

Background:

Chapter 1 – When God gets our attention (when we disobey)

Chapter 2 – Praying in the dark

Chapters 3-4 – Revival at Nineveh

OUTLINE:

3:1-4 – Jonah’s discipline leads to obedience

3:5-10 – The result of his preaching:

- Repentance
- God’s mercy

4:1-4 – Jonah’s displeasure

4:5-11 – God gets to the heart of Jonah

3:1-4 – Jonah’s discipline leads to obedience

3 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.” ³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey *in extent*. ⁴ And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”

It’s important to note that God’s discipline in Jonah’s life led to Jonah’s obedience. God is the God of second chances. And here God gives Jonah the same command and this time Jonah makes the right choice.

God loves us and He wants us to do the right thing.

- God is so gracious with us when we mess up. We may think we have blown it for good, but often times God will bring us back to the place where we came off the path so we can make that choice of obedience afresh.

ILLUSTRATION – THE KIDS PICKING UP DOG POOP

- God has a way of teaching us to walk in obedience.

Here the Lord brings Jonah once again to a place where has a choice to obey. And this time he does.

- V. 3 - ³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey *in extent*.

Now Nineveh was not only great in size (the Lord said it was more than 120,000 people – see Jonah 4:11), but it was great in its sin.

- **Jonah 1:2** - ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.”¹

As Jonah finally makes his way to the city he begins preaching:

3:4 - ⁴And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”

- You would hope Jonah’s message was longer than what was recorded here, but this records the gist of his message – Nineveh, the great city, will be overthrown.

3:5-9 – The result of his preaching:

- Repentance

⁵So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. ⁶Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes. ⁷And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. ⁸But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. ⁹Who can tell *if* God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?

I think the people of Nineveh responded the way they did because they were aware of their sin.

Q: Have you ever sinned and then tried to hide or ignore your sin? It’s always there in the back of your mind. Then maybe someone comes and confronts your sin and you just break down in repentance.

- I think that’s what happened here.

It’s God’s Word that changes people, not the preacher.

Here are a people who are ripe for judgement, but at the same time, they are also ripe for repentance. They chose to repent.

What we see here in V. 5-9 is true repentance. Note these details carefully:

- 1) They heeded the word of God – they “believed God” (V. 5)
 - They believed that God was going to destroy them because of their sin.
- 2) There was a denial of the flesh – “fasting” (V. 5)

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Jon 1:1–2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- 3) They mourned because of their sin (conviction that led to action) – “sackcloth” (V. 5)
- 4) They turned from sin – The king gave the command for every man to “turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hand” (V. 8)

APPLICATION

Q: Have we practiced true repentance?

- Are we heeding the Word of God?
- Is there a denial of our flesh?
- Have we mourned because of what we have done?
 - Do we have a conviction that has led us to take action?
- Have we turned way from our sin?

I think there are many times we fool ourselves into thinking that we have repented from sin but in reality, nothing has changed.

- The sin is still there
- We are not really convicted of sin
- We don't deny our flesh that tasty morsel of sin
- We haven't turned away from our sin

If sin is in your life today – repent. Repent with true repentance.

3:10 - God's mercy

¹⁰ Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it. Don't miss the reason why He relented – it was because “God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way”.

Let this be a good lesson for us. If we repent God is gracious and merciful and will forgive us. But if we remain in our sin, judgement is coming.

4:1-4 – Jonah's displeasure

4 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. ² So he prayed to the Lord, and said, “Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You *are* a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. ³ Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for *it is* better for me to die than to live!”

⁴ Then the Lord said, “*Is it* right for you to be angry?”

The hard truth is that Jonah didn't want to go preach to Nineveh because he knew the Lord is gracious and merciful and that Nineveh would have a chance to repent. It's sad when the people of God lose the heart of God:

⁹The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.²

-2 Peter 3:9

4:4 – ⁴Then the Lord said, “*Is it right for you to be angry?*”
The obvious answer is “no”.

I hope none of us have this selfish heart of Jonah – where we would rather see people under the wrath of God instead of repenting and experiencing His grace and mercy.

- How about you? What is your wish for that dirty politician or that wicked boss or coworker who gives you such a hard time?

4:5-11 – God gets to the heart of Jonah

⁵So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. ⁶And the Lord God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. ⁷But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. ⁸And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah’s head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, “*It is better for me to die than to live.*”

⁹Then God said to Jonah, “*Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?*” And he said, “*It is right for me to be angry, even to death!*”

¹⁰But the Lord said, “You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?³

The story ends with God trying to get to Jonah’s heart.

- It’s important for us to understand that God cares just as much about the minister as He does about the ministry. I love the heart of God that chases after His servant even after the servant has completed the task given to him.

The important lesson God is trying to teach Jonah here is that Jonah has had more pity on a soulless plant than he has on the 120,000 people of the city of Nineveh.

² [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (2 Pe 3:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Jon 3:1–4:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

APPLICATION

Is it possible that we care more about our convenience and comforts than we do about people?

- “There is nothing harder to escape than your own comfort zone.”⁴ – Skip Heitzig

The biggest miracle about this book is not that a great fish swallowed Jonah, it’s that a great revival swept through 120,000 people.

⁴ *The Bible from 30,000 Feet.*