

“The Recommissioned Prophet”
Jonah 3:1-4
Mercy Hill Church | May 209, 2022

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

Recap of Jonah 1-2

- In Jonah 1, Jonah runs AWAY from God as Jonah refuses God's commission to go to Nineveh. We see Jonah's animosity, lack of compassion and prejudice towards Nineveh (the Assyrians) which prompts Jonah to run AWAY from God on a ship to Tarshish.
- But on the ship, Jonah along with the other sailors encounter a supernatural storm (from God) which ultimately leads to the sailors throwing Jonah overboard. As Jonah is drowning in an ocean in Jonah 2, Jonah cries out to God and is mercifully rescued by a fish (whale). While in the belly of the fish, Jonah prays and begins to run TOWARDS God.
- In this morning's passage (Jonah 3:1-4), Jonah begins to run WITH God as God recommissions Jonah to go to Nineveh...

1. God's Recommissioning of Jonah (vv.1-2)

- This morning's passage is like a restart, relaunch or reboot. Compare and contrast this morning's passage with Jonah 1:1-3. Notice the similarities and the differences.
- **God Speaks -- God's Word**
 - Just like in 1:1, it all starts with God speaking: “The word of the LORD came to Jonah...” (v.1)
 - Genesis 1:3: “And God said...”
 - “...call out against it the *message I tell you.*” (v.2)
 - God's (re)commissioning of Jonah is *through* God's Word to Jonah and Jonah's message to Nineveh is *from* God's Word.
 - We worship and follow a God who spoke to His people in the past – and continues to speak to us today through His Word (the Bible)
- **God Redeems -- God's Mercy & Mission**
 - “...a second time...” (v.1)
 - Not just a God who speaks but also a God who redeems
 - Sermon series titled: “Jonah: A Tale of God's Mercy & Mission”
 - Seeing God's mercy extended and shown to Jonah
 - Jonah is possibly the only prophet (or leader) who disobeys and runs away from God.
 - We see examples of prophets (or leaders) in the Old Testament like Abraham, Moses, etc. who question, doubt or even debate with God – but Jonah actually runs away from God and at the lowest point in his life would rather die than follow and obey God (cf. 1:12)
 - Yet God doesn't cease extending mercy to Jonah nor abandons His mission for Jonah (to Nineveh). God is a, “God of second chance” – or third, fourth, fifth, etc.
 - God's mercy and mission for all peoples to turn back to Him are intricately tied together.

2. Jonah's Response to God (vv.3-4)

- After vv.1-2, there is meant to be a pause – a wondering – of how will Jonah respond? Will this be another repeat of 1:1-3? Will Jonah be like the people of Israel during the time of the (book of) Judges where there was this downward cycle and spiral of disobedience to God – despite His mercy and deliverance of them?
- **Jonah Obeys the Word of God -- Faith (Trust) in Action**
 - It is interesting to note that Jonah never responds verbally to God's commission (1:3, 3:3) – Jonah's responses in both cases are revealed not through his words but through his actions.
 - 1:3 – Jonah rises up and disobeys God by running away to Joppa and then hiring a boat to take him to Joppa
 - 3:3-4 – Jonah rises up and obeys God by going to Nineveh, a journey of 500-600 miles, and proclaiming God's Word there.
 - Uncertain whether it was a three days' journey to travel throughout Nineveh (proper – or the surrounding districts?) or was it a process of three days for Jonah to go through the proper channels to gain a hearing with the local authorities and officials of Nineveh?
 - While the Gospel message is one of God's mercy, grace and love, the Gospel message also commands and compels us to follow (obey) Jesus as well. What Jesus has done for us on the Cross – the indicative – empowers us to obey and follow Jesus – the imperatives. It is not either-or, but both-and. Jonah obeys God in light of God's mercy to him.
 - We see this throughout the New Testament: James 1:22-28, John 14:15, 1 John 2:3-6 – note that obedience, good works, actions don't merit (earn) God's mercy and grace, it is always in response to God's mercy and grace.
 - The Christian life isn't just one of faith – but obedience and action
- **Jonah Proclaims the Word of God**
 - Jonah is the only prophet in the Old Testament who is sent to speak to a foreign (i.e. non-Jewish) people/nation – the only prophet whose ministry is on foreign soil.
 - Nineveh (Assyrians) weren't just another foreign nation but one of the cruelest, barbaric, violent and sadistic nations at the time.
 - God's message to Nineveh through Jonah was a message of judgment for their sin – but also a merciful warning to repent – turn back to God (cf. Jeremiah 18:7-8)
 - Like an ambassador (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Romans 10:9-15), Jonah's words and message didn't come from him but from God.
- As we consider God is a God who speaks and redeems, we are reminded of Jesus – that God Himself – came into this world to speak to us and demonstrate to us what redemption is through His atoning sacrifice on the cross. And (un)like Jonah, Jesus perfectly obeyed and lived out the Father's command and mission for Him to come to us – faithfully proclaimed the gospel message of not just grace, mercy and love – but also sin, judgment and repentance.

Big Idea: The gospel message declares that despite our sin and disobedience to God, God is a God of second chances because of His mercy and grace through Jesus. But the gospel also calls us to a life of obedience (and mission) as we follow Jesus according to His Word.

Reflection Questions

- Why is God's Word (the Bible) central to the Christian faith? How have you experienced God speaking to you through His Word? What are some ways you can better incorporate God's Word & the gospel message into your daily life?

- How does knowing God is a, "God of second chances" encourage you and give you hope as you consider your life, your past/circumstances -- as well as for those around you?
- Are there areas in your life where your profession of faith is not matched by your actions? Take some time to acknowledge and confess those areas to God -- knowing God is merciful and forgives us through Christ Jesus.
- When it comes to evangelism (sharing the gospel), are there certain aspects of the gospel you tend to leave out or are uncomfortable sharing? Why?