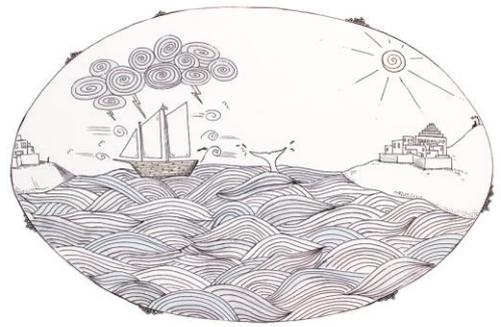


# JONAH

When God loves people more than you do.



## Week Four: When Rebels Repent

Text: Jonah 3:1-10

Last week, we saw how God appointed a fish to save Jonah from drowning. But prior to that, God had caused the storm. He was working in this trial and rescue in order to change Jonah's heart, so that he might obey the call to go to Nineveh. God's plan worked, and the second time he instructed Jonah to get up and head to Nineveh, Jonah went and did what he was told.

### 1. JUDGEMENT AND REDEMPTION ARE BOTH IN GOD'S HANDS

- Read Jonah 3:2

We need to read this verse so that we don't miss its seriousness. God was asking Jonah to call out against Nineveh because of their sin. God is never soft on sin, and we need to be careful that we don't fall in line with the worldly philosophy of today that thinks that God's love is synonymous with a tolerance of sin. Far from it. God's judgment on sin actually reveals his love because it shows that he is not passive about injustice and evil, but is deliberately opposed to it. God's holiness means that his standards are perfect and that he judges by those standards. He draws the bar in terms of what is right and wrong, and sets the consequences for failing to do so. This passage also reveals another side of God, which is sometimes missed, and that is his love for his enemies. The Ninevites were pagan enemies of his people, and yet God bothered to confront them on their sin, by sending one of his own prophets (an extremely rebellious and difficult one) to warn them.

In summary, in this text we see that God is:

- i. Authoritative and Sovereign
- ii. The Just Judge
- iii. Holy (set apart, other)

- ❖ Q: Why is it important for us to understand that God was going to judge Nineveh because of its sin?
- ❖ Q: Why is love and tolerance for sin/shortcomings/human weakness not one-and-the-same thing?
- ❖ Q: Why would it have been unloving for God to have left the Ninevites in their sin?
- ❖ Q: Why is it encouraging to us today that God would pursue an evil place like Nineveh?

### 2. GOD WARNS US OF HIS JUDGMENT SO THAT WE GRASP OUR NEED FOR REPENTANCE

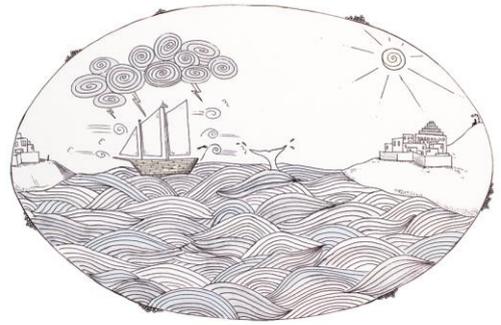
- Read Jonah 3:4

Through Jonah, God clearly warns the Ninevites of the consequences of their sin, if they continued to live in the same way, without repentance and faith. They would experience a devastating political defeat at the hands and direction of God himself. God had every intention of following through on this promise too, and so this was no mock-threat. The message of warning had to be proclaimed to the people of Nineveh in order for them to understand the serious nature of the prophecy, and so Jonah warned the entire city.

- ❖ Q: Why is it important to know that God was fully prepared to go ahead with his destruction of Nineveh, unless the people repented?
- ❖ Q: Why is it important to see that, should the people be punished, it would be at the hand of God, and not some random occurrence?
- ❖ Q: Why is it critical for us to see the concept of God's judgment as an act of pure righteousness, rather than as an act of maliciousness?

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## 3. GOD'S GIFT OF REPENTANCE LEADS US TO SALVATION

- Read Jonah 3:5 - 10

It is a beautiful scene to imagine: all of the pagan gentiles in Nineveh, hearing God's word and responding in repentance and faith. They saw their sin for what it was and responded with contrition, from the greatest to the least, across the city. Unlike Jonah who, when approached by God, ran away and did his own thing, the Ninevites responded immediately. They seemed to know that this God was not kidding around and that he would fulfil his promises.

Having believed God's word through the prophet Jonah, and then responding in repentance, they also appealed to God's mercy for forgiveness. And God responded favourably.

This part of the text calls us to respond in the following 4 ways:

- i. Repent and believe
- ii. Take comfort in the cross of Christ
- iii. Heed God's warning - in the areas where you have become complacent to sin
- iv. Be the messenger God wants you to be – go where God has called you, stop running

❖ Q: Why do you think the Ninevites responded in repentance and faith?

❖ Q: Why do you think they responded so quickly?

❖ Q: Why do we need to take stock of our own sin, and then to deal with the areas in which we have been complacent?

Personal Reflection Q:

❖ What is one big take-away from this week's message that God is pushing you to deal with this week?