

A Second Chance God

Revelation 20:12-16, 2 Chronicles 33:1-20, II Samuel 9:1-11

Slide 1

Happy Father's Day.

An eight-year-old boy was walking down the road one day when a car pulls over next to him. "If you get in the car," the driver says, "I'll give you \$10 and a piece of candy."

The boy refuses and keeps on walking. A few moments later, not to take no for an answer, the man pulls over again. "How about \$20 and two pieces of candy?"

The boy tells the man to leave him alone and keeps on walking. Still further down the road the man pulls over to the side of the road.

"OK," he says, "this is my final offer. I'll give you \$50 and all the candy you can eat." The little boy stops, goes to the car and leans in.

"Look," he says to the driver. "You bought the Ford, Dad. You'll have to live with it!"

So, how many today consider yourself a failure in life? I didn't think I'd have any takers on that one. The fact remains, no matter if we're a father, mother, son or daughter we've all failed.

Even Romans 3:23 tells us that. Now, we don't go around wringing our hands and telling everyone we meet that we're the world's greatest failure. Supposedly, we learn from our mistakes and move on. That's part of life.

The Bible tells us that our God is a God of Second Chances. He took a murderer, by the name of Moses, and turned him into a national hero and spiritual leader.

He took a liar and deceiver, by the name of Jacob, and made him the cornerstone of a nation.

He took an adulterer and murderer like David and used him to write many of the Psalms to strengthen and encourage the people of God.

He took a woman who had been married and divorced five times and living with a sixth man and turned her into the first evangelist in Samaria.

He took some of us, who knows what we were, and turned us into what we're becoming today. So, let's see our second chance God in action.

Slide 2

In II Chronicles 33:1-20, we meet King Manasseh. Ruling for 55 years, Manasseh was Judah's longest reigning king. During this period, he had the opportunity to have the greatest impact on the nation.

His father, Hezekiah, had been a king who loved the Lord and did a lot to lead the nation back to serving God. But, as soon as Manasseh got the opportunity, he undid everything his father had spiritually tried to do for the nation.

In fact, Manasseh spent most of his 55 years doing evil in the eyes of the Lord.

II Chronicles 33:2-3, "He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had demolished; he also erected altars to the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them."

He worshiped idols. He tried talking to dead people through witches and sorcerers. He sacrificed his sons as human offerings to idols, and he put to death innocent people who challenged what he was doing.

The account of Manasseh in 2 Kings tells us that he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. In fact, tradition tells us he had the prophet Isaiah sawn in half.

As King, he didn't have to answer to anyone. He didn't have to apologize to anyone for anything he did. He could care less about God. Manasseh was full of pride. But one day, God decided enough was enough.

II Chronicles 33:11, "So the LORD brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon."

God sent the King of Assyria to invade Jerusalem. Manasseh was captured, and they put a hook in his nose, chains on his hands and feet, and led him away as though he was some wild animal.

When he finally reached Assyria, he was thrown into prison where all the riches and power of which he had boasted meant absolutely nothing. None of the idols he had made could help him.

His situation was hopeless. He was helpless. But what about today? How many Manasseh's are out there today just waiting for some circumstance in life to come and humble them?

You may be on top now. The future may look bright. So, you don't see any need of God in your life. But God's going to send an Assyrian king into your life, because God hates pride and He'll bring down all those who are proud of heart.

But God's purpose in humbling us is not to punish us but to bring us to our senses so we might make a change. That's what happened to Manasseh.

In the dark of the prison, Manasseh remembered... He remembered that the God of Israel was a second chance God.

So, this murderous, lying, abuser of people, had the audacity to think that if he humbled himself, God would hear his prayer.

II Chronicles 33:12-13, "In his distress he sought the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. And when he prayed to him, the LORD was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God."

I'm amazed at the people who don't understand how big the heart of God is. They actually believe that they've done something so bad that God couldn't possibly love or forgive them.

When this evil man humbled himself before God, God already had a plan for his Life. God used this vile king for His good. Listen...

