

AMAZING GRACE

"Now when he was in affliction, he implored the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed for him. And He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his Kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God."
2 Chronicles 33:12,13

Manasseh had been the worst King that Judah had ever seen. He reversed everything his father Hezekiah had done to restore Judah back to the Lord. He began by rebuilding the pagan temples on high places, making wooden images, worshipped the stars, consulting sorcerers and placing altars to other gods in the temple itself. He even sacrificed his sons to the pagan god Molech. The Lord had sent his prophets but Manasseh and the people of Judah would not listen so they came under the judgment of God and were taken captive to Babylon. It was there that Manasseh came to his senses and began to humble himself by seeking the Lord.

God does not force Himself upon us. He does not oppose our stubborn will, but he has a way of bringing us to into compliance, and is it usually through pain and suffering if we ignore His warnings. Only the humble seek God and God must humble us if he is to bless us. And blessing is what he wants, not our destruction. A bit of pain and suffering is a good thing if it brings us back into communion with the Lord and into a place of abundant life and blessing.

What this story shows us more than anything is the amazing grace of God. Which of us would condone, let alone reinstall, a King who was so bad that he even sacrificed his sons in the fire to a false God? From the human point of view, this is an outrage! Yet the Lord not only forgave him, but gave him back his Kingdom. Manasseh's restoration was free, but the grace of God wasn't cheap. Manasseh "humbled himself greatly" before the Lord. He prayed, cried, and deeply repented, and God heard him.

And so it is with us who so miserably fail the Lord. We must humble ourselves, cry out in deep repentance and ask God to forgive us. There is no amount of failure too big for God to forgive and no position too high to restore if He so wishes. Total restoration is possible with humility.

Take some time now to reflect upon your leadership asking the Lord to show you any areas of failure. Confess it before the Lord asking Him for His amazing grace to cover your sin and for the power to change. Extend that same grace to others.