

**Tom Edwards Evangelistic
Assoc., Inc.**

—a ministry of lay Catholic evangelization & mission—

Forty-nine years
of
Full time outreach



**Radical Repentance—
Measureless Mercy**

The

Proclaiming

What would you do with a man like this?

Manasseh was his name. II Chronicles 33:1-11 details his life. He had a Godly and righteous father, King Hezekiah. After Hezekiah's death, Manasseh became king of Judah at the age of 12 and would reign for 55 years. Unlike his father, he introduced abominable practices adopted from pagan nations. He set up altars to worship a golden calf and others to worship a sex goddess. He bowed to astrological signs of the heavenly bodies. He sacrificed his own children by burning them alive in fire. He practiced spiritism, fortune telling, and sought council from demonic ghosts and spirits of the dead. He set up an idol in the holy Temple of Jerusalem built by Solomon. He misled all the people of Judah. When God tried to give him correction, he ignored it. His corrupt leadership resulted in the defeat of Judah and their captivity in Babylon. His life was marked by utter spiritual depravity. Manasseh himself was captured with hooks, shackled with chains, and transported to Babylon.

What would you do with a despot like this? How would you reckon his eternal destiny? Maybe better not to answer the questions!

Dare we read on the rest of the chapter (vs. 12-20)? We are told that in his distress, he began to appease the LORD, his God. He

humbled himself abjectly before the God of his ancestors, and prayed to Him. **The LORD let Himself be won over: He heard his prayer and restored him to his kingdom in Jerusalem. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is indeed God.**

Can you believe it? The Lord let Himself be won over! He forgave the man and delivered him. The Lord erased the sinful life of a horrible leader. He hit the delete button on Manasseh's sin. Manasseh went on to totally change his ways and led Judah back to worship of the one true God. Is this not radical repentance and measureless mercy?

Time and time again we see the Lord's amazing faithfulness to a people who struggle to maintain a semblance of faith, a people described as stiff necked and hard of heart. Often times, it is the prayer of one faithful servant who changes the course of history. A covenant keeping God never stops loving. (II Kings 13:23) *"But the LORD was gracious with Israel and looked on them with compassion because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was unwilling to destroy them or to cast them out from his presence even up to now."*

Some of the greatest men of wickedness were kings and leaders who changed their ways and brought entire cities or tribes to radical repentance. Most Bible readers are

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somewhat familiar with the account of Jonah, the reluctant prophet. Jonah was sent to preach to the people of the Assyrian city of Nineveh, a city first mentioned in Genesis 10:11. The city was built by Nimrod whose name means rebel (a rebel against the ways of God).

Settlement at Nineveh first occurred by about 6000 BC, and by 2000 BC the city was a center of worship to Ishtar, a goddess of sex and war. King Sennacherib ruled 704--681 BC. He built Nineveh into a magnificent city with new streets, squares, and a canal system within a walled area and built a vast and splendid palace. At the time Jonah was sent, the Ninevites were considered to be the most barbaric people on earth. They were feared and hated by the Jews (including Jonah). How cruel were the Assyrians? The Assyrians created stone tablets that showed them torturing their enemies to let the next city know what was coming. These depicted them skinning their victims alive, gouging out their eyes, and impaling them on stakes. One Assyrian king has left a whole series of these tablets behind and the descriptions are positively terrifying. "I flayed many right through my land and draped their skins over the walls," he boasts in one. "I burned their adolescent boys and girls . . . A pillar of heads I erected in front of the city." The pictorial stone tablets depicting these gruesome practices were sent to the cities they planned to attack to instill abject fear.

When Jonah arrived, he traversed the large city for three days proclaiming the Word of God. By that time, he himself had a rather personal and powerful testimony about obeying the Lord and the consequences of not doing so. The receptivity of the King of Nineveh was classic radical repentance. ***"When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he had this proclaimed throughout Nineveh: "By decree of the king and his nobles, no man or beast, no cattle or sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water. Man and beast alike must be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; they all must turn from their evil way and from the violence of their hands. Who knows? God may again repent and turn from his blazing wrath, so that we will not perish." When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out (Jonah 3: 6-10).*** The account ends with the Lord speaking these words: ***"And should I not be concerned over the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty***

thousand persons who cannot know their right hand from their left, not to mention all the animals?" (vs. 4:11) Once again the Lord's measureless mercy seems to reach above and beyond the natural reasoning of men.

