The Sermon

Welcome

Good morning!
My Name is Pastor Jonathan
And I am so grateful that each of you are here today.
Everyone is welcome at Harvey!

Opening Illustration

Now most of us in this room have ***ONE THING*** in common…
- It's that we've got a cell phone in our pocket, our purse, or somewhere near us….

And phones have been part of all of our lives for a REALLY LONG time.
- In my parents' childhood they had party lines…
  - Where neighbors all shared the same phone line…
  - Like I can't even imagine…
  - Talk about no privacy!

When I was really little…people still had rotary phones…
- Where you had to spin the dial for every number…
- Now kids just think those are baby toys…

Then I remember when I was in elementary school…I went to someone's house…and they had a cordless phone…
- Like that was uptown…they could walk from room to room with no cord…

Then when I was in middle school…
- Normal people began to get cell phones….
- You could talk on the phone anywhere at anytime…

And then the year after I graduated from college…
- our idea of the phone changed radically…
- The first iPhone came out…

But even through all this change… phones still had one thing in common…
- They receive calls.

And even today…
When the phone rings…
- You got the same choice people have always had…
- You can answer it… or you can reject it.

Now… most of us, if we reject a call…
- That's the end of it.
- If it's important, they'll leave a voicemail.
- If they really want us to see it then they'll send us a text…

But every one of us has had that ONE person…
- You hit decline… and the phone rings again.
- You hit decline again… and it rings AGAIN.

Like I remember one time…my phone was dead and I had to get ahold of Natalie…
- So I called on a borrowed phone…no answer…
- So I just kept calling…until she picked up…

Transition
In Jonah ***Chapter 1***… God called.
- And Jonah hit decline.
- In fact, he actually got up and ran the opposite direction…

But God didn't quit calling…
- God sent a storm.
- God sent a great fish.

And last week we saw Jonah went all the way to the bottom of the sea…trying to run away from the call of God…

But then…at the bottom of that sea…for the first time in the whole book… Jonah prayed…
- ***And Jonah discovered that sometimes the things that are swallowing you are actually saving you.***

He cried out… "Salvation belongs to the LORD!"
- And the LORD spoke to the fish…
- And it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

So this week… Jonah is standing on a beach…
- Smelling fishy…
- And the phone rings again.

And this time… God isn't just calling Jonah.
- He's calling a whole city.
- Nineveh.
- The cruelest and most violent people of the ancient world.

And Jonah would have been very familiar with their reputation…
In fact, he likely knew some who had been victims of the Assyrians' cruelty.

If there was ever a city that was TOO FAR GONE…
It was Nineveh.

So here's the question this morning:
IS ANYONE TOO FAR GONE FOR GOD'S MERCY?

And ***Jonah 3*** answers that question.

In fact, our big idea for today is this:

Big Idea

God's not asking how far you've gone; He's asking if you'll turn.

Transition
So if you have a copy of God's Word today, turn to ***Jonah 3***, and we'll be in ***Chapter 3***, ***vs. 1-10*** today.
I'll begin by reading ***vs. 1-4***

I. God's Word Comes Again (Jonah 3:1-4)

> ***Jonah Goes to Nineveh***
> ***3:1*** *Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying,*
> ***2*** *"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against 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, three days' journey in breadth.*
> ***4*** *Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"*

A. The Same Call, The Second Time (vs. 1–2)

In ***Chapter 3***, the story rewinds and starts over.
Jonah is right back where he started in ***Chapter 1***.

When we look at the first 3 verses of Chapter 1 and the first 3 verses of Chapter 3, it is crazy how similar they are.

In fact the only difference in ***Jonah 3:1*** and ***Jonah 1:1*** is that "the son of Amittai" is gone…
And that the word of the LORD came to Jonah "***the second time***"…
Otherwise…the verses are exactly the same…

See, Jonah's attempt to reject the call of the LORD failed…
- But still, even in his disobedience…
- We saw that God moved The Pagan sailors to cry out to Him…

And I want you to notice…what God doesn't say to Jonah…
- God doesn't say…hey Jonah…remember what you did….
- God doesn't say…hey Jonah…remember how you messed up

NO! God just gives Him the same call a second time…

Alistair Begg said this is God giving Jonah a "mulligan"…
In golf…that is a "do-over" you didn't earn….