2 Chronicles 33:15-16, "He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the image from the temple of the LORD, as well as all the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel."

Sometimes it takes a lifetime to straighten out our lives and move on the right track. Think about that. How great is our God to have so much patience with us to allow us to live long enough to get it right?

Our God knows where each one of us is today. He knows which of us really blew it this past week. He knows which of us have been pretending for a long time.

Today is the day to get rid of your little secret sins and humble yourself in the presence of God.

God's not going to be shocked by your confession. He's been waiting for a long time for you to get serious about your problem.

He's the Second Chance God, and He's offering you a second chance to make things right in your life.

Take time to recognize how the failures you've walked through can be used in a positive way to bless your loved ones and God. Remember, we serve a second chance God.

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Now, let's look at the story of Mephibosheth. This obscure, Old Testament character gives us a picture of God's grace to sinners.

II Samuel 9 tells us that after David was firmly established on his Throne, he remembered his promise to Jonathan. II Samuel 9:1, *"David asked, 'Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?'"*

He found young Mephibosheth, the only surviving son of Jonathan, the grandson of his enemy Saul, and restored him to the Palace of the King.

As we look at the restoration of Mephibosheth, we see that his story represents what God has done for each of us.

Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, was crippled in his feet when he was only five years old.

II Samuel 4 tells us that, upon hearing the report from Saul and Jonathan about Abner being killed, his nurse, frightened by the news, grabbed Jonathan's son and fled.

But, in her hurry to flee, she dropped him and because of that Mephibosheth grew up crippled in both feet.

So, Mephibosheth started out in life with a distinct disadvantage. This child would, for the rest of his days, need the help of others. He was pretty much at the mercy of anyone who came looking for him.

In much the same way, the human race is crippled because of the fall of Adam. We're at a distinct disadvantage because of our propensity to sin.

Morally speaking, we can't live up to the perfect standards of God. Physically speaking, we all face pain and sickness and death. Spiritually speaking, we can't make ourselves righteous enough to approach God.

We have the same basic problem Mephibosheth had; he was crippled. Likewise, we're crippled when it comes to pleasing God on the basis of our own deeds. Like Mephibosheth, we were all crippled by a fall; the fall of sin in our lives.

The good news is that, like Mephibosheth, we were sought by the King; the King of Second Chances.

Maybe you've been crippled in life one way or another. Maybe it was your fault or maybe you couldn't help the circumstances, but we have a God who looks after us 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to help us deal with our everyday problems.

Mephibosheth did not search for the King. The King searched for him. King David went out of his way to seek out this lost son. Chances are, he didn't even know David.

Fortunately, for Mephibosheth, he sought him for good. In very much the same way, Jesus came into the world seeking those who weren't seeking him.

David made himself known to Mephibosheth, just like God has revealed Himself to us.

John 1:10 says, *"He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him."* Jesus said, *"I have come to seek and to save that which was lost."* Luke 19:10

Slide 4

Conclusion

So today, the question is: Do you want a second chance in life? If so, then you have to recognize where you walked off the path, so you can start mending your ways.

How does this begin? It begins on your knees. You need to recognize that as a father you're nothing without the hand of God on you.

We were built in His image. We are all SONS and DAUGHTERS of the King of Kings. Can we ever repay a loving God? No! Can He make us whole? Yes!

But we must do our part and ask. We have to recognize that we're lost, without direction, and the direction only comes from HIM.

We're all crippled in our sins, but it's in the grace of God that we find the strength to get up and move on.

Look at 1 John 1:9, *“If we confess our sins, HE is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

We have to ask for forgiveness. Forgiveness isn't automatic. It's God who leads the way. It's God that's calling.

Get off the freeway of your life; stop and listen to the still small voice of a living God who's saying to each of us today: I love you.

Your Heavenly Father, on this Father's Day, is giving you a chance to come clean with your life and come closer to Him.

The greatest lesson in life today is to know that Jesus died for us all.