

The Mission Heart of God

The Book of Jonah

Review from last week:

- A. God will have His way and bring the gospel of good news of grace to all **people** (Rev. 7:9-10)
- B. God will use the **Church**, that's us to bring the tidings of good news to all people. **Not optional** (He's not using aliens; He's not using dogs or kittens; He's not using the Gov't/society = US)
- C. God has a **missions heart** – a heart to spread His glory and worth among His creation:

**Jonah declares that God has a Rescuing Heart; Relational Heart; & Missional Heart. (J. 4:2)

“Therefore in anticipation of *this* I fled to Tarshish, since I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in mercy, and One who relents of disaster.”

Context: Who were the Ninevites (Assyria)? Modern day Northern Iraq/city of Mosul, Ninevah was a capital city in Assyria – one of the world's five great empires. Year 760BC, 200 years before the fall of Israel to ASSYRIA. – Ninevites/Assyrians were known to be extremely violent and cruel people: Cut off lips/hands/skin people alive/impale/& invented crucifixion. **Think of radical Islamic extremists like Isis: *cruelty is an art.***

*40 years before God would use Assyria to conquer Israel & enslave Israelite's (b/c rebellion)

-Jonah knows about the cruelty, violent, & merciless nature of the Assyrians. He hates 'em & would love nothing more than to see them wiped off the face of the earth “Sodom/gomorrah”

READ Jonah 1:1-2

“The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry out against it, because their wickedness has come up before Me.” **i.e. Isis Caliphate**

- Notice, God initiated the convo. With Jonah. God invited him into the work & adventure w/ God.
- God spoke to Jonah; he clearly heard the voice & the call of God to engage the Ninevites
- Jonah was a believer. He knew God and worshipped God. Later, he is considered a prophet
- A. Jonah **Feared** God (J. 1:9) “So he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.”
- B. Jonah **Prayed** (J. 2:2) ““I called out of my distress to the Lord, And He answered me. I called for help from the ¹depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.”
- C. Jonah **Repented** when he was rebuked & disciplined by God (J. 2:9) “But I will sacrifice to You With a voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the Lord.” Like us, what Jonah believes and what he claims was at times different than how he acted and what he chose. Jonah was selfish and fearful. **No doubt scared to go & engage violent people; hardened people;** risk his own life to help/warn/save these pagan?? NO!
- Jonah had **prejudice** in his heart toward the violent and brutal Ninevites (and he wanted their just destruction) – he wanted God's judgment on them = his prejudice became an idol in his heart & outweighed the voice and obedience to the Lord. In his limited wisdom, he felt he knew better than God. (J. 4:2) “Then he prayed to the Lord and said, “Please Lord, was this not ¹what I said when I was still in my *own* country? Therefore in anticipation of *this* I fled to Tarshish...” –against whom are you prejudiced? Race? Educ.? Wealth? Lang.? U say no to God?
- In God's sovereignty, He allowed Jonah to express his own free will and rebellion against God's Voice and Purpose. **But there is always a cost to disobedience for God's children. Parent withholds goodness when throw a tantrum; never reward disobedience/ingratitude**