And when I play golf…my favorite thing to hear another person say is….
"***Go ahead…hit another one***"….
Because I usually messed up the first one really bad!

But this is God giving Jonah grace…
- Just like the great fish was the mercy of God…
- Now this second call is the grace of God to Jonah!

And here's the thing…God's plan had not changed…
- God still desired His prophet to go and share the message of salvation with a people whom He desires to save!

John Calvin put it this way:
"*There is here set before us a remarkable proof of God's grace…that He was pleased to bestow on Jonah his former dignity and honor*".

And here's the thing….it's not just Jonah….
- Abraham stopped short…and God called him again…
- Moses ran into the desert…and God called him again…
- PETER…OH PETER…He denied Jesus three times! But yet Jesus still called him again!

See, our God is the God of second chances!
And not even that…
God is also the God of the 10th, the 100th, and the 1000th chances…

Hey, I wonder for you today…
- Has God called you to something…
- And you've hit decline….

The same God who called Jonah…
Called Jonah a second time….

And for you today…
The same God that maybe you've hit decline on His calling…
He's still calling you today!

I remember when God first called me to ministry…my junior year of High School…
- And I said nope…God I'm not gonna do that…

And here's the thing…I'm standing here today…because God kept calling…
- And when God calls His own…His call doesn't fail…
- I'm standing here today because our God is the God of the 1000th chances!

In fact, the longer I walk with The LORD…
The more I begin to realize…

All the ways that ***I'M NOT*** walking with the LORD…
But yet, God still is patiently walking with me!

But there's also this difficult truth…
- Just like we see with Jonah…
- God's second chances often come after He has taught us painful lessons….

Someone once said:
"*It would be a mistake to assume that there will always be a second chance to obey God's call*".

See, a second call is grace…***BUT IT'S NEVER GUARANTEED!***

H.B. Charles put it this way:
"*Obey God now, rather than learning obedience the hard way*"…

And notice in this text…
THE MISSION HASN'T CHANGED!
God said, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that GREAT city…"
- It's the same calling
- The same destination
- And the same people that Jonah didn't want to go to before…

And at the end of ***vs. 2*** …call out against it…***THE MESSAGE I TELL YOU!***
- Jonah has already learned he can't escape God's call…
- And now he is reminded that he can't change the message that God is sending him with!
  - ***It's NOT Jonah's message***
  - ***It's GOD'S MESSAGE!***

And I'd like to think…that Jonah in ***Chapter 3…while he's not got it all figured out…has figured a few things out since Chapter 1…***
- Jonah isn't walking into Nineveh as a man who's never needed mercy.
- He's walking in fresh off the beach…
- smelling like a fish…
- as living proof that God gives us second chances.

B. This time Jonah goes (vs. 3a)

In ***Jonah 1 vs. 3***, it says: "But Jonah rose to flee"…
And then in ***Jonah 3 vs. 3***, we see there's been a change in Jonah…it says: "***So Jonah arose and went***"…
THIS TIME JONAH OBEYED THE LORD!

And we don't know anything about how he left, how the trip went, or when he arrived….
- All we know is that this time…
- ***HE OBEYED THE LORD…***

Like, his call has not changed…
- The mission has not changed…
- But what has changed is ***Jonah's Response!***

God could have found a better prophet…
- One that would have obeyed the ***FIRST TIME…***
- But God used the same ordinary man…who had run away in disobedience…to walk in obedience towards Him!

Hey, in the same way FOR US TODAY…
- God is not looking for extraordinary people…
- God is looking for ordinary everyday people who will obey Him
- And ***WATCH HIM*** do extraordinary things!

And While…
- Jonah may be headed in the right direction…with his feet…
- But we're going to find out in ***Jonah 4***…that his heart hasn't caught up with his feet….

See, God is not just after Jonah's obedience…He is after Jonah's heart!

