

Jonah 3 Second Chances

Intro: Golfing with my Dad – Hit a horrible shot – and he would take a ball out... hit another one

A) We won't could that shot! Mulligan –

B) (in informal golf) an extra stroke allowed after a poor shot, not counted on the scorecard. 2nd chance

C) Usually in a friendly game – mulligan on the 1st hole and sometimes the 10th – after a break

D) My Dad – constant Mulligans – I always scored well when playing with my dad

1) My 20 errant shots that were not counted – score in the high 80's instead of 120 :

God invented the Mulligan -Grace – He is the God of the 2nd chance – see that today in the life of Jonah

A) But how we respond to a 2nd chance is really, really, important – consider that as well today.

B) But let's do a quick recap to see how we got to chapter 3

C) Nineveh – capital city of the Assyrian Empire – Assyrians were wicked -brutal ruthless people

D) Their wickedness had come before God – So God told the Prophet Jonah to go and preach against them

God told Jonah to go, /Jonah said NO and instead of hopping the next camel to go to Nineveh,

A) Jonah instead, hopped on a boat going the opposite direction! Tarshish

B) Which was about as far as you could go from Nineveh

C) But when God is seeking to use our lives – he is wanting to do a work through us but also in us

1) So God has a work to do in Jonah – so God pursues him by sending a storm- Huge storm

D) Sailors are freaking out – calling on their gods – throwing cargo overboard – to no avail

E) Someone has ticked off the gods – **let's cast lots to see who – the lot falls on Jonah**

1) Jonah confesses and says – throw me overboard – Storm will cease

That is what they did!

A) God responds by creating his own version of UBER -prepares a huge fish to swallow Jonah –

B) After 3 days Jonah – prays – he cries out to God – Prayer we looked at last time

1) Jonah surrenders – and the Lord has the Huge fish vomit Jonah out onto the beach.

C) That is where we left Jonah last time. - First week – Fishes stomach – last week Fish vomit

D) Lesson: Running from God can result in an uncomfortable, messy and smelly situation

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah {Everyone say it together} the second time, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.”

A) Our God is the God of the 2nd chance – third chance

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

B) God is giving Jonah a 2nd Chance – to get this right!

C) Remember the etch-a-sketch? Do you know what an etch-a-sketch is?

1) Turn the knobs – lines – mess up – bummer – shake it and you get a clean slate

D) When God gives us a 2nd chance He is giving us a clean slate

When God gives us a second chance – how we respond to that 2nd chance is really important –

A) see what we can learn from Jonah's response
#1 Respond immediately V.3

³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD.

A) Don't procrastinate: Been said that “Procrastination is opportunity's natural assassin.”

B) Charles Dickens called *Procrastination the thief of time.*”

1) Martin Luther but it this way: “Not now – soon becomes never!”

C) When God calls respond immediately! He will meet your response with his grace and his power.

Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey *in extent*.⁴ And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk.

Now, why did God call Nineveh great? Because, really, they were horrible.

A) Wicked, brutal people! – Ruthless – How could it be described as great?

B) Well, it was great in influence. It was great in power. It was great in size ,

1) It was surrounded by a wall that was about 7½ miles long. It was a fortress

C) It was one of the most important historical cities, with a population of about 120,000 people,

1) and it was kind of like the cultural epicenter that people would learn from.

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

A) 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.

B) 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.**

C) 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) So Jonah responded immediately to this 2nd chance that the Lord gave him

#2 He obeyed completely!- Jonah preached the message that God gave to him. Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”

A) Eight words in English. It’s actually five words in the Hebrew language. This message was short. It was direct, and it was offensive.

B) Forty days, and you will be overturned. Forty days.

C) Now just to put this in perspective – Nineveh is modern day Iraq.

So imagine God calls you – get on a plane – fly to Iraq and say to the people –that includes - Isis – Taliban – Muslim extremist

A) In 40 days – God is going to destroy you!

B) How many of you would want to deliver that message – not be afraid

1) Not be tempted – to want to give a different message

C) I will be honest – there are times when God tells me to deliver a hard message to our church – **I am uncomfortable** – Not excited

1) **AND MOST OF YOU LIKE ME! – IT HARD**

I could see Jonah being tempted to tell them – God loves you guys.