One should not fear that God is unwilling to forgive them. The very essence of God is the love that He has for His creation! His desire is to forgive and show mercy. He is grieved when one fails to repent and persist in following the broad and easy path of destruction. Is there a sin that you have confessed a thousand times, perhaps availing yourself of the mighty graces that are present in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Yet you are still prone to listening to the nagging voice of the accuser. Confess our sins we must. Godly sorrow and pain work for sincere repentance when we identify with the pain we have caused Him. When the Apostle Peter was asked for the third time by Jesus "Peter do you love me", he hurt. It seems that he personally identified with pain that he himself had inflicted on Jesus through his three time denial. Radical repentance is the standard set before us. But then, as a people of faith, we must cease to dwell in the guilt of past depravities and come to rest in the truth of immeasurable mercy. Jesus came to give us life to the fullest. That fullness includes full pardon and grace overflowing.

The early church father, John Chrysostom comments, "If, looking to the magnitude of his own iniquities, [Manasseh] had despaired of restoration and repentance, he would have missed all that he afterward obtained."

Of course, accepting this amazing truth concerning the Lord's measureless mercy demands that we also embrace the other side of the coin.. How often do we pray, "Father forgive us our trespasses just as we forgive those who trespass against us? Do we really consider the full weight and value of these words? It's been called a "dangerous prayer". To state the same thing in a bit different way would go like this: ***"Father, if after having received your forgiveness and measureless mercy for offending you—I now having been offended by another person do willingly choose not to forgive them. Rather I will harbor the grudge and maintain a "get even" attitude. In so making this choice, I now sever myself from your ongoing flow of forgiveness to me".*** What a tragedy!

Let us be as the forgiven Apostle Peter. Let us hear the Word of the Lord. My son, my daughter, my friend—FEED MY SHEEP!

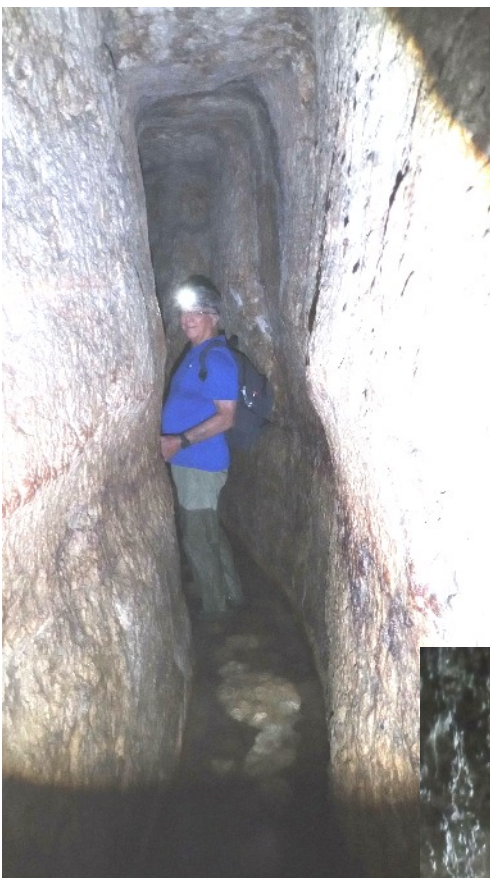


Tel Dan—Abraham's Gate

Left:—Tel Dan in Northern Israel was discovered just a few years ago and the archeologist uncovered this amazing city gate to the ancient city of Dan. It is the oldest intact arch in the world. The most amazing thing however is to stand in front of this gate and realize that this is the very gate that Abraham and his men passed through over 4000 years ago. The event is recorded in Genesis 14.