That is true for us today too!
- We can do all the right things…and God still not have captured our heart!
- We can do all the right things…and resent what it is that we are doing…

See, just like with Jonah…***FOR US TOO…***
- ***GOD DOESN'T JUST WANT YOUR FEET…***

- ***GOD WANTS YOUR HEART!***
- ***AND THE GOOD NEWS IS…HE'S THE ONE WHO GIVES NEW HEARTS!***

C. A Five-Word Sermon (vs. 3b–4)

The second half of ***verse 3*** gives us some insight about Nineveh…
- It was an exceedingly great city…
- And it took 3 days to journey across it!

This was a massive city!
- It would be like New York City or Los Angeles in our world today…
- So picture one man walking into one of these massive cities…with no plan…no organization…

Just a Word from God…

And the text tells us Jonah began to go into the city…
- But notice he didn't start preaching immediately…
- He ***didn't*** stop at the city gate where he could make a quick escape…
- But he walked all day…deep into the heart of the city, of one of the most dangerous cities on earth

AND THEN HE BEGAN TO CRY OUT

Like, can you just imagine?
Remember who Nineveh was….
- They were a terrorist nation…
- People who bragged about the depraved things they did to their enemies!
- They slaughtered and enslaved countless innocent people and oppressed the poor….
- And they were feared everywhere….

Now Nineveh was ALSO a beautiful city….
- It had beautiful gardens….
- A massive irrigation system…
- Magnificent Art….

But it was also a home to some of the cruelest people on the face of the earth at this point in time…

And in walks Jonah…
Like…can you imagine Jonah in this moment?…
- Surely he thought…God rescued me from the sea just for me to die in this moment, a cruel death…
- Surely he also knew friends or family members who had been victims of the cruel crimes of Nineveh…
- Maybe he even thought, okay, God…I'll do what you say…and then I'm gonna die at the hands of this cruel nation…

So Jonah doesn't stand at the gate where he could make a quick escape…
- He walks a whole day…right into the middle of the city…
- And opens his mouth…
- He proclaims 5 Hebrew Words…that are translated:

"***Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!***"

That's the whole sermon…
- ***FIVE HEBREW WORDS…***
- Some of you wish I would preach like Jonah….
  - No opening illustration
  - No 3 points with subpoints…
  - No closing applications…

JUST FIVE WORDS!

And here's the thing…
- Jonah's delivery style, his creativity, even the tone of his voice…wasn't the point…
- ***THE POINT WAS…IT WAS GOD'S MESSAGE PROCLAIMED!***

Nineveh…
- ***You got 40 days…***
- ***And God's judgment is coming!***
- ***You will be overthrown!***

How would they respond to God's Message and Jonah, who proclaimed it?
Let's keep reading to see in vs. 5-9

II. A City Turns (Jonah 3:5–9)

> ***5*** *And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.*
>
> ***The People of Nineveh Repent***
> ***6*** *The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.*
> ***7*** *And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water,*
> ***8*** *but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.*
> ***9*** *Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish."*

A. "The people of Nineveh believed God" (vs. 5)

Well…Would you look at what God did in ***vs. 5…***
- Jonah barely gets the words out of his mouth…
- And the people responded…

This is every Pastor's dream!

Remember the sailors back in ***Chapter 1***
- They believed in God in the middle of a great storm…
- And now the Ninevites believed in God after a single short message!

Like…Jonah is a very successful preacher for someone who has been running from God…

But look closely at what the text says…
The people of Nineveh BELIEVED GOD!
- They didn't believe Jonah…
- They believed GOD!

See, it wasn't the messenger…but it was the message ***FROM*** God that did the work….
See, each of us is called to share The Good news with people's ears… But it's ***ONLY GOD*** who ***CAN*** take that message from their ears and move it to their hearts.
It was ***GOD ALONE*** who changed the hearts of the Ninevites!

See, Jonah didn't win these people…
He simply walked in obedience…
And the LORD called ***who He wanted***, ***how He wanted***, and ***when He wanted***!

But not only that…
Look how far this message went!
"*From the greatest of them to the least of them*"
- Like the Rich ***AND*** the poor
- The Powerful ***AND*** the forgotten

THIS MESSAGE REACHED EVERYONE!

