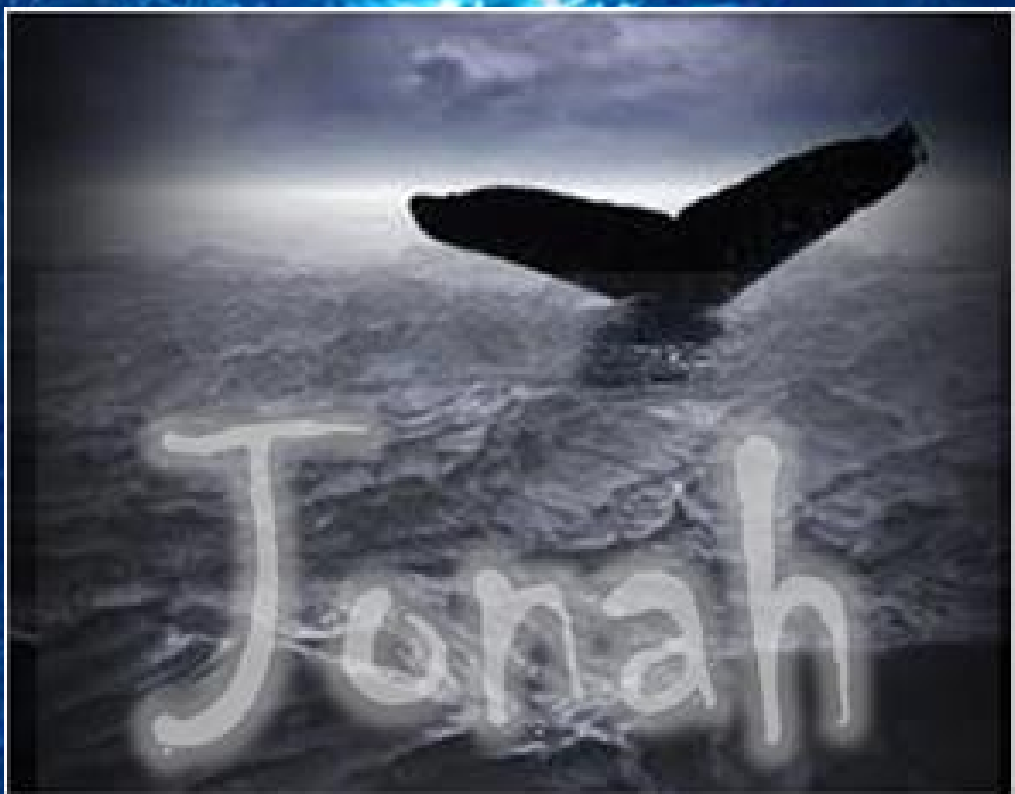


Jonah Missions

"God's Heart for the Nations"



May is Missions Month

From the Pulpit Ministry of Christ E Free Church

May & June 2016

Jesus Christ

Our Highest Calling
Our Greatest Purpose
Our Soul's Source and Joy
And Our All Consuming Passion

“Wherever there is a lost soul,
there is a need for a missionary.”

“We are all missionaries, everywhere we go,
everything we do,
to everyone we meet.”

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"Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you *all the families of the earth* shall be blessed."

--Genesis 12:1-3 ESV

INTRODUCTION

Probably the last thing a person is likely to think about in connection with the Old Testament is a missionary message to the Gentiles and the nations of the world.

"...all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you [Abraham]." -Genesis 12:3

This is the earliest statement of the fact that it will be God's purpose and plan to see that the message of his grace and blessing comes to every person on planet earth. The message did not begin there. The basis for it, in fact, went all the way back to Genesis 3:15, as will be seen shortly, but in Genesis 12:3 it found its most succinct declaration.

-Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *Mission in the Old Testament*

If anything, Jonah is a manual on missions. It is not, however, a "How To" kind of manual, but more of a "This is What **NOT** to Do!" kind of manual. Jonah is an example for us^[1Cor.10:11] to learn from, which if taken to heart, will cause us to examine our own inner thoughts on missions, evaluate our own attitudes toward those who are still outside God's family and to allow God to search us, and change us if need be, into faithful servants of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even to the most repulsive and detestable of intended recipients.

The book of Jonah will open the reader's heart to trust God for great supernatural movements of God's Spirit, as we respond to His call for us. It will invoke in us, a measure of faith to step out to the most unlikely mission field, with energy and excitement at what God may want to do and how He may be planning to use us.

At the end, we realize that we are not the superstars in the history of missions, God is. We are not to be the celebrities in reaching the world, but God is. Success does not depend on how well one might speak, sing, preach, or lead. What matters is whether or not each and every one of us are dedicated to the will of God in our own lives, responding to and obeying His call for us in Christian service, and eager to see even the worst of sinners cleansed by the blood of the Lamb and born again into the family of God, thus becoming our own brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers in the Lord.

Missions or perhaps as Kaiser argues, "Mission" (singular) is a single, far-reaching principle, or an age-old, over-arching Divine mission from the beginning of Biblical history to its end. Mission is the revelation of the heart of God expressed toward the nations,

through the message of His Son, through the obedience of us as His servants.

Take your place in Christian History, for the ending has not yet been written. How we live, what we do, who we reach with that good news will be part of God's eternal plan and will one day be fully revealed in eternity future. There, we will rejoice at His feet, side by side with those who are there, through God's workings, through our obedience.

Now turn the page and step into church history with me.



JONAH CHAPTER 1

Jonah 1 (ESV) (1) Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, (2) "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." (3) But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. (4) But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. (5) Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. (6) So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish." (7) And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. (8) Then they said to him, "Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" (9) And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." (10) Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence

of the LORD, because he had told them. (11) Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. (12) He said to them, "Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you." (13) Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. (14) Therefore they called out to the LORD, "O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you." (15) So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. (16) Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. (17) And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

"Jonah & Missions"

--What ***NOT*** to Do!--

Text: Jonah ch.1

May 8 & 15, 2016

Theme: "God's Heart and the heart of Missions."

"Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me."

--Jonah 1:1-2 ESV

We often attempt to give good advice, in hopes
of compensating for our bad examples.

—Anonymous

INTRODUCTION

I was recently talking with a man about his new job and he mentioned that he was praying that it would work out to be a real outreach opportunity for him. I wanted to shout for joy! That is what all Christians should think and pray for in their employment.

I believe every Christian has the opportunity to be a missionary – everywhere they go, in everything they do, to everyone they meet. And this must include, the workplace.

You are alive, because God has a plan to use you, wherever He has placed. As we read the book of Jonah, we are not given any introductory personal information about him. The name, Jonah, is mentioned 18 times in the book, indicating that it is not an autobiography but that someone is writing the story, that was centered around him.

Both 2 Kings 14:25 and Mat.12:29 state that Jonah was a real person and was also a prophet of God. And with that back ground information, Jonah begins.

The book of Jonah is about obedience and disobedience in the life of God's people. Its about missions. And Missions is about God's Heart and God's People working together to reach the world.

That means responding to God's call to serve Him, participating in His plan, and carrying His message, that others might know and worship Him.

Characters: Jonah, men on board the ship, inhabitants of Nineveh, the fish, and ah, oh yes, **GOD**. And unless we be mistaken, the fish is not the focus of the story, but God is.

As we think about Missions, it is important that we view it as, not just about reaching and saving the lost, but about expanding the glory and worship of God, both nearby and far, far away.

