

For the Living of These Days

Session 3: Jonah – Running with God

God gives Jonah another chance to be faithful

“Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah, a second time: Go to the great city of Ninevah and proclaim to it the message I give you.” Jonah 3:1-2

Send to the same unpopular people, the Ninevites

The same unpopular message from the Lord

“...preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” Jonah 1:2b

Have you ever been asked to share an unpopular message with someone?

“... speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

Jonah obeys and proclaims God’s message

“Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Ninevah. Now Ninevah was a very important city – a visit required three days. On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: ‘Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.’” Jonah 3:3-4

Ninevah was large – the walled city eight miles in circumference; the administrative district of Ninevah was about 30 to 60 miles.

Jonah had to proclaim this brief and clear message many times as he walked through the city.

“ And he cried out, “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”Jonah 3:4 NRSV
He cried out – sense of urgency in the message

Overthrown means "destroyed from the very foundation.

It is the same word used in speaking of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 19:25, Lamentations 4:6 and Amos 4:11)

The people of Nineveh are moved to repent, including the king.

“The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. The he issued a proclamation in Nineveh:

‘By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, tast anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let man and beast be covered with sack cloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence? Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fiere anger so that we will not perish.” Jonah 3:5-9

The Ninevites believed God!

They were the ones who had been plotting evil against God! Nahum 1:9

Now they believe ALL of them!

The least likely persons might be the ones who will convert.

Example: Saul of Tarsus Acts 9:1-19

The Corinthians: I Corinthians 6:9-11

“Don’t you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don’t care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don’t qualify as citizens in God’s kingdom. A number of you know from experience what I’m talking about, for not so long ago you were on that list. Since then, you’ve been cleaned up and given a fresh start by Jesus, our Master, our Messiah, and by our God present in us, the Spirit. The Message

Have you ever been tempted to give up on someone coming to Jesus?

Unusual fast is proclaimed by the King; not for show but for repentance Joel 2:14

Nineveh’s example of repentance is a rebuke of Israel in Jonah’s own day (II kings 17:13-14, 18 and II Chronicles 36:15-16)

Also a rebuke of Israel in the days of Jesus – Matthew 12:41

Could the people of God, followers of Jesus see their repentance as a rebuke today?

God takes notice, and relents of the disaster He had intended to bring

“When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.” Jonah 3:10

Hear the Good News -- repentance will change God’s mind and God’s actions!

The preaching of condemnation is conditional! Jeremiah 18:7-10