

Jonah 3-4

Redemption

Jonah 3 (CSB)

Second Chances

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ² “Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach the message that I tell you.” ³ Jonah got up and went to Nineveh according to the Lord’s command.

- God’s grace. Never is God obligated to give grace. Grace is unmerited favor. Meaning...God shows us favor that is unrelated to our actions.
- God didn’t need Jonah. God could have used a different prophet. Yet, God showed grace to Jonah and gave him a second chance.

Redemption

Now Nineveh was an extremely great city, a three-day walk. ⁴ Jonah set out on the first day of his walk in the city and proclaimed, “In forty days Nineveh will be demolished!” ⁵ Then the people of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast and dressed in sackcloth—from the greatest of them to the least.

⁶ When word reached the king of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, took off his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷ Then he issued a decree in Nineveh:

By order of the king and his nobles: No person or animal, herd or flock, is to taste anything at all. They must not eat or drink water. ⁸ Furthermore, both people and animals must be covered with sackcloth, and everyone must call out earnestly to God. Each must turn from his evil ways and from his wrongdoing. ⁹ Who knows? God may turn and relent; he may turn from his burning anger so that we will not perish.

¹⁰ God saw their actions—that they had turned from their evil ways—so God relented from the disaster he had threatened them with. And he did not do it.

- In forty days and Nineveh will be “turned upside down”. The literal Hebrew phrase “turned upside down” is very interesting. Because whether the people of Nineveh repented or not...Nineveh would be “turned upside down”. Because of repentance...Nineveh was “turned upside down” spiritually.
- Jonah takes this simple message and proclaims it all around Nineveh and we clearly get to see the power of the Word of God. According to man’s standards this particular message lacked cleverness, style, depth, etc. God’s Word doesn’t need our “special touch” to pierce the hearts of man.
 - Hebrews 4:12-13 (CSB): *¹² For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ No creature is hidden from him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.*
- We see time and time again throughout Scripture that repentance is marked by people coming humbling before a Holy God.
 - The king got up from his throne (realizing God is on the throne)
 - The king took off his robe (realizing God is the King)
 - The king covered himself with sackcloth (realizing he was unworthy)
 - The king sat in ashes (realizing he was guilty and undone)

Jonah 4 (CSB)

Rejoicing or Anger?

Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious. ² He prayed to the Lord, "Please, Lord, isn't this what I said while I was still in my own country? That's why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and one who relents from sending disaster. ³ And now, Lord, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."

- Jonah is not pleased that the Nineveh people experienced the mercy of God. There could be any number of reasons for this: he personally experienced their cruelty, he hated the way they treated Israel throughout the centuries, or maybe even the fact that Israel ignored his messages but Nineveh didn't and he'd have to acknowledge that pagans are better followers of God than his own people.
- God is:
 - Gracious; compassionate; slow to anger; abounding in faithful love; forgiving.

Losing Sight of the Big Picture

⁴ The Lord asked, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

⁵ Jonah left the city and found a place east of it. He made himself a shelter there and sat in its shade to see what would happen to the city. ⁶ Then the Lord God appointed a plant, and it grew over Jonah to provide shade for his head to rescue him from his trouble. Jonah was greatly pleased with the plant. ⁷ When dawn came the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, and it withered.

⁸ As the sun was rising, God appointed a scorching east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head so much that he almost fainted, and he wanted to die. He said, "It's better for me to die than to live."

⁹ Then God asked Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "Yes, it's right!" he replied. "I'm angry enough to die!"

¹⁰ And the Lord said, "You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ So may I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which has more than a hundred twenty thousand people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, as well as many animals?"

- Unanswered. Have you ever been asked a question you knew the answer to but didn't like the answer? Jonah knew the answer to God's question: "is it right for you to be angry?" Therefore, Jonah didn't answer it and moved on. He watched the city. Many in Israel would have wanted a Sodom and Gomorrah moment here: to watch Nineveh burn.
- Answered. The next time God asks Jonah: "is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" Jonah answers yes. At this moment...God teaches him a lesson on the importance of all human life. All people (including Hitler) are created in the image of God and therefore, God cares for all people. God has labored over all people.
 - Psalm 139:13-16 (CSB): *¹³ For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well. ¹⁵ My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret, when I was formed in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began.*