When we think of Missions, we probably think of Jesus' Great Commission in Mat.28, or Paul's missionary journeys in the book of Acts. We may think of the birth of the New Testament Church following Pentecost. But Mission has never been merely a NT

concept. On the contrary, Missions has always been a global purpose even in the OT. Here are a few passages of Scripture to support that.

Gen 12:3 ESV I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you *all the families of the earth* shall be blessed."

This is an early reference to God's Promise of bringing a Messiah for the salvation of the world.

Psa 22:27 ESV *All the ends of the earth* shall remember and turn to the LORD, and shall worship before you.

Psa.67:2 that your way may be known *all the families of the nations* on earth, your saving power among **all nations**.

Psa.72:11 May **all** kings fall down before him, **all nations** serve him!

Psa.72:17 May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! *May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed!*

So, we might view God's call upon Jonah as purely a mission calling, with purely a mission or salvation purpose, which is in agreement with the whole of Scripture. Jonah has a lesson for each of us, so let's get started.

The book of Jonah begins with...

GOD'S CALL FOR JONAH'S MISSION (1:1-2)

* This was Jonah's opportunity to participate in God's greater plan of saving the world.

Jon 1:1-2 ESV Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, (2) "¹Arise, ²go to Nineveh, that great city, and ³call out against it, for *their evil has come up before me.*"

Here is the call of God extended to Jonah. His call was to be a prophet, not to call God's people to repent, as did most of Gods' prophets in the Old Testament, but to announce the coming judgment of God upon the wicked inhabitants of the wicked city of Nineveh.

"their evil has come up before me." Take note:

Gen 4:10 ESV And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.

Gen 18:20 ESV Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,

The sin of the Ninevites is personified – as though it had a voice to declare its presence. "Their sin has come up before me"(v2). It is the idea that the sin of Nineveh is "in God's face" and is un-ignorable. Until this point, their sin has gone unaddressed by God, but it has not gone unnoticed. And now is the time God has chosen to take action in addressing that sin.

Question #1: Why did God send Jonah, to a pagan nation?

Jonah is the only OT prophet whose ministry is entirely on foreign soil. Nineveh was a large and wicked city and known for its violence, and ruthless treatment of their enemies, even skinning people alive.

Nineveh was located in Assyria, which is North East From Israel in modern day Iraq. Nineveh was a world power from about 900-600BC. The book of Jonah would have been written around

745BC, which would have been at the zenith of their power and global notoriety.

So, the story of Jonah seems clearly to be a mission of mercy and a missions focused outreach, initiated by God Himself, thus demonstrating the heart of God for the nations – even the most pagan of nation.

The Mission Call is the *Result* of God's Loving Heart

* So Why did God send Jonah to a pagan nation? Why did Jesus tell the disciples to go and make “disciples” of all nations?

Because God loved the World (Jn.3:16), *including wicked Nineveh*.

Because God is not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance. (2Pet.3:9), – *including wicked Nineveh*.

And because the heart of God is one which pursues those who are separated from Him. Consider Jesus' parable of the shepherd and straying sheep.

Luk 15:7 ESV Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

-- *including wicked Nineveh*.

The Mission call of God is evidence of His loving heart to those who are lost in their sins and outside His family – not only in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament as well, and throughout the whole of Scripture.

This Mission Call is *Because* of the Unsaved.

* Wherever there is an unsaved soul, there is the need for a

missionary. And in this story, Jonah is the missionary.

Jon 1:1-2 ESV Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, (2) "¹Arise, ²go to Nineveh, that great city, and ³call out against it, for their evil has come up before me."

Before God ever spoke it. Before any man every wrote it, This was true: that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."^[Rom.3:23] And that "the payment of our sins is death".^[Rom.6:23] And that one day God demonstrated His own love for the Ninevites, that HE sent His very own prophet, to tell them of the coming judgment and to urge them to repent and turn to God. Don't tell me God is not a loving God.

I believe God simply loved the people of Nineveh. So God gives His call to Jonah to "*Arise, Go*". Take action and evidence obedience. It reminds us of our NT Great Commission from Christ Himself, "Go and make disciples of all nations..."

This mission assignment for Jonah, was part of God using His people to reach the world with the message of "blessing" for all people, of all nations, from as early as Gen.12:3.

Nineveh was an evil city, filled with evil people, who were separated from God and outside of His family. His message was that God has taken notice of their sinfulness and He was preparing to take action against such sin.

Now the book presents...

JONAH'S RESPONSE AND THE FALL OUT (1:3-5)

* This is the part that holds a lesson for each of us. And the lesson is this: "This is how it should NOT be done."

God Called but Jonah Fled (v3)

Jon 1:1-3 ESV (1) Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, (2) "¹Arise, ²go to Nineveh, that great city, and ³call out against it, for their evil has come up before me (3) But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

Tarshish is West, across the Mediterranean in the region of present day Spain. No Jonah's disobedience was not passive disobedience. It was ACTIVE disobedience.

Jonah's action indicates intent and purpose. That is, Jonah's purpose was to oppose God's purpose and disobey His call. Purposes conflict, because hearts were conflicted. Jonah's will, conflicted with God's will. Jonah's plans conflicted with God's plans. And Jonah's heart conflicted with God's heart. God's heart was loving and Jonah's heart was not! Instead, it was Jonah's purpose to flee and run from God and let those Ninevites pay.

People hiding and running from God. What are they thinking?

After Adam and Eve Sinned in the Garden of Eden we read:

Gen 3:7-8 ESV Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (8) And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

1) DON'T BE DECEIVED into thinking that we can ever hide from God, and He won't come looking. When you play hide and seek with God, He always wins!

While in the garden the Bible tells that God called to Adam: "Adam, where are you?" - - - - "I'm....hiding." God obviously knew where Adam was. I think God just wanted Adam to hear himself say it.

We can't hide from God. Psalm 139 gives us a message of comfort and warning on this.

Psa 139:7-10 ESV Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? (8) If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! (9) If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, (10) even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

This is both a comfort and a warning. (1) We are never outside of His watch care. (2) We can never out run or avoid His discipline.

The Fallout of Willful disobedience (v4-5

2) DON'T BE DECEIVED into thinking that we can willfully rebel against God and expect things to go well for us.

Jon 1:4-5 ESV (4) But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. (5) Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep.

Question #1: Why did God send Jonah to a pagan nation? To be a missionary.

Question #2: Why did Jonah refuse to go to Nineveh? We are not clearly told this reason. But many commentators state that Jonah's reason for running was that, quite simply, he did not like the Assyrians. The Assyrians were a proud, idolatrous, nation bent on world conquest and had long been a threat to Israel. And their torturous brutality towards those they conquered was renown.

So God called and Jonah fled. Nineveh was about 700+ miles NE of Israel, but He fled to Tarshish, which is the region of Spain today and was about 2000 miles approximately due West across the Mediterranean Sea, in the opposite direction of Nineveh.

Now we begin to see the fallout from Jonah's willful disobedience.

i.) First we see God's response (v4) – God hurled a great wind (v4). This was a mighty tempest / storm. It was so great that the ship was in danger of breaking up. We aren't told exactly how long this lasted. It is clearly a case of someone living in sin and God, unmistakably and unapologetically acting on that sin and disciplining His sinful child.

Sometimes we see God more loving than holy. If anything Jonah shows us God's strong discipline toward His children. But it also shows His tender mercies towards those who are yet outside His family.

But does God still love Jonah? Yes!

