

Five-Day Devotional • “The God Who Relents”

Day 1 — The Second Word

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh...”

— **Jonah 3:1–2 (ESV)**

The most gracious phrase in the chapter is “the second time.” God comes back to the prophet who ran, slept through the storm, and had to be thrown overboard—and hands him the mission again. God did not go looking for a better prophet while Jonah was in the fish. Grace doesn’t just forgive your past; it re-commissions you. If you’ve been sure your failure benched you for good, hear the God of the second word: get up, go again.

Pray: *Father, thank You that You come back to failures like me. Where I’ve assumed I’m disqualified, give me courage to receive Your second word. Amen.*

Day 2 — The Warning Is an Invitation

And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”

— **Jonah 3:4 (ESV)**

Eight words. No mention of mercy, no offer of escape just doom. Yet the Ninevites heard it rightly: as an open door. When God announces judgment through His Word, the announcement is itself an invitation to turn (Jer. 18:7–8). The warning is the mercy. So, when God convicts you of something, some evil in your hands, don’t hear a slammed door. Hear the God who is giving you time, saying, “Turn, and live.”

Pray: *Lord, help me hear Your warnings as invitations, not rejection. Thank You for giving me time to turn. Amen.*

Day 3 — From Throne to Ashes

The king... arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes... “Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.”

— **Jonah 3:6, 8 (ESV)**

The most powerful man in the world trades his throne for an ash heap. Repentance levels people in the ashes, the king and the servant wear the same thing. And the king understands what many religious people never learn: the sackcloth is worthless without the turning. Real repentance isn't a costume you put on; it's a direction you walk away from. What “violence in your hands” do you need not merely to grieve this week, but to actually turn from?

Pray: *Father, humble me to the ashes if that's what it takes. And let my sorrow become real turning, not just feeling. Amen.*

Day 4 — When Nineveh Repented, God Relented

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster... and he did not do it.

— **Jonah 3:10 (ESV)**

“Who knows?” the king had said, he had no promise, only hope. Now we know. God relented. Not because He changed His mind or His character, but because His unchanging mercy met a changed people. He remained exactly who He said He was: “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love” (Ex. 34:6). Relenting is not the failure of God's justice; it is the triumph of His mercy over the judgment we deserved. His mercy has a wider boundary than we're comfortable with and that is very good news.

Pray: *God who relents, thank You that Your mercy is boundless enough to reach the worst of cities—and me. Amen.*

Day 5 — You Were Nineveh

“The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment... for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.”

— **Matthew 12:41 (ESV)**

The word for God relenting over Nineveh is the same word used when He relented over Israel after the golden calf. We are not the righteous audience watching the wicked get saved. We are Nineveh, spared by the same mercy. That truth takes away our favorite seat, the high ground, and it should destroy our resentment when grace reaches people we don't like. And it points to the greater Jonah: Jesus didn't just announce the disaster; He absorbed it, so the judgment we deserved fell on Him. If His grace saved us, shouldn't our hearts burn to see it reach our enemies too?

Pray: *Jesus, greater Jonah, You absorbed the judgment I deserved. Make me glad, truly glad, when Your mercy reaches the ones I like least. Amen.*