

**“The Mercy & Mission of God”**  
**Jonah (Overview)**  
**Mercy Hill Church | August 21, 2022**

**Big Idea:** *In the book of Jonah, God’s demonstration of mercy and His mission ultimately leads us to Jesus, who is the ultimate demonstration of God’s mercy and mission to us and the world.*

**Summary of Jonah**

- Jonah 1: Jonah runs away from God as Jonah disobeys God's command and commission to preach to the city of Nineveh (Assyria)
- Jonah 2: Jonah runs toward God in prayer as he's rescued and swallowed up by a fish in the sea.
- Jonah 3: Jonah runs with God as he goes to Nineveh to proclaim God's word to them. Jonah witnesses a city-wide repentance as Nineveh fasts and prays in contrition and acknowledgment of their sin.
- Jonah 4: Jonah attempts to run (control) God as Jonah continues in his anger, disappointment and frustration in the way(s) God has shown mercy towards Nineveh.

**1. The Mercy of God**

(Jonah 1:4, 14-17; 2:6, 10; 3:1-5, 4:4-11)

- Shown towards Nineveh despite their sins of violence, cruelty, and ruthlessness.
  - The very thing God shows the people of Nineveh (Assyria) is the very thing the Assyrians lacked – mercy.
  - We see God’s mercy shown to Nineveh in two ways:
    - 1. God sends Jonah the prophet to preach to them so that they might return back to God. God in His mercy because of His love doesn’t leave Nineveh in their sins without hope.
    - 2. Despite the sins of Nineveh, they were not excluded from God’s mercy, grace and love but included as the people of Nineveh acknowledged, confessed and repented of their sins through fasting and prayer.
  - Cf. Luke 7:47 – “There I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven – for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”
- Shown towards Jonah despite his sins of disobedience, anger, and self-righteousness.
  - We see God’s mercy shown towards Jonah the following four ways:
    - 1. Despite Jonah’s disobedience (1:3), God, in an act of mercy, sends a supernatural storm to bring Jonah to his senses (and to Nineveh)
    - 2. Despite Jonah’s continued refusal to go to Nineveh and desire to die, God, in an act of mercy, sends a fish to rescue Jonah from drowning (1:17, 2:6-7)
    - 3. Despite Jonah’s earlier refusal to go and preach to Nineveh, God calls Jonah a second time to go. Jonah is able to witness the miraculous response and repentance of the city of Nineveh.
    - 4. Despite Jonah’s anger and self-righteousness, God mercifully and patiently engages Jonah (4:1-11) in helping him to see the errors of his ways and heart.
  - Even Israel as a nation chosen by God was not because of Israel’s potential, power or popularity but a sign of God’s mercy and grace (cf. Deuteronomy 7:6-8)
- Both (All) are undeserving of God's mercy

- Nineveh's sins (of violence, cruelty and ruthlessness) were horrendous and obvious. Jonah's sins were more "acceptable" and subtle – while one might say one is more deserving of God's mercy, Scripture reminds us that all sin is sin and an affront against God (cf. Romans 3:23, 6:23)
- The story of Scripture and the Gospel message is that no one is deserving of God's mercy and grace. And that why God's mercy and grace is so amazing, astounding and astonishing!
- Cf. Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 4:16

## 2. The Mission of God

(Jonah 1:1-2, 15-16; 3:1-5; 4:11)

- God's mercy and God's mission are interconnected. God's mission of mercy.
- For all people(s) to know and worship Him
  - Throughout the Bible, from Old Testament to the New Testament, from Genesis to Revelation, God's plan and mission was to call people from every tribe, tongue and nation to Him (i.e. people of every ethnicity/race, culture, socio-economic status, etc.) – not just the people of Israel (or a particular group or type of people)
    - cf. Genesis 12:1-3, Revelation 7:9-12
  - We see glimpses of it in the Old Testament (e.g., Jethro, Caleb, Rahab, Ruth, Uriah, Naaman, etc.) and see it in greater clarity in the New Testament (cf. Matthew 8:5-13, 15:21-28; Acts 2:5-11, 6:1-8, 8:26-40, 10:34-48)
  - Unique aspect(s) of the book of Jonah (one of the twelve minor prophets):
    - 1. Book of Jonah is the only minor prophet written in narrative (story) form – all the other minor prophets are written in poetical/prophetic form (speeches)
    - 2. Jonah is the only minor prophet who had to travel to a foreign nation and preach and proclaim God's word to a foreign nation
- For God's people to be a part of His mission
  - Not only was God's mission for all people to know and worship Him, but from the beginning God's plan was for His people to be a part of that mission
    - Cf. Genesis 12:1-3, Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Corinthians 5:20
  - Not just as dutiful servants but to see and experience the Spirit of God at work!
    - But instead, Jonah's action, response and heart attitude was very much like the older brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son (cf. Luke 15:25-32).

## 3. The Mercy & Mission of God: Jesus

(cf. John 1:1-16, Matthew 8:5-13, 9:9-13, Romans 15:8-12)

- Jesus fully embodies God's mercy and mission
  - God demonstrates and fully reveals, cranks up the dimmer switch, His mercy in and through Jesus. What greater act of mercy is there than God the Father sacrificing His own son Jesus on the cross so we no longer need to bear the consequences, burden, guilt, shame, embarrassment of our sins?
  - God Himself, Jesus, would leave heaven, and come into and enter into this broken, twisted, sinful world (cf. John 1:1-16) on his own volition and out of love for us – to preach and proclaim the Kingdom of God, to call people back to Him – to repent and believe – and not just the people of Israel but all people (cf. Romans 15:8-12).

**Big Idea:** *In the book of Jonah, God's demonstration of mercy and His mission ultimately leads us to Jesus, who is the ultimate demonstration of God's mercy and mission to us and the world.*

**Reflection Questions**

- When was a time someone showed you mercy? How did you feel? When was the last time you showed mercy towards someone? Why were you merciful towards that person?
- Why do you think we can often take God's mercy for granted? What are some areas of your life where you need to be reminded of how God's been merciful towards you?
- In what ways is it tempting to become self-righteous (or exclusionary of others) like Jonah? Who are the (types of) people that you find more difficult to love (or easily get angered at)? Why?
- What might it look like for you (individually or as a family) – and us as a church -- to participate in the mission of God in our day-to-day life – esp. with the start of a new school year?
- In what ways do you see Jesus and the Gospel message throughout the book of Jonah?