not only worshipped them, he also served them. Verse 3 says, he worshipped all the hosts of heaven, and he served them.

Now when you think about this, it sounds ridiculous. It sounds like someone would have to be completely ignorant, largely, before they would look at these created things in the universe above, the stars shining so bright, all the hosts of heaven.

[9 : 58] You think, could somebody really and honestly worship them as though they were gods? As though they were living beings? Not only to worship them, but to actually serve them?

You sit down, you scratch your head, and you say, these people must be very, very foolish to think such a thing. But it's not very, very strange, really. In one sense, how many people today are trying to live their lives according to predictions of the stars?

People who want, and everyone I'm sure does want to know what the future holds. It's part of our nature to look into the future. And at a time like this, a year is ending, and a year is God willing about to begin.

And we think, what is ahead of us? What is before us? Well, here is King Manasseh, and he's worshipping the hosts of heaven, and he's serving them.

He's putting himself in a position of submission and dependence upon these hosts of heaven. He's realising in his own way of thinking that he depends on them.

[10 : 59] Because see, if he only worshipped them, well, that would be one thing, just paying, as it were, lip service, or giving the nod to these hosts of heaven like the other nations. But we're told he not only worshipped them, he served them.

Meaning that they would have things to say to him, no doubt. And having things to say to him, he would obey and go along with them, he would serve them.

But you notice that in all of this, he went a step further. And in provoking God, we see that he not only would participate, let's say, outside of the temple, outside of the church, but he was going to bring this astral worship, worship of the stars and everything, into the very house of God itself.

He was to be guilty, in other words, of sacrilege. Verse 4 tells us, This is a man who is really lifting both his fists to heaven.

He's a man who knew a lot about God. We'll come back to that in just a minute, which adds to you, is provoking God to anger. He's someone who was prepared to bring the dark arts and the dark worship of the heathen into the very temple of God.

[12 : 27] God had placed his own mercy seat. You remember, there were the altars connected with the worship of God. They weren't enough for Manasseh. He was going to drive them aside and bring in the worship of the host of heaven into the very house of God.

And he was going to do this to replace and to supplement the worship of God. He is defiling the very temple of God. This is a serious thing.

It's brought out serious because we're told in verse 4 that the house whereof the Lord had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be forever. Not only that, we're told there in verse 7 that he set a carved image.

The idol which he made into the house of God, which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, Notice, in this house and in Jerusalem, the end of the verse, will I put my name forever.

What is God saying there? When we're reading about God's name, it's not just the label by which God is differentiated from others or known to be God. Just like your name is given you and you're known by that name.

[13 : 33] God's name in this biblical sense is really the revelation of who God is. So for you and for me to know about God in Jerusalem, we would come to the temple.

We would learn about God. And God is saying, my name is going to be in this place. The revelation of who I am. This is where it's going to be. Manasseh says, no it's not.

You remember God told David, told Solomon his son, Kings. And Manasseh says, well I'm just going to throw all that out the window. I want nothing to do with it. I am going to put my name and the name of my gods in the house of God.

It's fearful. Driving God out of his own temple. And bringing Satan into his place. You may be thinking, wait a minute.

Satan. Well friends, I think we have to grasp the fact that this is Satan worship. Whatever form or guise it takes. And we see it particularly in the next thing that he did.

[14 : 34] This man Manasseh, he sacrificed, we're told, his children. Verse 6. He caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the sun of Hinnom.

This was an act of worship to his God. It was a practice the heathen way back in Leviticus. It's forbidden. It's something that was known back then. Where you would find a father would put his children to death in sacrificial ritual.

By putting them into the fire and letting the flames consume them. Now you think about that. Even when it's so fresh in your mind of a wonderful baptism service this morning.

Even think of yourselves, if you're parents. Think of your own children. Fathers. Mothers. Even if you're not a parent. You don't need to be a parent to get to grips with how terrible and how awful this is.

To murder your children. To murder them in flames. To murder them in flames as a sacrifice to Satan himself. That is what it is.

[15 : 35] If I'm not mistaken, Psalm 105 refers to that. Is it Psalm 100? One of these Psalms has a reference to them sacrificing their children to devils.

It is that serious. King Hezekiah. King Hezekiah. Man of God. Used by God. To bring about a great reformation and revival there in Israel.

His son Manasseh takes his place. Drives all of the good that his father did out of Israel. And institutes. And makes the state religion nothing short of Satanism.

I'm sure friends if we were to walk through Jerusalem day or night. If we were Christians spiritually sensitive. I'm sure we would feel the darkness in the place.

