

Week of October 11, 2009
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Monday

Jonah 3:2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you."

What is evangelism? It is the reporting to others the condition of their soul. What is evangelism? It is revealing to others the nature of God. What is evangelism? It is calling men and women to turn from self and sin, to God and His grace. What is evangelism? *It is you telling someone else about Jesus.* Evangelism is spoken, powerful, provoking, and loving. Who is an evangelist? You are, if you know Jesus

Tuesday

Jonah 1:1-3 The word of the LORD came to Jonah saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city ... But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD..."

The success of life can be measured in this way, God said... I did... It doesn't really matter the issue or the situation. What matters is what God says and what you do. If God says go one way and you go the other, guess what, you're in a mess. Happens every time. You don't like what God says? Guess what, it doesn't matter. He is still God. You want your life to stink like a fish? Do the opposite of what God instructs and you too can smell like fish gut. In your home/marriage, in your spiritual walk, in your daily experience success will be determined by whether you have learned the lesson: God said it, so I did it.

Wednesday

Jonah 3:1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah...
Jonah 4:1 But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry.

Most of the time our problems arise not from a lack of knowledge of God's will, but rather our unwillingness to be obedient in areas where God's will is clearly revealed. We beg God to show us His will for our life? We sometimes desperately cry, "Why won't you just show me Lord?" Yet, where God's word is clear we ignore it, even become angered by it; even at those who teach it. Do the will of God where it is clearly revealed and the will of God in all areas will become clear.

Thursday,

Jonah 3:1-3 The word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh ... proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you." So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh...

Our God is patient with us and by His grace often offers us a second chance for blessing and significance. Having learned the lesson of repentance and obedience, Jonah was offered again the opportunity of service and significance. "Arise and go" were blessed words to hear, justly, after his disobedient actions, he might expect never to hear the Lord's call to service again. Jonah did not fail this time. At the prompting of the Lord, he began his journey. Have you learned lessons from past disobedience? What will you do today when God says, "go"?

Friday

Jonah 3:5 When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes.

Humility is a most difficult trait to cultivate, yet our walk with God and one another is dependent upon humility. Humility to confess and repent is essential when you admit your need for the Savior. Humility to count others more important than yourself and their opinions as important as our own is essential for a healthy church. Humility is essential for husbands and wives to submit to one another (Eph. 4:21). Nineveh was saved because the King was willing to be humble. Peter writes, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." (1Pet 5:6)

Jonah: Introduction

“Today’s Choices”

Jonah is different from other Minor Prophets. Instead of focusing upon prophecy, the book of Jonah recounts an embarrassing episode in the life of the prophet. Famous in all generations, Jonah is the story of hope, pride, repentance, second opportunities, and God’s grace.

The story of Jonah takes place in the early 8th century B.C. and therefore is probably set earlier than the other Prophets. Assyria is already a hated enemy though not at this time a great power, as they would soon become. Known for brutality and barbarism, the Assyrians did not merely capture enemies, they physically tortured and humiliated them. There was good reason for Jonah’s anger, fear, and loathing. He was willing to give up his prophetic office and call to preach, rather than see God act mercifully toward the Assyrians.

What Jonah failed to understand was that God seeks to be merciful to everyone. He desires that all should come to repentance. Israel was not to be an isolated nation of God’s grace, but a missionary nation of God’s good news. Instead of being mission minded, Israel became self-centered and prideful. They came to think of themselves as deserving of God’s favor. In such a state, they not only failed to evangelize, they ultimately fell to the practices of the pagans around them.

We do not keep our religion when we fail to evangelize. Instead we lose our children to the practices and false teachings of the world. There is much to learn from Jonah, not the least of which is that when God’s people fail to act early, intensively, and consistently in proclaiming the Gospel, when they become complacent with their faith, they destroy the very ones they desire to protect – their children and grandchildren.

Assyria would have a period of repentance at Jonah’s message, but in the end Assyria would grow and finally, as a horrible dominating power, they would, at the end of the 8th century B.C., cruelly defeat and destroy Israel.

What of the message of Jonah. It reminds us that we too are undeserving of God’s grace. We do not own it, nor are we designed to keep it. God is the God of the whole world and His love extends to the peoples of the world: “For God so loved the world....”

Jonah did not want to preach in Assyria because he knew the word of God was powerful and the grace of God was universal. He did not want Assyrian people to find the Savior. His prejudice, anger, and blindness are diseases easily succumbed to.

“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...” If we have received God’s grace, so much more should we extend it to the world.

In Three Weeks: Malachi