<p>Heb 12:6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."</p>
--

IN God's love, He remains holy. In His holiness, He remains loving, even to the sinners, and even to His own rebellious children. But be assured here, *discipline comes!*

ii.) Now we see the Crew's reaction (v5) – they were afraid and cried out -- Each man prayed to his own god.(v5) Then the men began desperately throwing their cargo overboard.(v5) We read this rather quickly, but many, fearful hours of physical anguish would have passed as they fought to keep this storm from destroying the ship and taking them down with it. One thing is for sure, these men realized that their gods weren't responding very well and they were doing everything humanly possible to save themselves.

As Christians, we see that our sin and disobedience, not only affects our own life, but it affects our relationship with God, and it also affects the lives of others. Disobedience toward God is no small thing. Most would probably be quite offended if someone asked us, "could God be telling you something?" or "Could God be dealing with you for some reason or purpose?"

That might not be what we want to hear, but it seems to me it should be a consideration and a genuine concern on our part, when we go through trials. "Is God trying to get my attention?"

* "Never be deceived into thinking that we can live in willful sin and open rebellion to God and things will still be fine. Perhaps if we knew the whole story, we would discover that Jonah knew God was trying to get his attention, but simply did not care. And as we will discover later, he was even willing to die for his own disobedience.

THE PAGAN'S RESPONSE (1:6-16)

These pagans appear more religiously astute than the prophet of God.

Jon 1:6-7 ESV (6) So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish." (7) And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

Jonah is rebuked by a pagan (v.6-7)

Jonah is in the hold of the ship, asleep.

i) Wake Up! And do something! (v6)

Everyone else is throwing things overboard and praying to their gods, and Jonah is sleeping.

ii). Casting lots – more desperate measures

Casting lots occurred in the culture and throughout Old Testament Scripture. We do it somewhat today. We draw straws to see who will bat first. We flip a coin to see which team will kick off. We play, rock, paper scissors to help us make decisions, or Eeney, Meeney, Miney, Mo.

Whatever you think about casting lots, the fact is here, that God superintended this and the results, however they were perceived, pointed to Jonah, as being the cause for the storm and life threatening circumstances for the crew.

Pro 16:33 ESV The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

iii.) Start Praying! Get on your knees and guess at it, but pray. – Jonah is urged by the pagans to start praying.

“Our gods aren’t doing us any good, perhaps yours might”

Now Jonah is Questioned by the pagans (v7-11)

Jon 1:8-11 (8) Then they said to him, ¹"Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. ²What is your occupation? ³And where do you come from? ⁴What is your country? ⁵And of what people are you?" (9) And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." (10) Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, ⁶"What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. (11) Then they said to him, ⁷"What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous.

And what a testimony against God's people. "I'm living a life of sinful rebellion, but *"I'm a child of God"*. Some do that even today. They are living in known, unrepentant sin, rebelling against God, but tell the world they are a Christian and act all religious. The unbelieving world looks at them and for them, that is what a Christian is, that is how they live and act. Nothing different than the unbelievers around them.

So the unbelievers around them see their lifestyle, hear their testimony and think, "well I believe that." And "they live like I do, so I guess its all OK." The result being, people get desensitized from any sense of conviction or need to believe or live any differently than they already do, because the sinful Christians lives offer "no conviction on their corruption" (Leonard Ravenhill). And as Ray Comfort puts it, "they become one more person, inoculated from any personal interest in trusting in Christ."

Oh, the perils of a rebellious Christian, living in know sin.

(1) You will incur God's discipline.

(2) You are a damaging testimony to the unbelieving world around you.

Jonah's Recommendation & it's not repentance (v11-12

* Jonah doesn't come to grips with his own sinfulness, nor does he decide to talk to God about the situation, seeing how he has already purposefully ran away from the presence of the Lord, or so he thinks. People are urging him to pray to His God. Instead he offers this resolution.(v12)

Jon 1:12 (12) He said to them, "Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you." (

Are we getting the picture here? He'd rather die in rebellion, than to repent from his sin, return to His God, obey His call and live.

"Just Throw me into the sea and let drown." Thankfully for Jonah, the crew did have a decent heart and did not want any harm to come to him.

Now we are given...

The Crew's Reaction (v13-16

We'd expect a pagan to react like a pagan. But not in this case.

1.) They had Mercy on Jonah (v13

They did not take his advice – at least immediately.

Jon 1:13 (13) Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. (14) Therefore they called out to the LORD, "O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and

lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you." .

Things aren't getting any better, in fact the storm is getting worse.

2.) the Prayer of the Pagans (v14

The pagans pray to Jehovah, Jonah's God.

Jon 1:14 (14) Therefore they called out to the LORD, "O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you."

They clearly believe and understand that God has caused this storm. The pagans pray to Jehovah – LORD. And they pray, asking for forgiveness in advance for what they are about to do.

3.) the Pagan's last Resort (v15

What a predicament to find yourself in.

Jon 1:15-16 (15) So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. (16) Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

i.) Jonah is overboard. (v15

So they did what Jonah recommended. And the sea calmed.(v15)

ii.) the pagans worshiped the LORD. (v16

The crew apparently converted. The pagans feared the Lord more than Jonah. They even offered sacrifices to Jonah's God.

God turned Jonah's sinful disobedience into a trial and allowed others to see His power and experience His salvation.

It is a sad day in the life of any child of God, when unbelievers, are more righteous and more spiritually sensitive, than are Gods' own people. (cp: Abraham and Abimilech, Gen.20:9)

This chapter ends with...

THE LORD'S SALVATION (1:1:17

* Jonah's Salvation comes in an unusual way.

Jon 1:17 ESV And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

This Salvation is unmistakably from God.

* God called Jonah; Jonah rebelled; HE refused to repent or pray; HE even endangered the lives of those around him. He is thrown overboard, according to Jonah's own recommendation.

And God appointed a great fish...

Let us be clear, regarding Jonah's experience.

- (1) the Mission call to Jonah was from God.
- (2) The Storm was from the Lord.,
- (3) The Casting of the Lots, was from the Lord – it identified Jonah.
- (4) The fish was also from the LORD.

-----CONCLUSION;-----

(1) Chapter 1 is not about reaching the lost, but about revealing the heart of God toward the lost.

(2) The majority of this story, this far, is not about the salvation of the crew, but about the disciplining of God's servant.

(3) We are reminded that difficult situation are not due to bad luck, but that God has His hand in it all and uses circumstances to reach our hearts, get our attention and direct our lives.

If you are alive today... and chances are most of us *are*. But if you are alive today, it is because God has a purpose for you and He is not finished with you yet.

ASSIGNMENTS:

What are you personally doing to take part in God's plan to reach the world around you and me? (locally)

- Are there people in your life, whom you don't care if they are right with God or not?
- Are there people you hate and would say "no" to God, if He called you to reach out to them?
- Are there people who have made you angry or offended or treated you unfairly? Have you in your anger, already rejected engaging them in conversation and refused to connect with them for Christ?
- Are you in a trial storm of life right now? Could it be that God may be dealing with you and drawing you to repentance?

Some people are not so much unreachable, as they are undesirable, that is, *to us*. Don't think Jonah has gotten away with his sin. HE did not deserve that salvation. He did not get away with his sin.

God has not turned a blind eye to Jonah's disobedience. When we hide from God, He always finds us. When we run from God, He always catches us.

God sends salvation to Jonah, not because he has had enough or because he in any way deserves it. But God brings salvation to Jonah because God is not yet finished with Jonah.

