

## **Jonah: A Tale of Three Cities**

Pastor Eddie Estep

October 1, 2023

### **Opening Discussion**

- What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

### **Thought #1: Have you ever been called to a hard place?**

Read Jonah 1:1-2

“Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.”

Pastor Eddie reminded us that Jonah was called to an incredibly HARD place.

- The Ninevites were NOT nice people.
- They were known for being cruel.
- They are foreigners.
- They are Jonah’s enemy.

And yet the Lord calls Jonah to cry out for them to repent and to be saved.

Something that goes against the way Jonah thinks and feels.

Has God ever called you to a hard place? To serve someone or a group of people who you struggle with? To show compassion when you’d rather see punishment? To offer blessings when you’d rather offer curses?

What did you learn from this assignment? What did the Lord show you through it?

Pastor Eddie stated that instead of hoping for an “easy” assignment, we should pray that God will help us do “hard” better. How has God helped you handle hard better? What areas of your life do you still struggle with serving in a “hard” place? How does

this mindset challenge the way you naturally think or feel?

### **Thought #2: Have you ever been called to a wicked or needy place?**

Nineveh was known for its sinfulness, greed, injustice, and oppression. There was much brokenness throughout their land and their people. It was understandable why Jonah wouldn’t want to visit a place like this.

But God knew that HE could bring about a difference. That there was hope for the Ninevites.

Has there been a time, either past or present, that you have carried the radical hope and optimism of grace into a wicked or needy place? How did this serve to change or shift the atmosphere? Did you see transformation come from this?

Has there been a time, either past or present, that you have struggled to carry radical hope and optimism of grace into a wicked or needy place? What did you feel was the primary obstacle to doing this? What did you learn from this experience?

### **Thought #3: Have you ever been distracted from where you’re being called?**

Read Jonah 1:3

*“But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish.”*

Jonah was called by the Lord...and he headed in the opposite direction.

Ninevah was hard...Tarshish was beautiful. Ninevah was scary...Tarshish was comfortable.