And look how they responded:
- They called a fast
- They put on sackcloth, to show they were mourning…
- And THE WHOLE CITY went into mourning…

OVER THEIR OWN SIN!

B. From the throne to the ashes (v. 6)
And not only the people repented…
BUT look at vs. 6!

The word reached the King of Nineveh…
- ***AND*** He AROSE from his throne
- He REMOVED his robe
- He COVERED himself with sackcloth…
- And he SAT in ashes….

Like, can you picture this scene?…
The highest office in the most powerful empire on the earth at this time…covered in sackcloth and sitting in ashes…
What would cause a king to leave his throne and to respond in this way?
It's ONLY The Word of GOD and THE WORK of God!

Only the work of God could cause such a feared and evil ruler…
- To remove his sign of royalty…his robe

- To cover himself in sackcloth…declaring he was not the ultimate ruler…
- ***And to sit in ashes…saying he was humbled and repenting!***

This Pagan King literally got off of his throne and sat in humility… and it was a WORK OF GOD!

In ***Jeremiah 36***, we see Jeremiah's words were read to a king of Judah…
- And every few columns, he'd take a knife…
- cut a portion of the scroll…
- and throw it in the fire.

And the Bible says: "*Neither the king, nor any of his servants, who heard all these words, were afraid.*"

But now we read about The King of Nineveh who got off his throne and sat in humility at The WORD OF GOD…

FOR US TODAY:
- Which king ***are we more like*** when God's word confronts us?
  - Are we cutting out the parts of Scripture we don't like and throwing them away in the fire…
  - Or are we getting off our thrones and falling in humility?

C. Turn from the violence in your hands (vs. 7–8)

Look at ***vs. 7***…
Not only did the king get off his throne and sit in humility…
He also made a royal decree…
- Let neither man nor beast….
  - Eat anything…
  - Or drink anything…
  - But let every human ***AND ANIMAL*** be covered with sackcloth and call out to God!

LIKE….Can you just imagine this for a moment!?
- Hey honey…
  - The Word of God came to the King…
    - And now we can't eat anything tonight…
    - We can't drink anything tonight…

    - And we gotta go put on a scratchy sackcloth…
- Oh, and there's one more thing….
    - We gotta go dress our donkeys in sackcloth and not give them any food and water either!!!

Like, this is just bizarre!!

But then again….

- Offering people who constantly disobey you and defame your name…
- The opportunity to be forgiven and live in Heaven with God forever…
- Is ***ALSO*** wonderfully bizarre…to our benefit.

Look at the rest of ***vs. 8***…it says…

- Let them call out ***mightily*** to God…
- Literally, this decree from the King is: l***et them call out with strength to God…***
    - Like…This isn't a polished prayer…
    - This is a whole lot like that prayer that Jonah just got done praying…
    - When his life was fainting away…
- ***AND THE king says…***
    - Let them call out strongly to God…

AND…

- ***LET EVERYONE TURN FROM THEIR EVIL WAYS AND VIOLENCE!***

See…
The King was calling them not only to mourn…
NOT ONLY to display their humility…
BUT ALSO TO REPENT!
AND TURN FROM THEIR EVIL WAYS!

In a lot of ways…this king was wise enough to recognize…

- That God didn't just want them ***TO LOOK*** sorry…
- God wanted them ***to actually turn*** from their sin!

And notice…The King's Message…

- The King doesn't say…***OKAY…everyone…let's try to do better…NO!***
He told them specifically WHAT they were to repent from!
The violence in their hands!

Hey Today For Us:
Our repentance should also be specific.
- It's not "Lord, I'll try to do better"….
It's a specific turning from our disobedience to God…

D. "Who knows?" (vs. 9)

Look at vs. 9
The King says something really honest…he says:
"WHO KNOWS"…GOD MAY TURN AND RELENT FROM WHAT'S COMING IN 40 DAYS!

Notice, the King ***doesn't say***…
- If we do this…
- Then God ***HAS TO*** do that…

He says…***WHO KNOWS? HE MIGHT….***

Alistair Begg wisely warned against the type of thinking where***…***
We treat repentance like a vending machine…
"If we do this…then God is bound to do that"…

That's not how God works…
- The King didn't deserve mercy…and he knew it….
- Jonah didn't deserve mercy….
- And we don't deserve mercy….