Therefore:

- (1) Commit yourself to serve Christ fully and faithfully; wherever you are and for however long He gives you life.
- (2) Look for ways that God may want to use you. And be obedient!

An Old Testament Passage On Global Missions.

"All the ends of the earth shall remember and
turn to the LORD, and all the families of *the nations*
shall worship before you."

--Psalm 22:27 ESV



JONAH CHAPTER 2

Jon 2:1-10 ESV Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, (2) saying, "I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. (3) For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. (4) Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.' (5) The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head (6) at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. (7) When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. (8) Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. (9) But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!" (10) And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

"Jonah Desperate Prayer; God's Timely Answer"

Text: Jonah ch.2

May 22, 2016

Theme: "God's Heart and the heart of Missions."

{ "Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from
the belly of the fish."

--Jonah2:1 }

I have often tried ignoring my own blunders. The problem with
that is, no one else seems willing to ignore them.

INTRODUCTION

How do we respond when, ¹God's Holy Spirit convicts us of sin or
²God calls us to serve?

(1) IGNORE – "It must have been something I ate."

(2) EXCUSE – “that’s just the way I am.” Or “Well if so-and-so hadn’t said this-and-that to me, then I wouldn’t have treated her thus-and-so.”

(3) SMOTHER – continue working hard and not thinking about it. Filling your mind with noise and distractions. Immersing yourself in religious exercises like Bible readings, devotional guides or prayer, for the sake of occupying the mind and escaping God impressing conviction upon us.

(4) CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, FIGHTING AGAINST SIN - Jonah ch.1 is focused on God’s call for Jonah and Jonah’s sin of rebellion, in rejecting God’s call to serve.

Today’s lesson from Jonah ch.2 is about, handling sin in a manner that God responds to.

Today we look at Jonah’s desperate prayer and God’s timely answer.

JONAH FINALLY PRAYS TO HIS GOD (2:1-3)

** Reluctance to pray may result in delay in receiving help.*

Jon 1:17 ESV And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jon 2:1-3 ESV Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, (2) saying, "I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. (3) For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me.

Jonah prays from the belly of the fish (v1)

Jon 2:1 ESV (1) Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish,

* What we are looking at here is a good result, from a bad experience. This didn't have to be a bad experience. Its clear in this story that the situation Jonah finds himself in, is God's disciplining him because of his direct and active disobedience to

God's known will and instruction. We might say, "Jonah has made his bed, now he is lying in it."

Jonah Prays to God (v2) [cp. 1:2,6,12]

Jonah calls out to God and is finally doing what the pagans urged him to do in 1:6.

Jon 2:1-3 ESV (1) Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, **(2) saying, "I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.**

Perhaps if he had prayed sooner, help would have come sooner.

(1) Out of distress (2b). this indicates the inner angst of his spirit due to the hopelessness of his situation. He is in a desperate situation and he prays a desperate prayer. Desperation is a good thing if it leads us to turn to God in utter dependence and genuine obedience.

(2) Out of Sheol (2c) – from the place of death. We don't have evidence that Jonah died and God raised him, but he does consider himself as good as dead. And it is in his distress and desperate circumstances that he realizes he cannot hide from God,

for he always finds us. Nor can we run from God, for he always catches us.

"Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!" --Psalm 139:7-8 ESV

(3) *You heard my voice* – This is not to indicate that there was any time when God could not hear Jonah, but this was a situation when God would not hear Jonah, or would only respond favorably once Jonah turned to God in full surrender.

* Our level praise to God is often directly related to the level of trouble we are in, and the level of help we receive from God.

God is credited for Jonah's situation (v3)

Jonah is clearly a believer in the sovereignty of God.

Jon 2:3 ESV (3) For *you* cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all *your* waves and *your* billows passed over me.

This entire situation is credited to God. No apologies. No excuses. God is the cause of these unpleasant circumstances, as He is disciplining His child.

* The sovereignty of God is not always pleasant, but it must become comforting to us. "God in control of all things", must be the motto of the true believer's life.

Now, Jonah clearly Contemplates His Situation (2:4-6)

Desperate circumstances often drive people to desperate prayer.

Jonah reflects on his standing before God (v4)

Jon 2:4 ESV (4) Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.'

(1) *driven from God's sight* [presence?]

Jonah seems to grasp the fact that he was experiencing the discipline of God and that his problems were of his own making. Yet, he is not completely hopeless.

(2) *I will again see your temple* The implications are that he will one day, again, be in the *presence* of the Lord.

Jonah sinks into the depths (v5)

Jon 2:5 ESV The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head

These reflections indicate his expectation of dying.

I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore, Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more;

Jonah has sunk into the depths of sin, and in God's love, he also sinks into His discipline. Circumstances get worse rather than better. All hope seems lost. Death is staring him in the face.

Jonah draws near to death (v6)

Jon 2:6 at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; **yet** you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.

In his hopelessness, he is confident in his Hope. In his circumstances, he is certain of God's sovereignty.

(1) to the roots of the mountains (6a)

(a) I went down

(2) to the land whose bars enclosed me forever (6b)

(b) yet You brought up my life from the pit.

"Yet" – Jonah acknowledges his own punishment for his sin, and yet also acknowledges God's own sovereignty in mercifully bringing him out of the pit of death,

<p>But the Master of the sea Heard my despairing cry, From the waters lifted me, Now safe am I. <i>Love lifted me! Love lifted me!</i> <i>When nothing else could help,</i> <i>Love lifted me.</i> <i>taken from "Love Lifted Me"</i> <i>1912, James Rowe, Howard E. Smith</i></p>

<p>Psalm 30:3 O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit. [Ps.30:3; 28:1; 30:9; 40:2; 69:15; 88:6; 103:4]</p>

Jonah is coming to personally know that God is the God of the unpleasant circumstances.

JONAH DRAMATICALLY RETURNS TO THE LORD (2:7-9)

* When life is threatened, then the will is softened, then the heart is drawn back to the Lord where it belongs.

Jonah's Life is spared (v7)

Jon 2:7 ESV (7) When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.

(1) When my life was fainting away (7a)

(a) I remembered the LORD..

This indicates Jonah has finally turned to the Lord, and is in the process of repenting.

(2) My Prayer came to You (7b) [i.e. presence]

(b) into Your holy temple (i.e. God's dwelling place or "presence")

He offers more references to God's inescapable presence.

* When the Trials of life bring us to prayer and to the presence , of God, a good thing has been achieved, regardless of whether the issue is resolved or not.

Jonah Acknowledges the True God (v8-9)

Jon 2:7-9 ESV (8) Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. (9) But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. .. Salvation belongs to the LORD!"

(1) those who regard idols (8a)

(a) forsake their hope of steadfast love [cp.Ps.103:4]

(2) But with the voice of thanksgiving (9a)

(b) I will sacrifice to You

(3) what I have vowed, I will pay (9b)

(4) Salvation belongs to the LORD (9c)

* God's discipline of Jonah's trial has accomplished its purpose.

Seems like the Pagans were actually *good* examples for Jonah^[1:16]. They prayed to the LORD and made vows. Now Jonah is doing the same.

When Problems turn to Praise, then a change of heart and perception has begun to take place. Has God gotten through to Jonah? And is God's mission to change the heart of Jonah, been accomplished? We must wait to see.

JONAH IS MIRACULOUSLY DELIVERED (v9b-10)

Ch.1 ends with (v16) God honored. (v17) God sends a fish and essentially brings Salvation for Jonah. (2:1) "-then.." (indicating a change in the direction of the storyline.)