- But though God allowed Jonah to run and rebel from the Lord, He did not let him go too long or too far – **i.e. Prodigal Son =**
 -Psalm 139:7-10 “ Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?
⁸ If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in ^[l]Sheol, behold, You are there. ⁹ If I take up the wings of the dawn, *If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,*¹⁰ Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will take hold of me.”
 -Isaiah 59:1-2 “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short That it cannot save;
 Nor is His ear so dull, That it cannot hear. ² But your wrongdoings have caused a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden *His* ^[a]face from you so that He does not hear.”
- Jonah knew the right thing to do – to obey; yet he rebelled; he hid from God’s command = but there was **conviction** in his heart that this was not right (=no peace): (J. 1:10, 12) “¹⁰ Then the men became extremely afraid, and they said to him, “^[g]How could you do this?” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, **because he had told them...** ¹² And he said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm ^[i]for you, **because I know** that on account of me this great storm *has come upon you.*”
 =Reluctant Repentance. Jonah relented, but his heart was not yet changed to love wh. God loves
- God is the God of the Second Chance: (J. 3:1-2). Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you.” – This time, Jonah obeyed (J. 3:3). So Jonah got up and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord
- God could have executed His will and purpose for Nineveh in any way He wanted, BUT God invited Jonah to join Him in His purpose and adventure for the Ninevites. God knowingly chose a broken, resistant, and selfish man to deliver life-changing news to a people who needed to hear & be confronted with TRUTH. God chooses people like us to reach people with the gospel of grace. – Gives me great comfort.
- Even through his brokenness, God used Jonah to bring truth, light, hope, and salvation to those around him: A. Sailors got saved (J. 1:16) “**Then the men became extremely afraid of the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.**” B. Ninevites heard truth & repented: God’s message of judgment and destruction is both real and timely (J. 3:4) **Then Jonah began to go through the city one day’s walk; and he cried out and said, “Forty more days, and Nineveh will be overthrown.”**
- The People of Nineveh (hardened, violent, ruthless, inhumane), yet God had been working on their heart: (J. 3:5) “**Then the people of Nineveh believed in God**” -**didn’t take much/straw cam**
- We can never see or know how God is working behind the scenes in people’s lives – God is doing a spiritual work that we may not perceive, and then God calls us to be available, to go engage, and then share the gospel. **Do you know what is at stake?** Et. life/destruction Will you?
- Jonah, though he was obedient to share truth with the Ninevites (and God used Jonah to save them), Jonah’s heart had still not been rescued from himself; still selfish, still prejudice; still proud
- Jonah was more concerned with his comfort than with the Ninevites’ salvation (J. 4:1-11); **But it greatly displeased Jonah, and he became angry.** ² Then he prayed to the Lord and said, “Please Lord, was this not ^[a]what I said when I was still in my *own* country? Therefore in anticipation *of this* I fled to Tarshish, since I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate

God, slow to anger and abundant in mercy, and One who relents of disaster. ³ So now, Lord, please take my ^[b]life from me, for death is better to me than life.” ⁴ But the Lord said, “Do you have a good reason to be angry?” ⁵ Then Jonah left the city and sat down east of ^[c]it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade, until he could see what would happen in the city. [waiting for “fireworks” – God’s smiting of this obstinate people like Sodom] ⁶ So the Lord God designated a ^[d]plant, and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head, to ^[e]relieve him of his discomfort. And Jonah ^[f]was **overjoyed about the plant.** ⁷ But God designated a worm when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant and it withered. ⁸ And when the sun came up God designated a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah’s head so that he became faint, and he begged with *all* his soul to die, saying, “Death is better to me than life!”

⁹ But God said to Jonah, “Do you have a good reason to be angry about the plant?” And he said, “I have good reason to be angry, *even* to the point of death!”¹⁰ Then the Lord said, “You had compassion on the plant, for which you did not work and *which* you did not cause to grow, which ^[g]came up overnight and perished ^[h]overnight. ¹¹ **Should I not also have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 people,** who do not know *the difference* between their right hand and their left, *as well as* many animals?”

- God rebukes Jonah and through his lesson in humility, God’s sovereignty, and mercy toward the lost – we learn about God and our own heart. God is sovereign (over souls, plants, insects, & animals – over all His creation). We are to take notice and CARE for His creation/SOULS
- Vs. 10: “When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their evil way (REPENTANCE), then God relented of the disaster He declared He would bring on them. So He did not do it.”
- Ezekiel 33:11 ‘As I live!’ declares the Lord ^[a]God, ‘I take no pleasure at all in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways!’
- Jonah cared more about his prejudice than God’s command,
- more about his own comfort than God’s missional heart toward the lost;
- or more about a shady plant than God’s glory. **May we not be guilty of the same.**

APPLICATION:

1. My duty in life is to glorify God in all things; I glorify God through my obedience; (Jn 14:15)
2. God will accomplish His will with or without us; the question for you is – do you want to be a part of God’s great plan to glorify Himself on this earth & share with Him the joy of seeing lives changed for eternity? B/c God is a relational God, He wants to invite you into the journey of transformation to expand your knowledge, love, and worship of Him; God is more glorified & you experience more joy & purpose in this life.
3. God can do powerful things through weak servants – like you and me
4. God is for the lost & His mercy endures forever. God has a rescuing heart; a relational heart; and a missional heart
 - Are you more of a Jonah today? Or a Ninevite? What is God calling you to today?
 - To whom is God calling you?
 - What will be your answer?

Romans Road of Salvation: Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:18; 10:9-10; 10:13; 1 John 5:13