

Jonah: Meeting the God of Mercy

Jonah 3 – Dust and Ashes

By Pastor David Fields

I. Second Chances – For Jonah, and You, and Me

“Yet this I call to mind and therefore have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” - Lamentations 3:21-23

II. No Favouritism – God’s consistence in love and redemption

“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach *against it* (qara al), because its wickedness has come up before me.” – Jonah 1:2

“Go to the great city of Nineveh and *proclaim to it* (qara al) the message I give you.” – Jonah 3:2

Jonah’s obedience seems to be heartless, because he knew that God is full of mercy and compassion (see Jonah 4:2), and he doesn’t want to participate in the redemption of the Ninevites.

God is prone to relent and show grace to those who turn to him.

“If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, town down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.” – Jeremiah 18:7-8

III. True Repentance

He rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself in sackcloth and sat down in the dust.” - Jonah 3:6b

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” – Matthew 5:4

“Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.” – Jonah 3:8.

“Through fasting, sackcloth, and urgent prayer, the Ninevites demonstrated that they understood their situation – they gave up their entitlements to embrace their need for God.” – Eric Mason

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

IV. Believing God

“The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.” – Matthew 12:41

Life Group Questions and Reflection

(Some questions are borrowed and adapted from Eric Mason's study on Jonah):

1. When have you experienced God graciously offer you a second chance?
2. What did it teach you about His character?

Read Jonah 3

3. Despite his disobedience, God offered Jonah a second chance. How can you do the same for someone in your midst? Consider the resources God has blessed you with and list out three ways you can use them to help provide a second chance for someone.
4. How does God's response to the Ninevites encourage you today? Does it correct a wrong view of Him that has kept you from repentance? Why or why not?
5. We see that the repentance of the residents of Nineveh included the mourning and putting aside of good things in order to focus on turning to God's ways. Fasting is a way to practice that.
 - a. What are some fundamentally good things God has called you to let go of in order to walk in deeper fellowship with Him? (Relationships, career, money, etc.)
 - b. What might He be calling you to let go of today?
6. How does God respond to the repentance of the Ninevites (3:10)? What does His response teach us about His character?

Prayer: Take some time to thank God for his mercy toward you. Ask for grace to be people of deep compassion toward others. Pray for the needs of your group, our community, and for creativity in how you or your group can grow in mercy.