I'm sure the very hairs on our arms, on our neck and things would stand on end. That you would almost sense the darkness. The spiritual darkness in that place. From the ruler to the people below.

[16 : 35] There was a rejection of God. An acceptance and an embracing of Satan himself. Now notice how it's crowned there with King Manasseh.

He was someone who engaged in spiritism. He was someone who consulted the devil himself.

Someone who engaged with demons. Someone who was involved in the dark arts.

Trying to communicate with the dead. Which really was communicating with fallen demonic beings. Who would speak back. Yes. Who would impart information. Yes.

And leave you thinking you were actually talking to people who had died. When in fact you were talking to demons. Now this kind of thing wasn't done under the table or behind closed doors.

This was the religion of Israel. This was the religion in Jerusalem. And this was the king practicing it. And see if you oppose this man. Second Kings there in chapter 21 brings before us.

[17 : 33] That this Manasseh he made Jerusalem full of blood. From one end to the other. In other words he was a murderer. And no doubt. Let's remember this is all negative.

We're just trying to paint the picture of how far this man was gone. If you oppose this man. You would no doubt have been put to death.

He wasn't just a dictator who would put you in prison. He didn't just shed some blood in Jerusalem. He filled the city we're told with blood. The city was flowing with blood.

Of people who were innocent. People who would have been righteous. And it shows us. Praise God in such a dark time. God has his people everywhere. Everywhere. And he always will.

And also. God had his spokesmen. He had his prophets. And no matter how dark things are. We can sink our spirits.

[18 : 26] And we can let our minds go down. And think well things are just so terrible today.

Spiritually speaking. There's so much to discourage. And you look at the world. And yes there are things to discourage.

But we need to refocus our minds and our hearts upon the God of the Bible. Recognizing even tonight. That in the time of Manasseh. Who was the longest reigning king for 55 years.

And who was the most evil of all the kings of Judah. That even in the days of Manasseh. God was living. God was active. And God was speaking. And so it is for you.

And so it is for me today. And so it always will be. While the world stands. Jesus will build his church. And the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

Worst of all I think with Manasseh. We're finishing this bit. Is that we're told he seduced the people of Israel. He was responsible.

[19 : 24] Verse 9. Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err. He seduced them. It's quite strong language. The picture of a man who took them astray.

And he was leading them all. And they were following him. And isn't that a terrible thing to think about? The example you or I could be. In leading other people away from God. In a way that to the extreme with Manasseh. He is held responsible. For the destruction of Jerusalem. And for Judah going away into Babylon. Israel are away. The northern kingdom. The kingdom is away into Assyria. Later on. Judah is going to be away to Babylon. And Manasseh is blamed. He is held responsible. And it happens years down the line. But he is held responsible. For what he did. In leading these people astray. Now you might be thinking.

[20 : 20] What has that got to do with me tonight? Because you may be thinking. Well I've got nothing to do with fertility worship. Nothing to do with worshipping the stars. Nothing to do with a child sacrifice.

Nothing to do with contacting the dead. Spiritism. So you may be saying. That's absolutely irrelevant. And has nothing to do with me. Well in a sense you may say that. But in a sense you may not.

Because as someone has put this. All that Manasseh was doing. All these religious expressions. All these dark arts. And all that was involved. Really have at their heart. The ambition. And the drive. To keep in control of his own life. You see if he can. Manipulate the gods.

By way of fertility. That's going to be a side of his life. That's going to be fine. He's never going to want. He's never going to lack. If he can. Find out. What the stars are saying to him.

[21 : 16] And can serve them. Then he knows. What's going to happen in his life. If he can be in contact with the dead. And if he can. Have things. Explained to him. Knowledge. Insight.

Well things are going to go fine. He's going to know. What he's got to do. It's subtle behind all of this. What he's trying to do. Is not let go of his own life. If I can have religion. And if I can have the Bible. And if I can still do what I want to do. Without having to give up. My life to God. I'll have it. I'll keep it. And that's what I'll do. But if you start telling me. I've got to give up this.

I've got to stop doing that. You can forget it. God calls you. And he calls me. To give him. Our hearts. He doesn't want our just coming to church. Which is something we have to be involved in. We need to be in church. Of course. But it isn't something we do as an end in itself. It's to be a stepping stone.

[22 : 12] To get to God himself. He wants our hearts. He wants our lives. He wants everything about us. Manasseh was trying to keep a hold. And you might be trying to keep a hold of your own life tonight.