Ch.2 ends with (v9) God exalted. (v10) God is credited with bringing Salvation. (3:1) – "then..." (indicating once again, a change in the direction of the storyline.)

Now our focus shifts to God's Timely Answer.

Jon 2:10 ESV (9b) But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!" (10) And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

God "spoke" to the fish (v10)

This does not indicate that fish have a language that God speaks. But it does indicate that God controls, moves and uses even fish for His divine purposes.

The fish vomited Jonah on dry land

* Out of God's will and into a boat. Out of the boat and into the sea. Out of the sea and into the fish. Out of the fish and into the path of God for the mission that is before him.

Only after the lesson was learned, did God bring resolution to Jonah's situation. Jonah's journey has not ended, and his angst of spirit, has not eased. But at least He is going in God's direction.

We see that God is present in both the calm and in the storms. We may appreciate Him in the calm, but we seldom acknowledge Him. But it is through the Storms that we are made more aware of our need for Him and more inclined to acknowledge that need and seek Him.

Just as Jonah was God's prophet, so the storm was Gods' storm; the fish was God's fish. Each had its calling and purpose from the LORD. The storm obeyed. The fish obeyed. And once Jonah obeyed, there was no longer any need for the storm or the fish.

God's loving discipline upon His disobedient child, takes us closer to His overall mission in this story. Unfortunately, unpleasant circumstances or life threatening situations are what it takes to turn some to God, to repent from their sins and get their relationship with God restored. The question is; "Is Jonah's heart really changed?" We will consider that another time.

This story reflects Gods Heart for the lost nations.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Jon 2:10 ESV And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

“God did not send the fish to bring Jonah back home. God sent the fish to bring Jonah back to God, and back in line with His purpose to use him.”

Missions assignment: *Identify > Engage > Connect*

Reaching Our Mission Field involves being obedient to talk with at least one person this week, about the Lord.

“I am a missionary,
everywhere I go,
everything I do,
to everyone I meet”

ONE CHALLENGE

Every **ONE**, Praying for Some **ONE**, Connecting with Any **ONE**, and Bringing that **ONE**.....

(1) IDENTIFY – Take time to think of the people in your life path, that God may have brought to you or brought you to them. Think about them, their lives, their future, their souls, there

eternity. How does it make you feel, to realize that God brings people together for His kingdom purpose?

(2) ENGAGE – Take time to think about what you might do to interact in their life or to engage them in conversation. How hard would it really be to engage them in small talk and express interest in their lives? How does it make you feel to think that God may want to use you to bring them into His family?

(3) CONNECT – Think about what it would take, in order to connect with them on a slightly deeper level, relationally. Is there opportunity to invite them over for lunch, or a back yard BBQ? Is there opportunity to have coffee with them at work, or on a Saturday morning? What enters into your mind, when you consider the fact that God wants you to be His instrument in reaching the lost, making a disciple and eternally affecting their relationship with their Creator?

All my heart to Him I give,
Ever to Him I'll cling,
In His blessed presence live,
Ever His praises sing.
Love so mighty and so true
Merits my soul's best songs;
Faithful, loving service, too,
To Him belongs.

Souls in danger, look above,
Jesus completely saves;
He will lift you by His love

Out of the angry waves.
He's the Master of the sea,
Billows His will obey;
He your Savior wants to be—
Be saved today.

Love lifted me!
Love lifted me!
When nothing else could help,
Love lifted me.

"Love Lifted Me", 1912
James Rowe, Howard E. Smith



JONAH CHAPTER 3

Jon 3:1-10 ESV 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!" (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. (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." (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.

An Old Testament Passage
On Global Missions.

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted
among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

--Psalm 46:10 ESV

"Jonah's Re-Call Now That's Sensational!"

Text: Jonah ch.3

June 5, 2016

Theme: "God's Heart and the heart of Missions."

{ "Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the *second time*,
saying, "Arise, go...
-Jonah 3:1-2a }

"Recalls are made to repair broken or inferior items.
The best thing is to make it right the first time."

INTRODUCTION

Jonah ch.3 - "God's Call2 / Jonah's Obedience / Nineveh's Response"

Remember: Jonah is the only prophet of God who was sent to a pagan, non-Jewish nation. God has called Jonah to go to Nineveh

to preach against their sin. Jonah as rejected God's call and has fled in the opposite direction. God sent a storm to disrupt and redirect Jonah. The men on the boat, identified Jonah as the problem and threw him overboard. God sent a fish to swallow Jonah, thus saving his life, as miserable as the situation was.

INTRODUCTION

If 1 million died in an earthquake and went to hell, we'd think, "how horrible." But if we read in the paper that one person died in a car crash, we may not even think too much about it. If a million died, it would fill the newspapers. But if God withholds judgment that doesn't seem to **Sensational**. We wouldn't read, "Well nobody died today as a result of God's judgment on their sin." We pray for revival and think about God moving the masses and something really **Sensational** happening. In contrast, we may think, "there is nothing very **Sensational** going on in my life or in our church."

However, heaven doesn't necessarily measure **Sensational** ministry by masses. Even the biggest and greatest revivals in history, were simply God working in the hearts and lives of a lot of individuals at the same time. Well I hope today, you will begin to view your ministry for Christ differently. Because no matter how small or insignificant things may seem, God may be preparing any one of us for something really **Sensational** from heaven's perspective.

We ended our last lesson at Jonah 2:10

Jon 2:10 ESV And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

“God did not send the fish to bring Jonah back home. God sent the fish to bring Jonah back to God.”

That was the purpose of the storm . That was the purpose of the fish. Not to save his life. Not to ease his discomfort. Not even to answer his prayer. The main reason God worked these circumstances as He did, was to bring Jonah back into alignment with Gods’ will for him and His plan to reach the nations, specifically, the Ninevites.

JONAH CHAPTER 3:

Theme: Jonah’s Obedience and Nineveh’s Revival

*** Our focus today is on Jonah’s ReCall.** Even after blatant rebellion, God still has a plan for us.

JONAH RECEIVES HIS RE-CALL FROM GOD 3:1-2)

Ch.1 ends with (v16) God honored. (v17) God sends a fish and essentially brings Salvation for Jonah . (2:1) “-then..” (indicating a change in the direction of the storyline.)

Ch.2 ends with (v9) God exalted. (v10) God is credited with bringing Salvation. (3:1) – “then...” (indicating once again, a change in the direction of the storyline.)

The Word of the Lord comes to Jonah (v1-2)

Jon 3:1-2 ESV (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."

(1) Arise and Go to Nineveh (1a) – that is for the 2nd time.
This is God's recall for Jonah's mission.

(a) *that great city* – we remember it is great in size, as well as being great in its sin.(1:2)

(2) *Call out against it* (1b)

(b) *that message that I tell you*

We aren't told that God gave him the message at this point. IN fact the message God gave to Jonah is never revealed to us, until Jonah speaks it.

B. God was not finished with Jonah (v2)

Back to square one. God's Purpose in Jonah's Mission. God would be fair if He had just said, "OK Jonah, just forget the whole thing." "I'll get someone else to do this." But He doesn't. You see God has two missions in mind. ¹To reach the people of Nineveh, AND ²to change the heart of Jonah. God could have found someone else to deliver the message. But the fact that God pursues Jonah as He does, indicates that the mission to change Jonah's heart, rivals His mission to reach the pagan Ninevites in importance.