When Abram heard that his kinsman had been captured, he mustered three hundred and eighteen of his retainers, born in his house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. (15) He and his servants deployed against them at night, defeated them —

Right: Some of our small team. Behind us the 5th. century monastery of St. George built into the side of deep gorge Wadi Qelt in the wilderness.



Left & Below: 2 Kings 20:20 “As for the other events of Hezekiah’s reign, all his achievements and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city...” As a defense against the Assyrian army King Hezekiah accomplished this amazing engineering feat to bring water from Gihon spring into Jerusalem. Our team waded through the pitch black winding tunnel for 45 minutes. It lies under 140 feet of solid rock and at times narrows to less than shoulder width.



Qumran, site of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Behind us is Cave 4 that housed a treasury of ancient manuscripts.

STUDY TOUR OF THE HOLY LAND

Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the Holy Land as the Fifth Gospel. It’s true. Again and again in the Holy Scriptures the location, the land, communicates a vital part of the message.

Last year we began to make plans for a small group of seven to visit the Holy Land with the intention of really walking out and learning from the Fifth Gospel. Traveling by rental car and putting in 12 hour days we visited as many sights as possible in our allotted days. We were so blessed when Andre Villeneuve agreed to lead us. Dr. Villeneuve is professor of Old Testament Studies and Hebrew at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. He did 12 years of study living in the Holy land. We were accompanied by John & Pegi Mathe and Peter & Joy Newburn.

The experience was physically exhausting while so spiritually edifying. Our hope is that this personal encounter with the Fifth Gospel will serve to enrich the proclamation of Our Lord to others in the days to come.



VIDEOS--YOUTUBE:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxxyVoj-mYVu3_PrXzZ7R1Q

Mission Itinerary

July 11-27, Kigoma Diocese, Tanzania, East Africa—Renewal Ministries Mission—Rallies, Workshops

September 17-28—Brazil—Conferences, TV, multi-city meetings

October 4-9, Ann Arbor, MI—Renewal Ministries Country Coordinators retreat.

Oct. 12-27, Slovakia—Renewal Ministries Mission-Variou parishes, cities, towns, villages



*Tom & Jean Marie
Edwards*



Oh Mercy! by Jean Marie

Is mercy is the same as compassion? I wondered. So I looked them up in a Thesaurus. Oddly enough, compassion is a synonym for mercy but mercy is not a synonym for compassion ... not helpful. Then I did what Tom taught me to do. I looked at the root words and I learned that compassion comes from the two Latin words *com* (with) and *pati* (to suffer). *It literally means "to suffer with."* There's a painful emotional connection to someone and a desire to walk with them in their suffering. Jesus had compassion when He saw the crowd and even though He was tired, He taught them and healed them. The word *mercy* comes from the Latin *merces*, meaning "price" or "wages." Jesus suffered and died a criminal's death paying the price for our sins. That act of mercy came from His love and willingness to take on our suffering. All through Scripture Jesus shows us that mercy and compassion are deeply united in His heart...and I wonder... are they in mine?

Dear Friends,

Would you please prayerfully consider a regular commitment of spiritual and financial support by becoming a Co-Missionary with us. We will keep you updated in our special quarterly letter to all Co-Missionaries. We also send a supply of addressed return envelopes as per your need. We can also receive your support via most credit cards using the PayPal link (above if you are on-line) , or go to the PayPal link on our web page (see below). You do not need a PayPal account.

Go to <https://goyetomedwards.wixsite.com/parishmission>. There you can make a tax deductible gift on a one time basis or as a reoccurring amount according to your desire. Donations of stock can be made through our brokerage account. Contact us for specifics.

Or, use the enclosed envelope. Please include your prayer request. We personally read each one and pray for every need as we join our hearts with yours.

PLEASE!

We are making ready to lead the Renewal Ministries team to Tanzania in July—our 23rd. Mission in as many years to this East African country. This year we conduct multiple events in two cities of the Diocese of Kigoma which is located on the border of the Democratic Rep.of the Congo. Thousands of refugees are fleeing to Kigoma seeking refuge. Please keeps our team in constant prayer (July 11-27).

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