Remember back in ***Chapter 1***…The Pagan Captain said something really similar….
- Perhaps…God will give a thought to us…that we may not perish…
- Now the Pagan king says…Who knows…maybe God will turn and relent…so that we may not perish…

See…The Pagan sailors…and the Pagan king…
- ***They got it!***

- ***They cried out to a God they barely knew…***
- ***WITH JUST a hope that God MIGHT have mercy!***

And all they had was a "who knows"…

HEY TODAY:
We have much more than a "***Who Knows***"…
We have a King…WHO WE CAN KNOW…
Who offers us grace and mercy!
When we're undeserving of it!
Let's keep reading as we finish this out in vs. 10

III. God Turns (Jonah 3:10)

> ***10*** *When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.*

A. God Saw What They Did (vs. 10a)

Verse 10 says…***WHEN GOD SAW WHAT THEY DID…***
When God saw ***HOW THEY TURNED FROM THEIR EVIL WAY!***
- Not the sackcloth…
- Not the ashes…

BUT HOW THEY TURNED FROM THEIR EVIL WAYS…

Now this ***DOES NOT*** mean that Nineveh ***EARNED*** God's mercy!
Their repentance ***WAS*** the ***EVIDENCE*** that God was at work in their lives!
But God's Mercy is something freely given…that we are undeserving of….

In the same way, we see in ***Romans 2:4*** that while God's judgment rightly falls…***God's kindness and forbearance and patience are MEANT to lead us to repentance!***

God was patient with them…
God was KIND with them…
HE GAVE THEM 40 days to repent…
And HIS KINDNESS WAS MEANT TO LEAD THEM TO REPENTANCE!
They didn't EARN HIS KINDNESS OR HIS MERCY!

God's Mercy is always FREE…
BUT God's MERCY IS ALWAYS GOD's TO GIVE…
- ***Not for us to EARN***
- ***AND NOT FOR US TO DEMAND…***

But it's HIS FREE GIFT!

B. God Relented (vs. 10b)

The end of vs. 10 tells us:
So God relented from the disaster that He had said he would do to them…

And you may be thinking…
- Well….did God just change his mind…
- No, God did not change…
- NINEVEH's the one that Changed!

An old preacher named ***O.S. Hawkins*** told a story one time:
- He was walking down a street in Chicago…the Windy City…
  - And he was walking straight into the wind…
  - It was blowing so hard…it was difficult to walk and was slowing him down…
- Then he turned around and started walking in a different direction…
- And that same wind was now pushing him and causing him to walk faster…

Hawkins said:
"*The wind didn't change, I just changed the direction I was going*"…

That's a good picture of Jonah 3:10
- When Nineveh was walking in violence…God's Holiness was against them…
- However, when Nineveh turned…they found that same Holy God…Who is slow to anger and abounding in mercy…was now pushing them in the right direction…
- They weren't going against Him…now they were going with Him!
- God didn't change directions…
- Nineveh did!

See, God didn't change…
- God often speaks in a way we can understand.

- And from where we stand…sometimes it LOOKS like God changed.
- But what actually changed…was them.

And the warning from God was actually the very tool that God used to bring them to repentance…
- The warning was God's kindness!

SEE God never changes.
- God has always been holy…and He will always judge sin.
- And God has always been merciful…and He will always receive sinners who turn.

That's not God changing His mind…
That's God being exactly who He's always been.

C. Where The Wrath Went

And since God is Holy…
And since Nineveh was guilty…
Then what happened to The Judgement?

God didn't just sweep Nineveh's sin under the rug…
- God doesn't just set His justice aside.
- The wrath Nineveh deserved…the wrath WE deserve…had to be paid for
- ***And at the cross, God poured it out on His own Son JESUS CHRIST***
- That's how God can be both "***just and the justifier***" of sinners who turn to Jesus…like ***Romans 3:26*** says…

See, hundreds of years later…
Jesus Christ stood before a crowd that had seen him heal the sick and raise the dead…
And they ***STILL*** demanded a sign…
And Jesus said in ***Matthew 12:41***
The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.
So how much more should we now repent…
When the Son of God Himself has come…died…been buried…and has risen again?

