

003 How To Make A Missionary

Jonah 2:1-10

January 15, 2023

As you know we are in the middle of our “Missions Month”
And you know that we are studying the negative example of Jonah.
Jonah is clearly a terrible missionary.

BUT if you’ve read the entire book of Jonah
You know that Jonah becomes
The most successful Old Testament missionary ever.

God takes this terrible missionary and yet uses him
To lead a city to repentance and to save them from judgment.

Somewhere in the story of Jonah we need to see THE TURNING POINT.

- We need to see what God did in his life that turned this wayward prophet into an ambassador for God.

Chapter 2 of the book of Jonah is that explanation.
Jonah 2 is where God makes a missionary out of Jonah.

That is important for God seeks to make a missionary out of all of us

WELL LET’S START HERE:

There are perhaps MANY REASONS WHY people fail to be the missionary God requires.

- I know we hear “fear” as the excuse quite often; most specifically fear of failure, but also fear of travel, fear of people, etc.
- I know there is often a feeling of inadequacy that runs through people’s minds when they contemplate a missionary call. Namely that I don’t know enough or something like that.
- Maybe there are issues of an unwillingness to suffer or leave behind comforts, maybe there are money issues, etc.

We hear a lot of different reasons and excuses
For people’s failure to participate in God’s Great Commission.

But if you look at the book of Jonah and you hear God’s explanation
As to why people fail to participate in the Great Commission,
God seems to expose a deeper and honestly more concerning reason.

If you read the book of Jonah and see it as God’s word
Then there is really ONE main reason why people
Don’t participate in the Great Commission.

A LACK OF MERCY

For all the problems of Jonah, this is really THE glaring problem
That GOD IS MOST CONCERNED about exposing and correcting.

You will not and you cannot be the missionary God commands
If you lack mercy.

We think just for a moment of the GREAT MISSIONARIES in the Bible.

Listen to Paul for a second:

Romans 9:1-3 "I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,"

- That is a guy who is willing to go to hell if it would save his Jewish brothers.
- And indeed Paul experienced what many would consider to be "hell on earth" as he sought to win them.

We remember Paul's friends trying desperately to get Paul
Not to go to Jerusalem where they knew he was hated.

Paul responded:

Acts 21:13 "Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

- Paul's heart was filled with mercy.
- And more specifically it was overwhelmed with the mercy and glory of Jesus.

Certainly this true of God's heart.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

Or we think of the obvious mercy of Jesus.

Luke 5:27-32 "After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me." And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him. And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Or

Luke 19:1-10 "He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Jesus is concerned about the people that everyone else overlooked.
And not just overlooked, but disdained.

Jesus cared about the people that other people despised.
Jesus cared about the people that other people overlooked.

JONAH IS JUST THE OPPOSITE.

I was listening to John MacArthur talk about Jonah this week and he called Jonah a RACIST. (That's actually pretty fitting)

Jonah is like the Pharisees of the New Testament
Who had no mercy or compassion.
And is out of touch with God's heart

We think of the famous Luke 15 (Lost coin, Lost sheep, Lost son)

You are aware WHAT PROMPTED those stories from Jesus.

Luke 15:1-2 “Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

Those stories were given by Jesus
As a direct confrontation to the heart that had no mercy.

The Pharisee heart, like Jonah's, was a heart that beats out of rhythm.
They hated it when sinners got saved and that is nothing like God's heart.

Luke 15:7 “I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

Luke 15:10 “In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

But that was certainly NOT the Pharisee, or Jonah.
As we have said many times already, they were that older brother.

Luke 15:25-32 “Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. “And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. “And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.’ “But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. “But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’ “And he said to him, ‘Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. ‘But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.’”

A lack of mercy will absolutely kill your missionary zeal.
If you are able to rationalize that people do not deserve mercy
Then it is not surprising if you don't offer it.

WELL, THAT WAS JONAH.

We remember from studying chapter 1:

- Jonah hated sinners
- Jonah hated the gospel (because it offers mercy to sinners)
- Jonah hated God (because He relents concerning judgment)
- Jonah was disobedient – God said “Go”, Jonah refused.
- Jonah was disconnected – Even pagans had to tell him to pray
- Jonah was delusional – Thought himself to be a God-fearer
- Ultimately Jonah was a self-righteous man with no mercy.
- He would rather drown than see the Ninevites receive the message of the gospel.