A) Consider cleaning up your act! – Don’t worry be happy – Be Nice

B) Jonah doesn’t do that – he obeyed completely! - He preached the message that God called him to preach.

C) If we are going to be used by God and see God really work in our lives – we have to be willing to do what can be uncomfortable

Here is what is interesting about his message:

A) The word overthrown in the Hebrew language, it’s a word that had a double meaning.

B) It is a word that can mean – destroyed – but it can also mean changed

C)The prophetic message from God: “Forty days and you will be either be destroyed

1)or you will be forever changed. What’s it going to be?”

D)The outcome was going to depend on their reaction

There are so many things I think that are like that in our lives as well.

A)The outcome to God’s word and instruction can be awesome – full of grace – if we respond to it

B)Or it can be a disaster if we ignore it and harden our hearts to it

Notice how the people of Nineveh responded: ⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. ⁶ Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes. ⁷ And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying,

Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. ⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. ⁹ Who can tell *if* God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?

This is a radical response: signs of true repentance and revival taking place in the hearts of the People of this city. #1 They believed God V.5

A)This amazing – the cruelest people on the planet at that time – turn to God

B)Shocking to those living at this time to hear the news – You have got to be kidding me.

C)Be like if you heard tomorrow - “Howard Stern is now in Christian radio, and he has a talk show about sexual purity.” -Really no way

1)It’d be like me saying, “Tom Cruse is now a Christian evangelist.” Okay?

D)Pit Bull is now a gospel singer!

1)Kanye West is leading church services – wait that actually is happening

E)You get the idea: This was pretty amazing!

All of Isis is putting down their weapons and they are studying the Bible

A)Crazy stuff – Supernatural – they believed God

B)#2 There was surrender v.5 – they were fasting – Denial of the flesh

1)Instead of living to please their fleshly appetites

#3 There was humility – putting on Sackcloth and ashes V.5

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 to concerned about what others are thinking about them.

#4 There was a mighty cry V.8 – brokenness

A)A Broken and contrite heart – God will not despise

B)Imagine our president and national leaders – exhorting our nation to repent and cry out to God for mercy –

1)And the whole nation sincerely did it –that would be a MIGHTY CRY

C)Imagine how the nation would chance

#5 There was a Change! V.8 let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands

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 ourselves 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 real change - forsaking of sin and no move towards righteousness,

1) often there is no humility- forsaking of pride

C) Too often it is the fear of what someone might think of us that keeps us from responding

D) When real repentance happens and when real revival breaks out - there is a change -

Revival examples

When the Word of God went sweeping through Wales in the early 1900s, and a tremendous revival,

A) 1/5 of all the country was converted and came into the church,

B) The Lord was moving so powerfully it created - labors problems especially in the mines. - Documented

1) So many miners were getting saved - and they stopped using profanity

C) Problem with that? The donkeys in the mines were so used to being cursed at they didn't know how to respond to instructions - when not being cursed at

D) They had to build five new sheds at the mines to house all the tools that the miners had stolen but were now bringing back

E) Crime dropped so low that - the Police departments were becoming gospel choirs - so much spare time

It was a radical move of God

A) That is what we need again in this country - Jesus people movement

B) Luke warm? I don't think so - I know so many people who love God

C) We need a fresh and unique outpouring of God's spirit

1) Conflicted - Longing to go home - vs longing for an outpouring

Where sin abounds - grace abounds all the more

Well Jonah must have been ecstatic - so excited

A) God gave him a 2nd chance and Massive revival breaks out.

B) He must be super stoked - preachers dream!

1) All practiced Billy's line - come - the buses will wait

C) Jonah has got to be excited - Right - NOPE!

CH.4:1- But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.

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

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

C) Wait - People are getting saved - Revival is breaking out and Jonah is angry?

1) What is wrong with this dude?

D) See next week - this the very reason why Jonah didn't want to go there.

1) You are gracious and merciful - you are going to forgive - Jonah didn't like Nineveh

E) God is going to forgive and I don't want that to happen.

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!"

F) So this is where we are going to leave Jonah today

Sulking Angry at God – For his mercy and forgiveness

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.**

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

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

E) 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

1) **God is faithful to complete work begun..**