

Jonah 3

The God of the Second Chance

Well it is that time of the year again: **March Madness**

A) What is that? Big Sale at Macy's – NO

B) Month of the year where everyone gets a little more agitated on the road ways because of rain

1) **NO !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

C) It is that time that every college hoop fan loves

1) Basketball all day Long! –

D) It Starts with 64 of the best teams in the country in a single game elimination tournament

–
2) Sweet 16/ the elite eight / the final 4 – The championship game – { **April 3rd** } Glorious
AMEN

There are some awesome stories in this tournament

But the one that got my attention had to do with 2nd chances

A) You see David Pak is the starting point guard for Utah State. Senior, little old for a senior at 29 yrs old

B) **Why so old?** Well David Pak went to Prison for a crime he committed when he was 17

1) He served an 8 year sentence. He was released Christmas Eve 2001 – a day before his 25th B-day

C) After prison he was given a 2nd Chance – A Scholarship to play at Utah State.

D) **He has become a model citizen and a team leader**

And although his team lost in first round

1) His story is a great story of mercy, and 2nd chances

The Bible is full of stories of men who were given a 2nd chance by God.

A) Abraham (lied about his wife); Jacob (lied to his father Isaac); Moses (killed a man & fled from Egypt);

B) God gave David a second Chance. He gave Elijah a second chance

1) Of course there is Peter (denied the Lord 3 times).

C) God still is doing that today: He is the God of the 2nd Chance.

George H. Morrison "The Victorious Christian life is a series of **new beginnings.**"

D) New Day in the Lord –

It is seen in the wife that takes back a wayward husband

Parent a wayward son or daughter

Friend who forgives when his trust has been betrayed.

Another opportunity after a failed ministry.

He is the God of the 2nd Chance.

Now when it comes to 2nd chance stories you either love them or hate them

A) Your response is really connected to your understanding of & experience w/ the grace of God

B) When I remember that my walk depends upon and hinges around being a recipient of grace

1) **I love the fact that He is the God of the 2nd chance**

C) For example who here can say that they responded to the message of the gospel the very first time they heard it?

D) For most of us it was yrs of hearing and rejecting hearing and rejecting – putting off

1) Finding reasons why we didn't need to turn our lives over to Jesus.

E) But where would we be if God said – I am going to give you **ONE CHANCE** –

1) Most of us would be lost

Or how many of us have been used by the Lord even after we have been disobedient –

A) Reality all of us have been recipients of 2nd and 3rd and 4th and Chances by God

B) And we live on **2nd chances** – that is what grace is all about.

C) I find myself wanting to be a dispenser of grace

But if my walk with God is more performance based

If I somehow think that I earn his blessings

A) That what has come into my life is the result of my faithfulness and obedience –

B) Then when I see him being gracious to others giving **2nd chances** – **I am not real excited about that!**

C) **Here is a test:** How do you respond when someone that you know has been flaky in their walk but gets blessed ?

D) **Are you glad and excited ?** Or do you find yourself mumbling to yourself things like

1) **They don't deserve that !** / That is not fair / that is not right

E) Hey listen the truth of the matter is – you don't deserve what you have been given either

1) All sinners – All that we have and are is because of Grace.

Well here in Jonah Ch.3 we see that Jonah is given a 2nd chance. V.1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time,

A) God is about to use Jonah to spark the greatest revival in Human History.

B) **What is your reaction to that?** Great ! Amazing

1) Or you know that just doesn't seem right

C) **Modern day:** How would you feel if God all of a sudden started using Jim Baker in a mighty way.

1) Would you find yourself saying – he doesn't deserve that –

D) That just doesn't seem right after everything that he did.

1) But that is exactly what God does so often – He loves to give grace – give **2nd chances**

That is what he does here w/ Jonah **RD V.1-4**

Preach to it the message that I tell you:

A) This is such an important word for any Pastor – home group leader, discipler

B) Preach the message that God tells you.

1) Milk / the Meat / the Manna { **His word** ..today
VARIES PER SERVICE IN EMPHASIS

2) Last week first service – Prayer
2nd & 3rd had a different focus

C) This is why it this is so important – There can be a temptation for any teacher to want to Preach what he thinks the people **NEED TO HEAR.**

D) His perception of things: Carnal Youth group
HOLINESS

1) God said point them to Jesus { **I want them to see how much I love them.**

The other temptation for a teacher is to teach what he thinks people WANT TO HEAR.

A) This is actually what the Apostle Paul warned us about happening in the last days when he said that **in**

2 Timothy 4: 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

B) This has become the hot new style of our day.

1) You find out what people want to hear and then you teach it to them.