SO, GOD IS ABOUT TO TEACH MERCY TO JONAH

You remember LAST WEEK that the sailors threw Jonah into the sea
And God appointed “a fish to swallow Jonah”.

Interestingly enough

- The word for “fish” in the book of Jonah is NOT the Hebrew word for “whale”.
- For all we know God created a special sea creature just for the purpose of swallowing Jonah.
- The New Testament calls it a “sea monster”. (Matt 12:40)

And yet, what you will see is that this “fish”
Became a first-hand account of God's mercy to Jonah.

So let's work through chapter 2 and see how God makes a missionary.

#1 JONAH'S EDUCATION

Jonah 2:1-7

What we learn in the first verse of chapter 2 is that
God had a great lesson to teach Jonah
And by the time we get to chapter 2 Jonah has **ALREADY LEARNED** it.

(1) "Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish,"

What you will notice is that this prayer is one of thanksgiving.

- Jonah does not see the fish as a trial to be delivered from.
- Jonah saw the fish as deliverance.

God saved his life with that fish.

That means that the education of Jonah
Actually occurred between verses 15 and 17 of chapter 1.

God educated Jonah in the sea.
And the main course curriculum was mercy.

When you think of **MISSIONARY TRAINING** you might be tempted to think of subjects like:

- Gospel familiarity (theological)
- Cultural Issues (about the nations)

But if a missionary never learns mercy
His theology and knowledge of the nations won't help him much.

Jonah is being educated in mercy.
Let's see how God does it.

1) DISTRESS

You notice that Jonah's distress is **NOT** the fish.
Jonah's distress was the sea.

You notice that now in the belly of the fish, Jonah is speaking in **PAST TENSE**.

- (2a) "I called out of my distress..."
- (2c) "I cried for help from the depth of Sheol;"
- (3) "For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, and the current engulfed me. All Your breakers passed over me."
- (5-6a) "Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head. I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever."
- (7a) "While I was fainting away..."

So you get a picture of Jonah's distress.

- He had been thrown overboard and he began to sink.
- He was sinking in the sea, with the seaweed around his head and the roots of the mountains in view.
- The weight of the sea crushing him.
- Jonah had but a few moments before he would die.

It was absolute distress.
It is what we call a "near death" experience.

What was Jonah learning?
JONAH WAS LEARNING ABOUT THE SEVERITY OF JUDGMENT

Sometimes in our witnessing
We encounter people who seem to have no fear of hell.

The only reason that is the case is because
They have no accurate concept of hell.

Mark 9:43-48 "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. "If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. "If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED."

Jesus was clear that you'd be better off to gouge out your eye
Or cut off your hand than to go to hell.
You don't want to go to hell.

But many lost people have no accurate understanding of hell
And so they don't fear it.

But this can be a problem for the missionary too.

When a missionary loses touch with the reality of judgment
He will stop caring about saving men from it.

James Hudson Taylor said:

"Would that God would make hell so real to us that we cannot rest; Heaven so real that we must have men there."
https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/7871218.Hudson_Taylor

Jonah had no problem with the Ninevites falling into the hands of God.
Jonah had forgotten just how terrible that would be.

So God reminds him here.

- Jonah gets a few seconds of a taste of God's judgment.
- Jonah was granted the privilege of staring death in the face.
- Jonah experienced distress

2) DESPERATION

This is obvious.

Jonah may have had a low view of the severity of judgment
But it only took a few seconds to realize how awful it is.

And Jonah started crying out for help!

- (2a) "I called out of the my distress to the LORD"
- (2c) "I cried for help"
- (4) "So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.'"
- (7b) "I remembered the LORD"

Just moments earlier,

- Jonah had been content to flee from God
- He would rather drown than see the Ninevites warned.
- Under the heavy hand of God's judgment and Jonah has changed his tune.

He has decided that mercy is a good thing.

And what a blessing to know that
We are promised mercy when we call on Him.

Romans 10:13 “for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Jonah remembered that too, and was eager to act upon it.