Remember God's Restoration of Peter. (Jn.21:15)

Mat.26:34, before His crucifixion, Jesus told Peter that Peter would deny Jesus 3 time and Peter did just that.

Then in John 21:15, Jesus asks Peter a series of questions. Three times Jesus asks, "Peter, do you love me?" 3 times Peter replied,

“Lord, you know I love you”. To which Jesus then replied, 3 times, “then feed my sheep.”

(2) God was not finished with Peter. Feed My Sheep 3x

Jesus would have been fair if He'd just said, “forget it.” But many refer to this passage as Jesus' restoration of Peter. Yes, he had failed, but Jesus was not finished with Peter. He had great ministry, still in store for Peter, if he is willing.

Aren't you glad that God doesn't give up on us when we mess up? What? You didn't know that God doesn't give up on you, even when you mess up?" You didn't know that God can still use you, even when you have made a mess of things? He can. He does. And He will.

* Failure does not have to be final, even when it involves direct rebellion against God.

ILL) Following God's will for your life, is somewhat like a roller coaster ride. You may be petrified. You may scream and make a fool of yourself. You may even get sick and throw up. But you can recover from all that.

But attempt to get off the ride before its over and the results could be devastating.. If your life seems to be a mess, don't give up, thinking God has given up on you. He alone, can take our messes, and make beautiful things from them. Peter stayed on the ride. He didn't reject God or give up on living for Christ. Jonah received his ReCall from God and it looks like he may still be on the ride. We will see.

JONAH'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S MISSION (3:3-4)

* Obedience brings us in line with God's plan and makes us a

participant in His mission. No matter how large or how small, God's work is always ***SENSATIONAL***.

Jonah's Obedience to God (v3)

Jon 3: (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.

(1) Jonah Arose and went to Nineveh -

* He finally takes up God's calling for Him. WE might say this is obedience under duress.

(2) "According to the word of the LORD".

* Jonah is now evidencing obedience to God's clear and specific instruction for him.

Jonah's Ministry to Nineveh *v4)

Jon 3:4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

Jonah began to go into the city which was a single day's journey. (4a) Then it happened. Jonah pronounced the message God gave him. The phrase "Called out" is used many times, in a variety of forms in this book.

Just some observations pertaining to this message.

(1) Jonah is an unknown visitor. He is not a celebrity speaker or some renown person.

(2) His message appears too short for adequate response to take place. There is no clear explanation of what to do, or if this ultimatum offers an alternative ending.

(3) As far as a good evangelistic message it was lacking.

* *"yet 40 days and Nineveh will be overthrown"*(v4).

Wow. So that is it? That whole trip and only 5 words? That is the message God wanted Nineveh to hear. Anybody could have said that! If we were concerned about qualifications and leadership principles, we'd say, "get rid of that guy and get someone more skilled and with better qualifications than what he has."

But remember, God has 2 missions in mind in this book.

(1) God's mission is to reach the pagan people of Nineveh with the message of coming judgment.

(2) But God's other message is one of personal development aimed at Jonah. It is God's the mission to change the heart of his prophet.

NINEVEH'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S MESSAGE (3:5-9)

Perhaps our lesson today, helps us see how much our lives and obedience may affect the lives of others. God's will, through our own influence must never be discounted.

Ministry does not depend so much upon our own personal ability, but upon how God has chosen to use us.

Perhaps you have heard the explanation of why Jonah's message was so powerful and so readily received. The explanation goes something like this. Ole Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. The stomach acid in a fish would be such that it would have shriveled his skin like a prune and would have

bleached his skin and hair to something like a sand dollar. So when he was spit out of the belly of the fish, he would have been such a sight, shriveled like a prune and bleached like a sand dollar, so that people would have heard the message and been so horrified by his appearance, they couldn't help but believe his message and repent from their sins, out of pure fright.

Its an interesting explanation, but one that is sensational but not realistic. You see the fish did not spit Jonah out on the beaches of Nineveh. Because there are none. The most plausible location where the fish spit Jonah out, was in the general vicinity of where he left on the boat in the first place. It was probably somewhere around Joppa.

Joppa was approximately 700 miles from Nineveh. In the book of Ezra,. Ezra traveled from Babylon to Jerusalem which was around 500 miles, and it took **5 months**. So if Jonah caught a fast camel, he could possibly make it to Nineveh in 4-5 months. If he traveled by caravan, which many did in those days, it could have taken 6-8 months or longer.

Either way, it would have been plenty of time to think through his situation, his experience and God's calling for mission. It would also seem enough time for his skin to clear up, for his hair to grow back to normal and to look like an ordinary person.

So, one thing's for sure, we can't give Jonah any credit for what took place there. He is no example of faithfulness nor of a compassionate heart for the lost; and there is no indication he was any good at speaking.

The power of Jonah's message cannot be attributed to his appearance, but to his obedience and God's mission to change

Jonah's heart and His purpose to reach those pagan Ninevites and bring glory to Himself in the process.

* God's supernatural power is demonstrated in Jonah's proclamation of God's message and is to credit for the outcome. Jonah's ministry was certainly not sensation. But God's work is always ***SENSATIONAL***, regarding how it is accomplished.

Revival Begins (v5)

Jon 3:5 ESV (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.

(1) Nineveh believed God

It seems to refer to the vast majority of the population of Nineveh to have been convicted of their sin and come to believe in and repent, calling out to God for mercy.

(2) Called for fasting and sackcloth

* This was not religious show boating. There is every indication that this was genuine repentance and conversion taking place.

Word reaches the King (v6)

Jon 3:6 The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes

(1) Arose from his throne – the idea is that he lays aside his exalted position, humbles himself and leads by example in repenting and turning to God. Was he was scared into repentance? It certainly sounds like it.

(2) covered in sackcloth and ashes-

This was more than outward, ceremonial religious actions. The king was concerned for the well fare of his people, not merely for himself.

He Issued a proclamation (v7-9)

This is the far reaching effect of Jonah's obedience and God's sensational mission to reach the nations.

Jon 3:7-9 ESV (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.

(1) Total fast from food and water (v7)

(2) Men and beast covered in sackcloth (v8a)

(3) Call out mightily to God (v8b) [note: 1:14]

Jon 3:8-9 ESV (8) 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".

(4) Everyone Repent from evil and violence (v8c)
[conviction of specific sin]

Hopes of God relenting and sparing lives (v9)

"Who knows?" That is, "what do we possibly have to lose?" Wow. This is the dream of every missionary who has ever lived. Repentance. Revival. Salvation of an entire city.

GOD RELENTS FROM HIS JUDGMENT (3:10)

* Repentance brings about revival. Small repentance => small revival. Large repentance => Large Revival.

This revival may seem pretty ***SENSATIONAL*** due to its magnitude. But the fact is, even the largest of revivals would not occur, if not for the individual response and revival of every single heart. From heaven's perspective even one revival of one heart is ***SENSATIONAL***.

If Every **ONE**, Prayed for Some **ONE**, and Connected with Any **ONE**, and Brought that **ONE**.....Imagine what could happen in a year.

<p>Jon 3:10 ESV (10) When God saw what <i>they</i> did, how <i>they</i> turned from <i>their</i> evil way, <i>GOD</i> relented of the disaster that <i>HE</i> had said <i>HE</i> would do to them, and <i>HE</i> did not do it.</p>
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When God saw... (v10)

(1) *what they did* - The idea here is that he took notice of their changed lives.