C) Easy to draw a crowd this way, but it's not what God wants.

What God wants is for His people to hear from Him. And that's why Paul told Timothy,

A) **2 Timothy 2:2** Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, **rebuke, exhort,** with all longsuffering and teaching.

NOT ALWAYS POSITIVE

B) Advantage we have in Calvary of teaching thru the Word: Books of the Bible Chapter by Chapter –
1) It is harder to fall prey to those temptations – and get off on tangents

C) So God told Jonah preach the message that I give you to Preach.

What was Jonah's message 40 days and Nineveh will be over thrown

A)The word overthrown here literally means to turn something upside down.

B)But to really capture the idea here you have to think of a plate full of food being tossed up in the air and then landing upside down.

C) That's what this word meant: **In other words,**

1)this great city of Nineveh was about to be thrown up in the air and splattered all over the place.

D) A good cross reference here is that this is **the same** word that was used when God said that He was going to overthrow Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now, I'm sure that there were many people that heard this and thought, IMPOSSIBLE

A)Nineveh, overthrown, can't happen. Nineveh is far to substantial to be turned upside down by anyone."

B)And yet from God's perspective, it was just forty days away from falling apart at the seams.

Jonah told the people of Nineveh this was going to happen in 40 days

A)40 days, is the number of testing and judgment in the Bible.

B) Flood – 40 days/ Jesus wilderness tested 40 days

Now This isn't what you would call a seeker sensitive message.

A)Today those who say let's give the people what they want to hear. Keep it positive

- 1) No blood
- 2) No sin
- 3) Not hell

B) Only going to talk about God's love –

1) Problem not the whole message.

C)Jonah walked into Nineveh and said Hey God loves you and has wonderful plan for your life

1) **He would be being disobedient**

SIDE NOTE: In v.3 we are told that Jonah walked around Nineveh delivering this message – took 3 days

A)Now the book of Jonah has been heavily attacked by scholars who try to say this is a myth.

B) And one of the things that they point to is this statement where the extent of the city is said to be a three days walk.

C)Archeologist have actually found the **ancient sight of the walled city of Nineveh** and they will tell you that it is **no bigger than the average city of this day.**

D)And certainly the city is not large enough to take three days to walk across.

1) So the critics had seemingly won on that point.

That was until they discovered that the walled section of the city was only a little part of the actual city of Nineveh.

A)Now archeologist will tell you that the Biblical account is right on,

B) In fact how do you think that they found the outer rim of the city?

1) By using the three days walk formula.

I love stories like that.

C) Another simple explanation is: He was preaching so it took him that long to cover every section

1) **San Diego in 3 days**

Now lets consider the reaction to Jonah's message

RD V. 5-9

A)Now what we have here are some genuine marks of repentance.

1)They believed God: – that is the starting point

B) True preaching and teaching will always have this result.

1)It will draw people to God, it will move them to put their faith in Jesus.

2) They were broken: Then they changed

A)Seen in the fact that from the greatest to the Least of them they put on sackcloth.

B) There was a Humility that was apparent in their repentance.

C) Suddenly things like positions / power and appearances meant nothing

1) **Even the King** – put on sackcloth and ashes

This was a picture of the total abandonment of Self image.

A) That is always a true mark of repentance: when a person is no longer worried about how they are perceived.

B) No longer worried about what others are thinking of them –

1) **All that matters is that they are right w/ God**

C) Quite frankly that is the thing that holds some people back from true repentance:

1) They are way too concerned about what others are thinking about them.

3) There was a denial of the flesh.

A) They proclaimed a fast!

B) Fasting is simply not eating or drinking.

1) But what it points to here is this idea of denying self, or denying the flesh.

C) They were used to being driven by the flesh Catering to their fleshly appetites

But now they were willing to deny the flesh in order to seek God. Purpose of FASTING

A) Food fast – a Day for Prayer: A meal – lunch

B) TV Fast – No TV for a week –

1) News paper fast –

2) **Gym Fast:** Seek God

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

C) That is the purpose of Fasting! –

So they:

1) They believed God

2) They were broken

3) **There was a denial of the flesh**

4) **There was a sense of urgency. V.8 Cry mightily**

A) **Cry mightily: intensity**, i.e., a high degree of harshness or severity of an event or action

1) **Earnestly= Energy & Passion**

2) **Vigorously: Violent**

5) **There was a change! Turn from the evil and violence**

A) True repentance turns away from sin and starts moving towards righteousness.

B) There is action in repentance, it is not just words and a prayer.

1) It's agreeing with God that what you were doing is wrong and then getting away from it.