Jonah was a missionary who saw no need for mercy,
But it didn't take God long to change his tune.

Jonah is granted distress so that he might be moved to desperation.

3) DELIVERANCE

Again, the sea is the judgment, the fish is the deliverance.
And from the fish, we see how Jonah prays.

- (2b) “I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.”
- (7c) “I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple.”
- (6) “I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.”

God delivered Jonah.
God showed mercy to Jonah.

Jonah was first allowed to feel the sting of judgment
So that he would also be allowed to feel the relief of salvation.

I think of that prodigal...

Luke 15:22-24 “But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

What a blessing that was, and what a wonderful feeling!

We think of that woman caught in adultery...

John 8:10-11 “Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”

Again, what a relief!

- To be dead to rights in sin.
- To be condemned clearly by the Law.
- To be facing sure and certain judgment.

And then to be spared by nothing but pure mercy!
WHAT A JOY!

Jonah was just educated.

- He learned the severity of judgment,
- The availability of God
- And the joy of mercy.

All of those things are necessary things for a missionary to know.

Jonah's Education

#2 JONAH'S DEDICATION

Jonah 2:8-9

After being reminded of mercy
We now see how Jonah has CHANGED HIS TUNE.

(8) "Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness"

That verse has some depth to it.

ON ONE HAND there is the theological reality
THAT THERE IS SALVATION NOWHERE BUT IN GOD.

As Jonah sank in that sea

- He could have called on any number of the pagan deities.
- He could have cried out to the sailors to throw him a rope.
- He could have relied on the advice of his childhood swim instructor.

But the reality is none of them could even hear him, let alone help him.

As Jonah faced judgment the exclusivity of God
As the only Savior become abundantly clear to him.

There was only One who could save him at that point.
IT WAS GOD.

Isaiah 43:10-13 "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. "I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me. "It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And I am God. "Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"

Isaiah 45:5-7 "I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these."

John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Jonah was emphatically reminded while he sank in the sea
That there is only One Savior.

What does that mean in terms of missions?

Without the knowledge of the One True God
The Ninevites will never receive mercy.
You can't know mercy apart from God.

AND TODAY.

There is no mercy in Islam – Allah cannot grant mercy.
There is no mercy in Buddhism – Buddha cannot grant mercy.
There is no mercy in Mormonism – Joseph Smith or their fake Jesus cannot grant mercy.

Jonah saw the value of mercy and he was filled with the conviction that
IT ONLY COMES FROM ONE SOURCE.

A missionary should certainly know that.

If you care about mercy then you care about the gospel
Because that is the only place where genuine mercy exists.

BUT ON THE OTHER HAND Verse 8 is NOT JUST a theology verse.

Jonah says, "Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness"

For Jonah that is also a statement of repentance.
Jonah had been unfaithful to God because Jonah had been idolatrous.

No, I don't think Jonah worshiped pagan gods.

- I think Jonah sought to distort the true God.
- Jonah wanted to make God someone who had no mercy.
- And a false view of God is idolatry.

Jonah is now confessing that mercy only comes from God
And He doesn't deserve hatred for that mercy,
He deserves glory for it.

Jonah fled from God and that was wrong.
God deserves Jonah's faithfulness.

And that is what he promises.

(9) "But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."

I told you I question the legitimacy of Jonah's salvation in chapter 1,
And if he was not saved, this is where salvation occurred.

Saved or not, JONAH HAS NOW REPENTED
And is once again committed to the LORD.

This is the necessary repentance for any of us

- Who have lost our sense of mercy
- And failed to obey God's mandate to share the gospel with the world.

There is no other way to say it.

- If you are not obeying the Great Commission...
- If you are not sharing the gospel with anyone...
- You are in violation of the agreement you made at salvation.

When we are saved we confess Jesus as Lord.
We submit our lives to Him and commit to follow and obey Him.

If you said you would do that, but you have not done that
Then repentance is necessary.

You see that here in Jonah.

- God reminded Jonah of the value of mercy.
- And Jonah has determined that God should be glorified for such mercy.

God is the Savior and the world must know this.
That is Jonah's new DEDICATION.