(2) *how they repented...* - He took action; i.e. He relented or withheld the judgment.

What God saw...

God relented...(v10)

The action that God took was actually showing mercy and withholding taking any action toward the pouring out of His judgment.

(1) of the disaster He had said...

(2) He did not do it.

CONCLUSION:

I'm thinking our problem today, may be that we don't view our calling by God, **SENSATIONAL** enough. We don't view our ministries as God does. "Well this is just little ole Saegertown." IN reality I am me, not a prophet like Jonah."

You see, from our perspective, Nineveh's revival was **SENSATIONAL** because it was so big. But it was only big because of each and every individual living there.

But what if we began viewing our lives as **SENSATIONAL**, from heaven's perspective. And what if we began to view our ministries as extremely **SENSATIONAL**? And what if we began considering our own personal callings as **SENSATIONAL**? And what if we viewed our mission field as **SENSATIONAL**?

Luk 15:10 ESV Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

You know what Heaven views as **SENSATIONAL**? One person coming to faith in Christ. Being born again into Gods family. One person saved from a Christless eternity, spending eternity with God. That is **SENSATIONAL** !

ONE CHALLENGE

Every**ONE**, Praying for Some**ONE**, Connecting with Any**ONE**, and Bringing that **ONE**.....

The **ONE**Challenge is a **SENSATIONAL** Challenge!

As we seek to appropriately respond to God's call in our lives, let us (1) diligently seek God's plan, will and commands; (2) Obey

all you know (3) Trust God to move in His time and in His way and to use you to His glory, regardless of how large or how small.

We must be willing to do what God wants all Christians to do. Trust Him to lead you to what He wants you to do specifically and personally. *Rejoice in that!*

Our Missions assignment: **IDENTIFY => ENGAGE => CONNECT.**

Reaching Our Mission Field involves being obedient to find ways to connect with others, in order to connect them to Christ and to other Christ followers.

(1) IDENTIFY → Take time to think of the people in your life path, that God may have brought to you or brought you to them. Think about them, their lives, their future, their souls, there eternity. How does it make you feel, to realize that God brings people together for His kingdom purpose? Now That's **Sensational!**

(2) ENGAGE → Take time to think about what you might do to interact in their life or to engage them in conversation. How hard would it really be to engage them in small talk and express interest

in their lives? How does it make you feel to think that God may want to use you to bring them into His family? That could be **Sensational**

(3) CONNECT → Think about what it would take, in order to connect with them on a slightly deeper level, relationally. Is there opportunity to invite them over for lunch, or back yard BBQ? Is

there opportunity to have coffee with them at work, or on a Saturday morning? What enters into your mind, when you consider the fact that God wants you to be His instrument in reaching the lost, making a disciple and eternally affecting their relationship with their Creator? **Sensational** !

ONE CHALLENGE

If Every **ONE**, Prayed for Some **ONE**, and Connected with Any **ONE**, and Brought that **ONE**.....

---Imagine how **Sensational** that would be? ---



An Old Testament Passage
On Global Missions.

"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah. that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

--Psalm 67:1-7 ESV

JONAH CHAPTER 4

Jon 4:1-11 ESV But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. (2) And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. (3) Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." (4) And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?" (5) Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. (6) Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. (7) But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. (8) When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." (9) But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." (10) And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. (11) And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

"Clash of Hearts"

Text: Jonah ch.4

June 12, 2016

Theme: "God's Heart and the heart of Missions."

Jonah ch.4 - Jonah's heart clashes with God's sovereignty.

"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.
And he prayed to the LORD...
--Jonah 4:1-2a (ESV)

"Like colors in a wardrobe, some personalities and opinions
clash. Some lead to great innovations, while
others result in great wars."

Review: So, God has called Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach judgment against the great city. Jonah rejected God's call and boarded a ship going in the other direction. God sent a storm to disrupt Jonah's plans. Realizing Jonah was the cause of the storm, the crew threw Jonah overboard. God in turn, sent a fish to swallow Jonah, thus saving his life. The fish spit Jonah out onto

land, possibly somewhere around the same harbor where he caught the boat in the first place.

In our last lesson, God Re-called Jonah and this time Jonah obeyed. He went to Nineveh and preached a 5 word message God had given him. God performed a supernatural work, with the inhabitants turning from their sins to God and God, turned away His judgment. Revival had taken place in Nineveh. This is surely a dream come true for any missionary.

INTRODUCTION

Remember: God has two missions in mind in this book. First, it is God's mission to reach the wicked Ninevites. And secondly, it is God's mission to change the cold, uncaring heart of Jonah towards those who are separated from God by their sins. Today's focus is the Clash of Jonah's Heart & God's Sovereignty.

JONAH'S DISPOSITION OVER NINEVEH'S REVIVAL (4:1-2)

* Just because we share a part in God's family, doesn't mean we share God's heart for those outside His family.

Jon 4:1-2 ESV But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. (2) And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

It is possible to think we love God, and yet fail to love others. It is possible to appreciate all God has done for us, while lacking an interest in what God wants us to do for Him.

* When our heart is not aligned with God's heart, even the greatest of mission accomplishments will not satisfy the soul.

Jonah is displeased and angry (w/ God?) (v1)

Nineveh has repented from their sins, from the king all the way down to the livestock. God has shown mercy and relented from the judgment that was pronounced. And yet Jonah is not only unconcerned, he is greatly displeased. What could have been a dream come true, has become a crisis of personal, inner distress.

Jonah prayed & confesses to God (v2)

This is why I ran away in the first place. I knew your character. I knew You are gracious and merciful and that You are slow to anger and abounding in love. Where would Jonah himself be if God were any less than that?

Jonah knew that because of God's character and mission, that He would relent from disaster(2) and that He did not desire that any would perish, but that all would come to repentance, even the Ninevites. ^[2 Pet.3:9]

This is the heart of Jonah towards those worthy of judgment and this is the heart that God desires to change. God's mission to reach the Ninevites? *Mission Accomplished!* God's mission to change the heart of Jonah? This has yet to be seen.

JONAH'S DESIRE TO DIE IN HIS PITY (4:3)

(cp. Elijah at carmel)

Jon 4:3 (3) Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."

There is an old hymn of the faith which states: "*Take my life and let it be*, consecrated Lord to Thee. Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold, not a mite would I withhold."

Perhaps Jonah's attitude would be best reflected if the words were, "Take my life and *let me be*!"

"Lord, Kill me now. Why did you even bother with the fish?"

* When our desires are self-focused, we miss God's purpose and the interest of others. This is what happens when we allow emotions to lead us astray. This is what happens to the heart when we nurture feelings which darken the heart. This is the result, when we harbor selfish desires and allow them to keep us separated us from God and His calling for us.

Once our of self, causes us to lose the heart's compassion for others, we lose a crucial component of our missionary call.

Better for me to die

It is better to die, rebelling against God? Its is better to die than to realize and renounce our own dark heart and selfish motives?

At this point, Jonah's whining over those whom God has chosen to save than to slaughter, becomes somewhat disgusting. Some of Jonah's attitudes we may be able to understand and tolerate, but perhaps this is where the line must be drawn.

Jonah's position is simply irrational and non-sensical thinking for a true Christian. This is not only selfish! It is downright shameful. And this is a great example of what ***NOT*** to do.

GOD'S REPLY TO JONAH'S PRAYER (4:4-5)

* If nothing else, we must admit that God's reply to Jonah's prayer

is one of long-Suffering and loving-kindness, first to Nineveh, but now toward Jonah.

