

What will we do when God speaks?

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you." (Jonah 3:1-2 NKJV)

Failure does not have to be final, but restoration leads back to obedience.

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]. 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!" (Jonah 3:3-4 NKJV)

Obedience is not feeling sorry about the wrong direction; It's turning and walking in the right direction.

The 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 Peter 3:9 NKJV)

God's warnings are not evidence that He has abandoned us; they are evidence that He is calling us before it is too late.

So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then 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. (Jonah 3:5-6 NKJV)

When the heart truly believes, life begins to respond.

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4 NKJV)

His kindness does not encourage presumption; It breaks our pride and draws us home.

"The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah [is] here. (Matthew 12:41 NKJV)

Repentance starts when we believe God, humble ourselves, and surrender the throne of our lives.

And 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. But 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. (Jonah 3:7-8 NKJV)

Biblical repentance is more than regret, fear, tears, or religious emotion.

It is a change of mind that produces a change of direction.

He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes [them] will have mercy. (Proverbs 28:13 NKJV)

We can't ask God to remove consequences while protecting the sin that caused it.

Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:6-7 NKJV)

Repentance isn't simply turning from something; It is turning to Someone.

For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, (1 Thessalonians 1:9 NKJV)

Repentance is not proved by how badly we feel, but by the direction in which we turn.

Who can tell [if] God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? (Jonah 3:9 NKJV)

We don't come to God presenting our résumé. We come empty-handed.

"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He [is] gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. (Joel 2:12-13 NKJV)

Repentance does not demand mercy as a right; faith receives mercy as a gift.

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. (Jonah 3:10 NKJV)

Living faith produces visible fruit.

"Say to them: '[As] I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'" (Ezekiel 33:11 NKJV)

God does not delight in destruction. He delights in rescue.

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, (Acts 3:19 NKJV)

God sees genuine repentance, and in Christ He offers complete forgiveness to everyone who turns and believes.

Jonah 3 is urgent and hopeful: believe God, turn from evil, trust His mercy.