Look at yourself seriously. Just as I've got to look at myself seriously. And if you're not listening. And giving yourself over to the Lord completely. And unreservedly. It might even be one thing in your life.

You're not prepared to give up. It might be a thing. It might be a person. It might be a place. Ask yourself seriously. What is it about me?

What is it about my life? What is it in my situation? That I am not prepared to completely bow the knee and say. Lord. Here I am. Everything I am. And all that I have.

Take me. And save me. Well Manasseh was provoking God terribly. You think about it. Particularly. Not only was he going to be familiar with the history of the kingdom.

[23 : 10] Going way back to Saul and to David. To Solomon and others. And not only did he have the godly example of his father Hezekiah. Who was someone who had living.

Genuine. Powerful. A dynamic relationship with God. Someone who knew what it was to hear God speak to him. Someone who was able to live. A godly life. Someone who had brought about such a great reformation.

He knew all of that. Now it is not clear whether. Although it might actually be more obvious. If we take the first verse. Just as it seems to stand. Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign. If we take it like that. There are other interpretations. And explanations of how old Manasseh was. When he actually began to reign by himself. But if you just look at verse 1.

If he was 12 when he began to reign. It means he was born in his father's last 15 years. The 15 years that God had added on to Hezekiah's life.

[24 : 08] Isn't that staggering if that is the case? Imagine your father telling you. That he had nearly died. God had healed him. God had told him you are going to have 15 more years.

And you grow up to be age 12. Your father dies when you are 12. And you realize. God has spoken into my father's life. Powerfully in his providence.

By striking him with illness. And then healing him. And he has spoken into his life. Powerfully with his word. He said you are going to have another 15 years. And he had 15 years. And they have ended. And I am now king.

Surely I need to listen to this God for myself. He did not care. This Manasseh did not care. It really comes out. When we are told. Verse 10.

The Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people. But they would not hearken. 2 Kings 21 tells us. What God said through the prophets to Manasseh. I don't want to read it. Just now you may want to follow.

[25 : 05] Weigh the two accounts together. 2 Kings 21. And this chapter. 2 Chronicles 33. God had a word for Manasseh. And this is where we are seeing. God's grace. This is where we are seeing.

More of the light. It has all been dark and dim. And gloomy with Manasseh's. Catalogue of sins. But as God comes. And God speaks. You can surely begin to see. The light is shining.

Around this man's life. This man who sunk. In his sin. And his rejection of God. Provoking God to the highest degree. God. Has his mind.

And his heart on this man. You notice secondly. His providence. More briefly. His providence. God sent prophets.

To warn Manasseh. To turn from the way he was going. He sent prophets to warn the people of Israel. Who are following Manasseh. Turn from the way you're going. If you don't.

[26 : 01] What happened to Israel. Is going to happen to you. You're going to be wiped off the face of the earth. Wiped off Jerusalem. There will be devastation. It's a picture of the gospel. Is it not? It's a picture of.

Really. In order to understand the good news of the gospel. We need to know the bad news. If we don't know the bad news. We're not going to appreciate the good news. If we don't know about our sin.

We won't appreciate a savior. Jesus. Who will save his people. From their sins. And so God sends word. He says. Manasseh. I'm warning you. And isn't that a wonderful thing?

It's not a comfortable thing. But there is always. Sounding in the gospel. The note of warning. God comes up to you. He looks you in the eye. And in the face. And he says.

I'm talking to you. He talks through his word. And maybe when you're in church. And maybe your mind can go around the whole world. You're thinking about next week. You're thinking about yesterday. You're planning.

[26 : 56] You're thinking. But it's so easy in church. To just switch off. It's like switching a light off. It's hard to concentrate sometimes. Someone will come along. And just steal your thoughts.

And steal your mind. And your attention is gone. But God is still speaking. You know. Doesn't he say there. Jesus. In addressing the seven churches in Asia.

In the early chapters of the book of Revelation. He who has ears to hear. Let him hear. Are you listening? That's the question. Am I listening to what God is saying? Because if we're not going to listen to him.

When he speaks in his word. Like he does here to Manasseh. We will listen to him when he speaks in his dealings with us. That's what I mean by his providence. Because something happened. There seems to have been a rebellion.

In the kingdom of Assyria at this time. Manasseh may have been part of it. And when the rebellion is quashed. Those who were part of it. Were rounded up. The vassal kings.

[27 : 49] The subject kings. To the great king. They were gathered together. Humbled. And they were brought along to Babylon. They were going to be taught a lesson or two. And this is what God does for Manasseh.

