

## Too Wicked To Forgive

Text : **II King 21: 1-9 & II Chronicles 33: 10-20**

### INTRODUCTION :

#### A. The following is an article from “*The Christian Chronicle*” :

Nearly 17 years ago, one of America’s most notorious serial killers was attacked and killed while cleaning a prison bathroom.

Few mourned the gruesome end for Jeffrey Dahmer, who strangled and dismembered 17 boys and men and cannibalized some of them.

“Most people wanted Jeffrey Dahmer to fry,” Episcopal theologian Kendall Harmon said after Dahmer’s Nov. 28, 1994, slaying at a Madison, Wis., prison.

“Now that he’s dead, they’re celebrating, and they’re absolutely sure he will burn in hell, because that’s what happens to people like him,” Harmon, whose doctoral work at Oxford University covered 20 centuries of teachings about hell, told Scripps Howard News Service religion columnist Terry Mattingly.

But did Dahmer go to hell?

Or is there a chance that we’ll see him — *brother* Dahmer, that is — in heaven?

How you answer may depend on whether you believe God can work miracles in hearts and minds — even behind bars — or if you brush aside prison ministry as “jailhouse religion.”

When Dahmer died, I was a staff writer for *The Oklahoman*. I’ll never forget talking that day with Curt Booth, a member of the Crescent Church of Christ in Oklahoma, about his role in Dahmer’s conversion.

“I know Jeffrey was ready,” Booth told me. “Today, all the angels in heaven are rejoicing because Jeffrey has come home.”

Booth said he had no doubt about the sincerity of Dahmer’s conversion.

“On the great resurrection day, I’m expecting to see him right along there with Abraham, David, Isaac, James, John and all the saints that have lived right up to the modern day,” Booth said.

Booth usually ministered to inmates at prisons closer to home. But in April 1994, he caught a glimpse of Dahmer on television. Dahmer mentioned that he wished he could “find a little peace,” Booth said.

The Oklahoma church member sensed what he considered the hurt in Dahmer's voice and eyes. Booth said he thought: "I know somebody who can give you that peace. His name is Jesus Christ."

Booth sent Dahmer a Bible correspondence course teaching the steps to salvation. Dahmer mailed the answers back and thanked Booth for the course.

"But I still have one problem," Dahmer wrote. "This prison does not have a baptismal tank and Mr. Burkum the prison chaplain is not sure if he can find someone to bring a tank in and baptize me? I've taken all the other steps."

Booth contacted Roy Ratcliff, minister of the Madison Church of Christ in Wisconsin. Ratcliff set up weekly Bible lessons with Dahmer and baptized him on May 10, 1994. Ratcliff later shared that Dahmer told him he had been fearful of the minister's visit.

"He dreaded that I might say, 'No, you're too evil. You're too sinful. I can't baptize someone like you,'" Ratcliff said.

Booth said he contacted other preachers besides Ratcliff, "but they were kind of scared to go in."

Booth himself had served more than four years in a Kansas prison for what he called "thievery." Behind bars, he studied the Bible. However, he did not obey the Gospel until years later.

After prison, he ( *Curt Booth* ) drank, abused drugs and ended up in a ditch after a drunken night hunting raccoons. When a doctor told him in 1987 that his life was almost over, he remembered all the promises he had made to God in prison and began to contemplate his eternal salvation.

Booth called his nephew, a preacher named Phil Sanders, and asked what to do. Booth, his wife, Jenny, and three others studied with Sanders. All five were baptized in a pond behind Booth's house.

"An amazing change took place in Curt," Sanders, a speaker for the "In Search of the Lord's Way" television ministry in Edmond, Okla., wrote in a tribute after his uncle's 2005 death.

After his baptism, Booth led more than 1,000 inmates to Christ, including Dahmer.

Upon hearing of Dahmer's conversion, David Hartman, a member of the Wilshire Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, wrote to congratulate him.

Dahmer sent Hartman \$5 worth of stamps, asking him to mail him 25 copies of a Bible correspondence course for distribution to other inmates. In one letter, Dahmer mentioned being attacked in July 1994, months before he was killed.

“I don’t know if you heard, but last Sunday I was attacked while in the chapel,” Dahmer wrote. “Some guy tried to cut my throat open with a razor but didn’t succeed. The razor broke, and my neck was only slightly scratched. I believe that it was only the protective grace of our Great Lord & Savior Jesus Christ that saved me from serious injury or death!”

- Christian Chronicle

**B. How would you feel if you had been the one called to baptize Mr. Dahmer ?**

1. Would you have gone ?
2. Some preachers were called, but they refused to go.
3. Only God knows hearts, but what do you think is Mr. Dahmer’s eternal condition?

**C. Our attitude toward Mr. Dahmer reflects our attitude toward the gospel.**

1. The gospel :
  - a. Is not a system of religion.
  - b. Is not for men who are righteous. (*I picked Dahmer because he’s an extreme.* )
2. The gospel is God’s way of recovering lost souls.
  - a. **Rom. 1: 16-** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is **the power** of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
  - b. **Mark 10: 45-** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.  
( **I Tim. 2: 6** “... who gave Himself a ransom **for ALL** ...” )

**D. If Dahmer has no change at salvation, neither do you or I.**

1. The wages of sin is death. **Rom. 6: 23**
2. All who sin commit a capital offense.
3. All who influence other people to sin commit spiritual murder.
  - a. By ungodly actions (*Everyone influences others for good or for ill.* )
  - b. By the things you do not do ... worship God, respect others, honor flag
  - c. By the things you say or advocate.
4. If the gospel **cannot**, i.e., it lacks power to save Mr. Dahmer, if cannot save you.
5. If God **will** not save Jeffrey Dahmer, He will not save you.
  - a. Mr. Dahmer was a wicked man who deserved to burn in Hell.
  - b. You and I also deserve to burn in Hell.