Today…
Won't you repent…
God's not asking how far you've gone; God's asking if you'll turn.

Transition
So is anyone too far gone for God's mercy?
If God would show mercy to Nineveh…
- The most violent city on earth…
- Then no one is too far gone.

God's not asking how far you've gone…
He's asking if you'll turn.

Next week we'll find out one person who wasn't happy about this at all…
Jonah 4:1 says But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.
The whole city repented…and the preacher was mad about it.
We'll pick up there next week.

But for today…
I have just a few applications for us from God's Word.

Applications

1. Trust And Obey…There Is No Other Way

There's an old hymn that I grew up singing…
"***Trust and obey, for there's no other way***
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

AND Jonah had to learn this the hard way…
- In ***Chapter 1***, Jonah didn't trust ***AND*** he didn't obey…
- It took a great storm and the great fish in ***Chapter 2*** to move him to obedience
- And in ***Chapter 3…*** we saw that Jonah went…according to the word of The Lord…

And when Jonah finally started walking in obedience…
Look what God did with his obedience…
- Five words of a sermon…

- AND A whole city Repented and called out to The LORD!

And here's the thing…Jonah didn't do that…
- Jonah's heart wasn't even all the way there yet…
- And yet, God still worked ***THROUGH*** Jonah's obedience!

Hey For Us Today:
- We may never know what God might do through our obedience…

When we looked at The Book of Ruth…we saw that Ruth just did the next right thing…

Hey, in your life…
What is the next right thing that God is calling you to walk to in obedience?
- Is it inviting someone to church?
- Is it finally having that conversation about The Lord with someone?
- Is it surrendering to a call to ministry or missions in your life?
- Is it to begin mentoring someone younger in the faith than you?

What is the next right thing that God is calling you to walk to in obedience?

I don't know about you…
- But I always want to see the full picture of what God is calling me to and how it's going to turn out…***BEFORE I DO IT…***

But here's what I've learned in following Jesus…
- God rarely shows us the whole picture…
- But when we take that next step of obedience…
- God can do far more abundantly through our lives and in our lives than we could ever ask or imagine…
- Just that next ordinary step of obedience…

When I was just 22…God was clearly leading me to the next right step of obedience in leaving Mississippi and moving to Texas to go to seminary in Fort Worth…

Then when I got here, the next right step was working part-time at a church in Midlothian…

And in that church, God placed in my path Godly mentors…
- God let me meet a beautiful young lady that became my wife…
- God placed in my path friendships and connections that are still part of my life today and are very much part of the reason I'm standing here today…

I couldn't see the whole picture then…
All I could see was the next ordinary step of obedience…

Hey In Your Life:
What is God's next step of ordinary obedience that you need to take?

Don't be like Jonah…
Don't let it take a storm for God to get your obedience…

BUT YOU Trust and obey…for there is no other way…
To be <u>SATISFIED</u> in Jesus…than to trust and obey…

2. Repent of What You're Holding On To

In our story…
Remember…
The king of Nineveh didn't say, "***HEY Everybody try to be a little better***."
He said: "***EVERYBODY turn from your evil ways and drop the violence that is in your hands"***

See the people of Nineveh were holding on to something…
- And the King was telling them…
- You can't call out to God with arms outstretched
- When you're already holding something else in your hands…

Hey, For You Today…
- What is it that you're holding in your hands…
- That's keeping you from reaching out fully with outstretched hands to God??
  - Is it anger that you keep excusing…
  - Is it something you've been consuming on your screens?
  - Is it a grudge against a family member or friend?

- Is it an addiction…an idol that you've never called an idol…

And here's the thing…
- We can feel sorry…
- We can mourn our sin…

ALL WHILE STILL HOLDING ON TO THAT THING IN OUR HANDS!