C) And the way that you get away from it is to start doing what is right.

1) **Repentance is a 180 degree turn.**

D) True repentance radically changes our world view, 1) it gets our eyes off of our selves and on to the needs of those around us.

Too often Repentance in the Church today is lacking of these traits:

A) There is a prayer and tears and a promise.

B) But there is no forsaking of position and power, there is no change in priorities,

1) there is no move away from sin, there is no move towards righteousness,

2) And there is no change in where we have our eyes, they are still fixed firmly on ourselves.

C) **And then we wonder why there is so much sin in the Church.**

1) We wonder why there is so little victory over sin in the Church.

D) **We wonder why the Christian divorce rate is almost as high as the worlds.**

1) We wonder why our kids are all messed up and confused.

E) A lot of it comes back to this. We have forgotten what it means to repent.

1) We have forgotten what God really requires of those who have fallen and want that second chance.

Notice that v.10 Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

A) God saw their works – he saw their repentance and forgave them.

B) Wait doesn't this contradict what we read in Eph. 2 We are saved by grace thru faith not of works

B) Yes but don't forget what James wrote in James

James 2:20-24

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

C) How are these verses reconciled –

Paul in Ephesians is talking about the Way of Salvation – How a person is saved –

A) Believing Jesus – exercising faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross for them

B) James is focusing on the Proof of salvation **Faith without works is DEAD**

C) Blend the two together and what you have is **"We are saved by faith and not works – but our faith is a faith that works. Our faith is evidenced by our works."**

So when it says here that God saw their works – it is referring to the Proof of their repentance

A) It was manifested in their actions

B) This was a true repentance.

Well Jonah must have been ecstatic – so excited

A) God gave him a 2nd chance and Massive revival breaks out. **THINK AGAIN CH.4:1**

B) But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.

C) The English words that are used here don't even come close to conveying what this actually says in the Hebrew.

1) These are the strongest words that could have been used.

D) The literal Hebrew here would go something like this, **"But it was evil to Jonah, a great wickedness and he was burning."**

The repentance of these people & God's subsequent mercy, was viewed by Jonah as a grave injustice.

A) In his mind, God had actually done evil, He had violated His own holiness and it was burning Jonah up.

B) What this tells us is that God's work with the Ninevites was done,

1) **But God's work in Jonah wasn't**

C) You see Jonah had repented from his rebellion, but the root of bitterness that caused the rebellion was still there.

1) And God was not about to let it remain.

What a lesson this is for us in this

A) I believe that like Jonah we are often times willing to let God deal with our outer problems,

1) but what we are reluctant to do is let God get at the source.

B) We won't let Him get deep inside of us and get to the **root of the problem.**

1) And because we don't, those problems just keep coming up over and over again.

C) They just manifest themselves in other relationships

What we see here in Jonah is a repeat performance of his initial rebellion.

A) He sees God's gracious heart and he rebels against it

B) Because God is not doing what he thinks God ought to do. Listen to his prayer in verse 2.
2 So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.
3 "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!"

The thing that amazes me about this prayer is how Jonah can know all of these great things about God and still be mad at Him.

A) But you see the problem was that these attributes of God weren't working in Jonah's favor.

B) They weren't accomplishing what Jonah wanted.

1) In fact they worked against what Jonah thought God should do.

C) God's grace and mercy and forgiveness and loving kindness was fine when it applied to Israel,

1) it was great when it saved Jonah out of the belly of the great fish.

D) But it was not so fine when it was applied to pagan Gentiles and it was down right evil when it was applied to Israel's enemies.

1) Like most Jews Jonah hated the Ninevites.

E) Brings us right back to the beginning the person who doesn't understand grace. –

1) **2nd Chances are good for me – but not for them.**

Here's the Problem: What Jonah wanted was for God to stay in the box that Jonah had designed for Him.

A) And God just wouldn't do it.

B) Jonah is saying, Look God, you're supposed to function this way and I won't tolerate you drawing outside of the lines.

C) But you see God is God, and He can draw outside of the lines anytime that He wants.

1) He is always drawing outside the lines –

2) One of the things we should learn to love about God is that **He is unpredictable.**

This is one of the problems w/ systematic theologies.

A) What we want our theology to do is to lock God in to certain parameters so we can understand Him.

B) God does this, God doesn't do that. But in reality, systematic theologies are just man's attempt to control God,

C) It's man's attempt to get God to **fit inside of a box so that we can understand Him.**

1) But it's a futile exercise because the box of our understanding is just too small.

D) So when God won't fit into Jonah's box – Jonah says ok God just kill me then

1) **Leave him here today – Pick up next time.**