Jonah's Education, Jonah's Dedication
#3 JONAH'S RELOCATION
Jonah 2:10

What a great picture!

The whole time Jonah was in that fish pouring out his heart to God,
That fish was already swimming to Nineveh.

God never changed His mind about the mission to the Ninevites

When Jonah refused to go,

- God DIDN'T just say, "Oh well I guess the Ninevites will never hear the warning."
- God determined that the Ninevites would hear it
- God determined that Jonah would share it.

And that is what is happening.

- And after Jonah went through a crash course on missionary training
- God recommissioned him
- And the fish "vomited Jonah up onto the dry land."

YOU SEE NOW THE PROGRESSION OF THE STORY.

1. Jonah was a missionary who hated the lost, hated the gospel, and hated God. He was a missionary who lacked mercy.
2. God has now changed his tune by granting him the second chance that he did not deserve.

And Jonah is now ready to obey God.

This is important for us to grasp.

In Scripture, one's propensity to offer mercy

Is directly related to one's appreciation for having received mercy.

To put it another way.

Show me someone who has no mercy,

And I'll show you a self-righteous person who has never cried out for it.

There is a link between having received mercy and then offering it.

Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."

Matthew 6:12 "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

We remember that story of the king who forgave his slave only to watch that slave refuse to extend mercy to his fellow slave.

Matthew 18:33 "'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?'"

Luke 6:35-36 "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

And we are forced to wonder:

If we don't offer mercy, have we really ever received it?

SO THIS MORNING

As we seek to be the missionaries that God has called us to be,

We are going to remind ourselves of our tremendous need of mercy
That it may inspire us to offer it as well.

I would start with:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

We are reminded there of a specific list of the types of sins
That God does not condone.

Sexual immorality – Idolatry – Adultery – Homosexuality – Theft – Coveting – Drunkenness – Reviling - Swindling

Do you find yourself on that list anywhere?
Are any of those sins indicative of your life?

I know we tend to read that list like homosexuality is the only one on there,

- But what about when you lusted for that women?
- What about when you saw an advertisement on the internet and you coveted something?
- What about when you got drunk?
- What about when you talked about that person behind their back?

Those are ALL sins of which God sends people to hell.

"Such were some of you...

"but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

You did not deserve mercy but God gave it to you.

Perhaps we read:

Romans 5:6-11 "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

The words there are:

"helpless" - "ungodly" - "sinners" - "enemies"

Do you know that is what we were?

We were very much like Jonah, helplessly sinking in our sin and not deserving of any mercy at all.

- We were antagonistic to the call of God.
- We were disobedient to Him.
- And we deserved judgment.

But He saved us.

He sent His Son to forgive us.

How about:

Titus 3:3-7 "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

"foolish" – "disobedient" – "deceived" – "enslaved to various lusts and pleasures" – "malice" – "envy" – "hateful"

But God saved us.
God showed us mercy.

Do you recognize that in your life?

- Do you remember the weight of your guilt before God?
- Do you remember that fear of judgment?
- Do you remember the terrors of hell?
- Do you remember how disgusted you were with your filth?
- Do you remember how badly you wanted out?

And do you remember how Jesus rescued you?

- How He forgave you?
- How He delivered you out?
- How He set you free?

Do you remember the mercy you received?

Then your cry ought to be the same as Jonah's

"Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."

This morning we are going to partake in the Lord's Supper
Because we need to be reminded of what Jesus Christ did for us.

We need to be reminded that

- He answered the call to leave the comfort and glory of Heaven to go to a place of filth and sin where He would be hated, maligned, and killed.

SO WHERE WILL YOU NOT GO?

We need to be reminded that

- When He came He never stopped offering mercy, even to those who sought to kill Him.

SO WHEN WILL YOU STOP OFFERING MERCY?

We need to be reminded that

- He fulfilled the requirement we had neglected and suffered the wrath that we deserved so that He might save those who hated Him.

SO WHAT WILL YOU NOT DO FOR HIM?

We need to remember that He did this for us.

And may such a reminder motivate us
To share His mercy with the world like He has commanded us to.

As always, we're going to have A Time Of Preparation to examine ourselves and then we'll partake of the table of the Lord.