Psalm 24:3-4 says:

> ***3*** *Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?*
> *Or who may stand in His holy place?*
> ***4*** *He who has clean hands and a pure heart,*
> *Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol…*

And if we're honest… none of us has clean hands.
- There's ***ONLY ONE*** who ever ascended that hill with clean hands and a pure heart…***and that's Jesus***.
- So we don't open our hands to earn our way up the hill…
- We open our hands to receive what only He can give.

God's not looking for a perfect people…
But our God is a jealous God…
- ***WHO IS*** looking for men and women who will cast down their idols
- Who will let go of what it is they're holding on to…
- And fully stretch out and reach for Him…

And I'm not just preaching to y'all…
I'm preaching to myself too…

What would it look like for us….
- To quit trying to cling to God with one hand
- While we're holding onto something else with a death grip with the other hand…

What would it look like for us…
- To fully cast those things down and cling completely to King Jesus!?

Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to thy cross I cling;

What would it look like for us…

- To fully turn towards Jesus and follow Him?

And sometimes letting go of those things is a process….
- Letting go of that addiction
- Letting go of that grudge

So maybe today your plea to The Lord is…
- God help me!
- Help me let go of all the things I've been clinging to for years… except for you….

In a moment…
- You can come down front…
- And you can cast that IDOL down to The Lord…

In a moment…
- You can come down front…
- And you ask God to help you open your hands…so you can let go of those things…

We've lost the practice of doing business with God in this room… in this moment….
- But if God has pierced your heart today…
- Then don't walk out of here still holding on to that thing…
- But come lay it down…

Repent of what it is you've been holding on to…
Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to thy cross I cling;

3. Call On The Name of The Lord

In our story today…
The king of Nineveh stood in the ashes and said…
"*Who knows? God may turn and relent…*"
That was all that King had.
- ***WHO KNOWS…***

But today…
You and I don't have to say…"Who knows"…
Because God sent One greater than Jonah!

And we've been given this promise in ***1 John 1:9:***
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!

Not WHO KNOWS…BUT HE WILL!
For Us Today…
- We can call out and ***KNOW***
- That our assurance doesn't rest on how good our repentance is…
- It rests on how faithful ***JESUS IS!***

Here's what the whole of the bible tells us:
GOD IS HOLY.
In the beginning, God created all things, and He alone is perfect.
HUMANS ARE SINFUL.
All the way back with Adam and Eve, humans sinned..and ALL OF US HAVE fallen short of the glory of God. We've all sinned.
THIS CREATES A PROBLEM.
Because our sin separates us from a good and perfect God, in this life and the next. And we are deserving of the full weight of God's Wrath! Therefore, we need help! We need a rescuer! We need a redeemer!
JESUS IS THE ANSWER.
But God, Who is rich in mercy…did not leave us without a Redeemer. God loved us so much that He sent us His only Son, Jesus Christ, who came to Earth as a baby.
He was and IS fully God and fully man.
And Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life here on Earth, yet He ***willingly went to the cross*** and ***really died*** for your sins and my sins.
Three days later, He ***really rose from the grave,*** defeating sin and death!

SO THAT TODAY…
We don't have to remain separated from God, but we can have a ***Redeemer*** named Jesus Christ!
If we turn from our sins, confess Jesus Christ as ***BOTH LORD AND SAVIOR***, and follow Him in faith, then we can and will be saved from our sin that separates us from a Holy God.

So my question for you this morning is simply this:
- Why not cry out to Jesus for salvation?

If you are not a follower of Jesus Christ this morning, would you trust Him today?
And would you cry out to Him and repent…

Remember that person who wouldn't stop calling?
- God is calling again this morning.
- Don't hit decline.

If the Ninevites weren't too far gone…
- ***Neither are you…***

God's not asking you how far you've gone…He's asking you to turn from your sin and turn towards Him…

You can come see me or any of our church members as we sing this last song…
- After this service…
- Or through out the week…

But don't walk out of here without ***CRYING OUT TO THE ONE WHO IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE YOU OF YOUR SINS!***

If you ARE a follower of Jesus Christ…
- What do you need to cast down to Him today?

Let's do business with The Lord today!

Big Idea

God's not asking how far you've gone; He's asking if you'll turn.

Church, I Love You.
Let's Pray.