Jonah 4:4-5 (4) And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?" (5) Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city.

God's Question: Do you do well to be angry? (w/ God?) (v4)

Literally: "Do you have a right to be angry?" or "*What* right do you have to be angry? Jonah is noticeably angry with **God**.

* The Ninevites were wicked people. *Yes!*

* They have been God's enemies for years. *Yes!*

* They deserve to be punished. *Yes!* Yet God has chosen compassion rather than condemnation.

Jonah left town and built a booth (v5)

* He knows God is gracious(v2), patient, and abounding in steadfast love. "But with any luck, God still may crush those despicable, detestable Ninevites", and Jonah wants to be sure he sees it all. So he waits and watches the city.

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable
his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him
that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him
and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.
Amen." --Romans 11:33-36 ESV

The glaring issue here is that Jonah seems to deserve God's mercy, but the Ninevites do not. They deserve God's wrath and judgment, but somehow Jonah does not.

Once we begin to nurture thoughts like this, we are traveling down a dark and deceptive path. The truth is, none of us are worthy. None of us are deserving of God's mercy. All of us are guilty of sin and deserve God's wrath and judgment. And apart from God's grace and mercy and the death-blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Calvary on our behalf, we are not different than the Ninevites.

Even a hint of this attitude within the hearts of God's people is prideful and inappropriate. This kind of attitude will quench even the hottest of mission passion flames for the lost.

GOD'S MAGNANIMOUS MERCY (4:6-9)

God provides an object lesson.

Jon.4:6-9 (6) Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. (7) But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. (8) When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." (9) But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die."

* God appoints an object lesson just for Jonah to teach him that God cares even for Jonah as well as the people of Nineveh. God

miraculously caused a plant to grow up and give shade and bring comfort to Jonah. And Jonah is glad for the plant.

Then God appointed a worm to destroy the plant(v7). God also appointed a scorching wind (v8), but without the plant, Jonah had no shade from the heat. So the sun beat down on Jonah and was faint(v8) and he asked God to let him die.

In His mercy and love, God questions Jonah again: Do you do well to be angry for the plant? (v9) To which, Jonah's answered: "Yes, angry enough to die."

In this we see both Jonah's heart and God's sovereignty. We see that the storm, was God's storm. The fish was God's fish. The plant was God's plant. The worm was God's worm and the scorching wind, was God's scorching wind. All appointed by God. All intended to accomplish God's purpose and mission: (1) to reach the people of Nineveh, and (2) to change the uncaring and unconcerned heart of God's own servant, Jonah. God is indeed a merciful God.

GOD'S MESSAGE ON GOD'S MISSION (4:10-11)

* Issues to contemplate re: personal preferences, God's calling and our mission.

Jonah 4:10-11 (10) And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. (11) And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

Now God explains the object lesson to Jonah.(v10) You pity the plant, even though you did not labor or cause it to grow. The plant came and went by night. God reveals His own heart and his mission of mercy for Nineveh and how, because of that, Jonah should also care for them. But he doesn't.

“Should I not pity Nineveh? A great city of 120,000 human inhabitants (i.e. lost souls) who don't know their right from left and much cattle.

In other words, “you are troubled about a plant, but you are not troubled about the eternal souls of those in Nineveh?” God reveals that these lost pagans have no spiritual understanding of any kind and are in desperate need of being reached with the message of God's love and salvation to those who will believe and turn to Him.

And Jonah just ends here. It's almost like someone lost the last page of the book. We don't know what happened between God and Jonah. But we do know what happened between God and Nineveh. God and Pagans are good. But God and His prophet – we aren't told. The book of Jonah just ends, with no resolution... or at least none is recorded. It does leave us wondering and possibly even considering our own perspective and heart regarding those unreached around us, of whom we may find just as despicable and detestable as Jonah did the Ninevites.

CONCLUSION:

Jonah is a great Old Testament book on what we often perceive to be a New Testament concept of missions. He is also a great example for us of what NOT to do.

In this, God's loving heart toward sinful man is revealed. That is the message of God's mission and the invitation to come on board and participate in that with Him, still stands. I submit to you, that if we belong to Jesus Christ, we are not our own. We belong to Him and His heart must become our heart. His purpose must become our purpose. His mission must become my mission. Otherwise we are no different than Jonah.

God's purpose to reach Nineveh? Mission Accomplished! God's purpose to change the cold, heart of Jonah? – *Unresolved*. The end of Jonah is not clearly known. And at present, our own personal history story is still being written. How will your life story end? How will your life purpose and mission end?

Will we be changed by God in our attitudes and outlook to the lost around us? Even those lost whom we really dislike or even hate? Will my heart be aligned with God's heart? Will God's mission become my own mission?

The Book of Jonah shows an Old Testament prophet doing reluctantly what Christians are now to do enthusiastically. It was not God's plan that all Old Testament prophets, much less all Israelites, were to do what he did. Nevertheless they were to have a heart of compassion for those outside the covenant community and to show them mercy, as this book clarifies (cf. Boaz in the Book of Ruth). Christian missionaries can use the Book of Jonah, therefore, but they should do so by stressing its true message, not by making Jonah's call the main point.

"This book is the greatest missionary book in the Old Testament, if not in the whole Bible. It is written to reveal the heart of a servant of God whose heart was not touched with the passion of God in missions. Does it strike home . . .? Are we more interested in our

own comfort than the need of multitudes of lost souls . . . dying in darkness without the knowledge of their Messiah and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we more content to remain with the 'gourds,' the comforts of home and at home, than to see the message of Christ go out to the ends of the earth to both Jew and Gentile?" –Dr. T.Constable

Our Immediate mission field: Our Work, our Neighbors, those on our ball team or in your dance class, maybe other students or family members.

(1) IDENTIFY – Take time to think of the people in your life path, that God may have brought to you or brought you to them. Think about them, their lives, their future, their souls, there eternity. How does it make you feel, to realize that God brings people together for His kingdom purpose? That's

Sensational

(2) ENGAGE – Take time to think about what you might do to interact in their life or to engage them in conversation. How hard would it really be to engage them in small talk and express interest in their lives? How does it make you feel to think that God may want to use you to bring them into His family? That could be

Sensational

(3) CONNECT – Think about what it would take, in order to connect with them on a slightly deeper level, relationally. Is there opportunity to invite them over for lunch, or back yard BBQ? Is there opportunity to have coffee with them at work, or on a Saturday morning? What enters into your mind, when you consider the fact that God wants you to be His instrument in

reaching the lost, making a disciple and eternally affecting their relationship with their Creator? **Sensational!**

ONE CHALLENGE

If Every **ONE**, Prayed for Some **ONE**, and
Connected with Any **ONE**, and Brought that
ONE.....

---Imagine how **SENSATIONAL** that would be? ---



An Old Testament Passage
On Global Missions.

"There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours. *All the nations*
you have made *shall come and worship before you*,
O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great
and do wondrous things; you alone are God."

--Psalm 86:8-10 ESV

Don't close this booklet yet

Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
--Romans 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him
to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of
Jesus Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his
name, he gave the right to become children of God, -
John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins
and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as you LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

*It is our prayer that you find **Jesus Christ** to be...*
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your greatest purpose,
your soul's source and joy,
and your all-consuming passion.

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“Global missions is nothing more or less than the far-reaching effects of our own personal discipleship efforts.”



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May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

--- Downloadable free resources at: www.christefca.org --

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