He's gone too far. And God says. I've had enough of this. You're not going to carry on anymore like this. And this is what God can do. He can do what no one can do in your life. Your parents may be plead with you.

Pray for you. They try and warn you. And speak to you. And God through his word does the same. He speaks to you. But if we are not going to listen with our ears. To his word. We're going to listen

with our ears.

When he comes. And does a work in our lives. And that can be a wonderful blessing. Manasseh was taken from the highest place. To the lowest place.

He was taken from a palace. To a prison. He was brought down. He was humiliated. The picture is of him. Being taken with a hook through his nose. Bound with chains.

[28 : 49] He was being treated like a wild animal. Which is really what he was anyway. But God is behind all of this. King of Assyria. He doesn't know that he's the instrument of God. But God is going to deal with him.

Brings him to a place. Where he's got time to think. Have you ever come to that place yourself? Maybe before you became a Christian. If you are one tonight. You can remember God speaking to you.

Look back on it. And now you see it. But at the time you just didn't care. And then he came along into your life. And he made you listen. Maybe it was death. In your family. Maybe it was illness. Maybe it was losing job. Whatever it could be. It will generally be a negative. Hard. Difficult providence in life. That you've got to sit down.

Helplessly. And start asking. Why is this happening? What is God saying to me? He gives you ears to hear. He gives you a mind to think. You notice he's brought to reflect.

[29 : 47] God is giving him thoughts. The light that was shining round him. Through the message of the prophets. Is now beginning to shine in him. God is doing something.

How do we see that? We'll look lastly. Again briefly. At his prayer. And wasn't it said about. The converted Saul of Tarshish. Behold.

He prays. A man who prayed all his life long. But never really prayed. One single time. Until we're told that. He is praying. He's a man who knows.

What it is to pray. He isn't saying his prayers. He's brought to a place. Where he's praying. Like he's never done in his life. This was through. You find it here. Of Manasseh.

When he was in affliction. Verse 12 tells us. He besought the Lord his God. Really means. He sought the face of God. And this is giving the picture.

[30 : 41] No doubt. That he's starting to think of God. He's remembering. The God he had learned about. The God he had heard about. And he turns his face. Which was going away.

God's face was looking at him. His face was going the other way. But now he turns. And he faces God. And in coming to face God. We're told. He humbled himself greatly.

Oh the proud King Manasseh. The iron willed King Manasseh. Here he is. And he's humbling himself. Before the God of his fathers. What a time that was.

There he is in prison. Humbled. Helpless. Hopeless. Humanly. And he begins to think of God. Isn't that wonderful? This is what it took.

In this man. Before he started thinking about God. The prophets weren't doing it. But the providence made it all begin. And he starts to pray. Have you started praying yourself? Like you've never prayed in your life.

[31 : 37] Maybe the first thing you started saying was. Help. Maybe like the thief on the cross. It was Lord remember me. Don't forget me. Don't leave me behind.

You've got the sense of urgency. Hopelessness. Helplessness. Absolutely humbled. Before God. What a wonderful place to be. And friends. Tonight you can thank God.

And so can I. For anything he may have been pleased to use. To bring us to that place. Where we pray. And where we seek him. He prayed unto him. Verse 13. And he was entreated of him.

Other translations have it a bit different. That God was moved with his entreaty. The picture not only of a cold. Indifferent.

Hearing of his prayer and answering. But the fact that God was entreated. God was moved. God was taken as it were by this prayer. And that is a staggering fact. Just as the case with the thief on the cross.

[32 : 37] Who turned in the dying hours of his life. To Jesus. And asked for forgiveness. And asked for mercy. The last thing. You maybe would expect. Or I would expect. Is for the Lord to forgive him.

But that is exactly what he does. How you would say. Well people would never. Have been able to forgive Manasseh. For things he had done. You think of people.

Who had been slaughtered by this man. Whose blood had filled Jerusalem. Think of relatives.

Loved ones. You think of that. You think. How could they ever find it in their hearts. To forgive this

man.

Even when he says sorry to everyone. And as he later does. Thries to undo all the wickedness. He had previously done. How could you forgive this man. You may be thinking. Your own life. Are there people tonight.

You find it hard to forgive. Before. Maybe you were a Christian. Even since you've become a Christian. People who have done you wrong. And harm. Isn't it hard to forgive.

[33 : 29] Oh I've forgiven them. And then you see them. Or you hear something. And it's all back up again. The emotions. And the feelings. And the thoughts.

And the desires. All of these things come back. Forgiveness is a difficult thing. Here with God. This man Manasseh. Is brought to his very knees. He cries to God. And God. Hears his prayer.