## I. The gospel is for everyone.

### A. The gospel was an expression of God's love for all mankind.

**John 3:16-** For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

### B. The gospel is specifically for wicked people.

#### 1. The mission of Jesus was to save wicked people.

a. **Luke 5:32-** I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

b. **Luke 19:10-** For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

#### 2. Jesus died to save wicked people.

**Rom. 5: 6-10** For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. **8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.  
( *We aren't sent to seek to preach to the morally upright, but to sinners.* )

## II. God is the God of second chances.

### A. Remember our text.

#### 1. Manasseh started off as an enemy of God.

a. He rejected God and required others to do likewise.

b. **II Kgs 21: 16** - Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; besides his sin with which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

#### 2. Manasseh ended his life being a faithful servant of God.

a. God sent events of his life and preachers ( seers ) and he truly repented.

b. Manasseh tried to correct the error he had brought upon the people.

#### 3. So, the king who shed more blood than a serial killer was given a second chance.

### B. The Apostle Paul was formerly a serial killer and an enemy of the Christ.

#### 1. Few have served Christ more fervently than the Apostle Paul, formerly a killer.

#### 2. Before serving Christ, Saul served Satan by persecuting Christians.

**Acts 26: 9-11** So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **10** “And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. **11** And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

3. Like Manasseh, when given a second chance Paul made the most of it.

**C. Those who actually participated in the death of Jesus were given a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance.**

1. **Acts 2: 36 ff**

2. 3000 of them took advantage of God’s offer of mercy and pardon.

**D. Those who are now Christians were ALL once enemies of God.**

1. **I Cor. 6: 9-11** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10** nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

2. Our sins were no less repugnant to God than were the sins of these brethren.

3. Who do you know who is worse than these ? **No one is too wicked to be saved.**

### **III. There is no sin too great for God to forgive. ( If we are willing to leave it. )**

**A. The sins we commit are ALL abhorrent to our holy God.**

1. He cannot be near sin - **any sin.** ( *It’s like eating beside a dirty, stinky person.* )

2. Sin that men consider insignificant separates them from the presence of God.

3. No man lives without sin so no man has the right to judge any other.

**B. God never refuses anyone who will come to Him with a repentant heart.**

1. All men fall into one of two categories :

a. One is either unrepentant like the BTK killer. ( *Dennis Radar serving 175 yrs* )

b. Or Jeffrey Dahmer repented and serving for eternity in Heaven.

2. Everyone falls into one of those categories; there is nothing in between.

a. Our sin is just as abhorrent to God as the sins of Dahmer or Radar.

- b. God has not made a separate Hell for those we view as especially wicked.
- 3. God does not want for any to perish so He gives us opportunity to repent.  
**II Pet. 3:9-** The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. ( *Manasseh, Paul, Dahmer, me, you* )
- 4. No matter what wickedness a man commits, God will receive him if he repents.  
**James 4: 7-8** Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.  
<sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

### C. God will not save anyone IN their sins.

- 1. Not you, not me, not our children, not those we love
- 2. He uses the gospel to call people out of their sins. ( *D. B. R. of Jesus .. I Cor 15:3-5* )
  - a. **II Thes. 2: 14-** It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - b. **Remember :** **Rom. 1: 16 ...** Only the gospel has the power to save.
- 3. The opportunity to be saved ends at death or at the coming of Christ.
  - a. **Heb. 9: 27-** And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,
  - b. Jesus revealed a principle which applies to God's Judgments :  
**Matt. 24: 36-** But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

## CONCLUSION :

### A. When the Lord returns, will we be eager to see Him ?

- 1. Have we responded to the gospel call ?
  - a. Have we humbled ourselves before God confessing our faith and repenting?
  - b. Have we called on the name of Jesus by being baptized into Him.  
 ( **Acts 22:16 / Gal. 3:27** )
- 2. Will your loved ones also be happy to see him ?

### B. Will you be able to say, "I have finished the course ..."

- 1. Have you shared the gospel with your neighbors ?
- 2. The gospel is powerful enough to save them.
  - a. It saved murders.
  - b. It saved those who crucified the Son of God and it can save you.

## INVITATION :

## Lesson Texts :

### II Kings 21: 1-9

**1** Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hephzibah. **2** He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel. **3** For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. **4** He built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." **5** For he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. **6** He made his son pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and used divination, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD provoking *Him to anger*. **7** Then he set the carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever. **8**" "And I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers, if only they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them." **9** But they did not listen, and Manasseh seduced them to do evil more than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel.

### II Chronicles 33: 10-20

**10** The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. **11** Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze *chains* and took him to Babylon.

**12** When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. **13** When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

**14** Now after this he built the outer wall of the city of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance of the Fish Gate; and he encircled the Ophel *with it* and made it very high. Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah. **15** He also removed the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, as well as all the altars which he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and he threw *them* outside the city. **16** He set up the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it; and he ordered Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. **17** Nevertheless the people still sacrificed in the high places, *although* only to the LORD their God.

**18** Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh even his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are among the records of the kings of Israel. **19** His prayer also and *how God* was entreated by him, and all his sin, his unfaithfulness, and the sites on which he built high places and erected the Asherim and the carved images, before he humbled himself, behold, they are written in the records of the Hozai. **20** So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house. And Amon his son became king in his place.