And God. We're told. Answers. His prayer. He brought him again. To Jerusalem. Into. His kingdom. That's amazing.

God could have left him. To die in prison. But he chose to bring him back. To Jerusalem again. He not only forgave. All his sins. There's a sense here. I think.

Where we have to see. That he's saying. To Manasseh. I'll give you another chance. It's like these wonderful words. In Jonah chapter 3. The prophet. We're told. The word of the Lord.

[34 : 23] Came to Jonah. The second time. Yes. Here's a believer. Who had failed. And run away from God. And rebelled. He's given a second chance. But here is King Manasseh. And God is going to bring him back.

Out of prison. Back to Jerusalem. As it were. Giving him a second chance. Now look. The year is nearly finishing. And I don't know. We don't all. We don't all know each other tonight. If you aren't a Christian tonight.

Can I say something to you? The year is nearly finished. How many times. Over how many years. Have you heard the gospel? How many times. Have you heard it being said to you?

You need to be converted. You need to start seeking the Lord. And you need to be saved. How many times. Have you said to yourself. I will one day. Or I will tomorrow.

Or how many times. Have you said no? Well. Why don't you start getting serious. About the things of God. If you haven't started yet. Because you look at the year that's passed.

[35 : 22] Hasn't it flown? Maybe flown past more. Than you've ever felt time pass. In your whole life. And soon life is going to be over.

You know that yourself very well. And let's face facts. And God in his word. Is repeatedly speaking to you. And tonight. I don't know.

It might be the case for somebody. That the problem you have with the gospel. As someone else has found it. In their own lives. And many people. Is when you come into church.

You feel the most sinful person. Under the sun. You look at all of these people. And you know they're Christians. You know their reputation. And their lives. And you think. I could never become like one of them.

People who maybe never lived. In the ways of the world. Or the courses. And the habits. And the things that you do. And you feel maybe uncomfortable. And there'll be someone on your back. Saying to you.

[36 : 19] Look. Forget it. You think God will forgive you. After everything that you've done. And you can sit there. And you can pray. And you go on your knees maybe. And this all floods into your mind.

You remember things you've done. You remember who you've been. And you remember what you are. And you say. Can he forgive me? King Manasseh's conversion experience.

Tells us. Yes. There is nobody here tonight. I don't believe. Who in terms of the gospel. When you compare your own life. With that of King Manasseh.

Before he was a Christian. There is no one. About whom we could say tonight. There is no hope for you. The gospel is a word of hope. It's a word of challenge. It's a word of warning. It's a word of hope.

It tells you. You come to him. Just as you are. Forget everything else. Forget everyone else. Just get yourself to the Lord. And call upon his name. And seek him.

[37 : 16] And say Lord save me. He'll save you. If he saved Manasseh. He'll save you too. But what you have to do yourself.

Is look for him. And search for him. Seek him while he's to be found. Call on him while he's near. He is ready to forgive. He delights in mercy.

God delights. He rejoices. It thrills his being. May we say. For God to have mercy on sinners. And heaven rejoices. And over one person who repents.

And turns. What joy there must have been. Over Manasseh's repentance. It's wonderful to think of it. But will there ever be joy in heaven over you?

Will you ever find him for yourself? Very last thing. Don't go away thinking. Well.

[38 : 15] Manasseh found mercy. After everything he'd done. So I can do everything I want to do. And at the end of that. I'll find mercy too. How many of the bad kings.

Both in Judah and Israel. Think of Ahab. Think of Jeroboam. Son of Nebat. All of these men. How many of them were converted? None. There's one man.

This king Manasseh. Who stands out. And the very fact that there's one. Gives us hope. Doesn't it? But the very fact that there's one. Is also a great warning. Because all the rest.

Never found forgiveness for themselves. And if there was only one. God is saying. Look. Don't presume. Don't think that you can wait.

And you can do what you want. And at the end of it all. You just call as though God was some machine. You put a coin in. You pull the handle. And out comes forgiveness. He's a living. He's a holy. He is a wise.

[39 : 12] He is a just being. He is loving. Yes. He is love. Absolutely. But don't trifle with him. And don't say to yourself.

One day. Because God says to you now. And don't put it off. Make this new year that's about to begin. The year when you will seek the Lord for yourself.

And you will never look back on it. Never look back on it. Then Manasseh knew. We're told. That the Lord.

Is. God. May God grant that. To each one of us. Let's pray. Shall we? Amen. I'll see you next time. Bye. I'll see you next time. Bye. Bye. Bye.

Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye.