

Jonah 3 & 4

What Really Matters

(The Major Point of the Minor Prophets)

Intro: Major Point of the Minor Prophets

A) Minor – not B guys - Shorter

B) Wednesday nights – The whole book

C) Weekends – Major Point Read Ch. 3 Pray

I heard the story of a wealthy lady on the Titanic that crashed into the iceberg. When it was clear it was going down, she pushed her way against the crowds to go back to her room where large amounts of cash and jewels were locked up in her room safe – but she was not going to the room for those things – she was going to get three oranges she had on her counter, because in that moment, she knew it wasn't the cash that was important, it was food

D) The Story of Jonah is about God showing us what really matters

Sometime around the year 780 BC, the Lord looked down from heaven and saw an exceedingly wicked city that was **doing very horrible things**.

A) The name of that city was Nineveh - Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire

B) The Lord wanted to bring a message to that city, a warning against that city

And so His eyes went over to the region of Northern Israel, by the Sea of Galilee

A) To a small little village where there was a man named Jonah living there.

B) The Lord said to Jonah – arise and go to Nineveh and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up to me

1) Oh you know the story

C) When Jonah heard the Word to go to Nineveh, instead of going east toward that city,

1) He **went west** in the direction of Tarshish

I don't blame Jonah I understand why he would be afraid

A) **The Ninevites were frightening as a people-** They were very cruel, downright brutal

B) The Ninevites were so cruel, when they would come into a region, when their armies were on the move into new territory

C) The cities in those regions **would often surrender** even before they got there, just hearing the rumor that the Assyrians were coming

Because the Assyrians were those who were known to show no mercy when they captured a people,

A) They lead those people back to Assyria, back to Nineveh where they made them their slaves

B) But the way they lead them back was very cruel - they would take large fishhooks and they would hook their victims in the mouths,

1) And then **string the hooks** together with other people and lead 10's of thousands of people to Nineveh in this gruesome manner –

C) Traveling hundreds of miles thru the desert and many of course would fall down dead.

They Also have records that they developed methods to skin people alive!

A) Starting with the feet – literally peel back the skin all the way up to the face.

B) They would take those who were resisting them and impale them on a pole that went through the back

1) **Body weight – begin sink down on the pole** until it would eventually go right into your skull – piercing the brain and killing you.

C) The bodies would hang there while the birds ate their flesh! - **a sign – Don't mess with the Assyrians**

D) The Assyrians were the ISIS of their day! – Cruel merciless and brutal killers

E) So we could understand why when God said to Jonah to go and preach to the Ninevites that Jonah ran in the opposite direction – **Scary people!**

But Jonah was not afraid of the cruelty of the Ninevites

A)Jonah was afraid of the mercy of God!

B)Jonah was afraid that the Ninevites would receive his message – REPENT and God in His mercy would forgive them.

C) Jonah had no intention of seeing the people of Nineveh blessed

1)He didn't want to see them **blessed** – he wanted to see them **blasted!**

D)He didn't want to see them come into **salvation**, he wanted to see them suffer! –

1)He wanted to see them annihilated!

E)Jonah wanted **revenge, not restoration!** –

1)It is something that is in all of us

Even the ancient Chinese proverb speaks of revenge – if thy enemy doeth thee wrong, buy each and everyone of his children a new drum”

A)Revenge, I love it You parents get that one- You teenagers are thinking what is wrong with that

B)There is something in us that makes us want to get back at those who have wronged us and Jonah was no different

C)He was afraid not of their cruelty, but he was afraid of the mercy of God

1)And so Jonah went off in the opposite direction

But here is what Jonah failed to realize – God is fully concerned about all People – Not just some people.

A)This really is the MAJOR POINT of the Minor Prophet – Jonah – **PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD!**

B)See when Jonah fled – when Jonah rebelled and ran from the call of God.

1)**God had other options.** – He could have chose Hosea, Joel, Amos

C)But God pursued His rebellious prophet- because Jonah mattered to God.

God wasn't just interested in the work that He was going to do in Nineveh, he was focused on the work He wanted to do in Jonah!

A)Pastor Mike will cover all the details of the story on Wed. night

B)But God sends a storm – my fault/ throw me over board - Big Fish swallows him

C)I know Skeptics who have a hard time with that – impossible – **definitely can't survive three days**

1)Documented accounts of people who have – but more importantly –

JESUS validated the story of Jonah

A)In order to believe in Jesus you have to believe in the story of Jonah? Really?

B)See **Jesus quotes the story of Jonah** as an historical fact that really happened

C)Matthew's gospel – religious leaders asking for a sign.

Matthew 12:39-41

“Jesus answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

D)Believe in Jesus – believe the story of Jonah!

A little elementary age girl was talking to her teacher about whales and how she had heard in Sunday School about how a whale had swallowed Jonah.

A)**Public school** – the teacher was not a Christian – said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small.

B)The little girl remained steadfast in her position and reiterated that indeed, a whale had swallowed Jonah.

C)Irritated, the teacher again stated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible.

D)The little girl said, "I'm not sure how it happened, but when **I get to heaven I will ask Jonah.**"

E)The teacher replied smugly, "What if Jonah isn't in heaven?" What if Jonah is in Hell?

1)The little girl replied, "Then you ask him."

So Jonah gets swallowed by the Big fish – NOT TO PUNISH JONAH But to PRESERVE JONAH –

A) God had a plan for his life.

B)God didn't need Jonah to go to Nineveh for Nineveh's sake – he could have sent anyone to Nineveh.

C)God needed Jonah to go to Nineveh for Jonah's sake – do a work in Jonah

D) So after 3 days in the fish– Jonah says ok God I will go and God has the Fish – Barf Jonah onto Dry land – OUR TEXT 3:1

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

JONAH MATTERED TO GOD – not only did God pursue Jonah – he gives Jonah a 2nd chance. the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time,

A)Love that about God – 2nd chances – 3rd – 4th

B)The Bible says that God's spirit will not always strive with man – but it strives for a long time!

1)If you are living in rebellion and sin today – Devil is trying to tell you God has given up on you –

C)**NOT TRUE – PURSUING YOU** – Why you are here

D)The word of the Lord came to Jonah a 2nd time –

V. 4 GIVES US THE MESSAGE: really simple: 8 words – yet 40 days and Nineveh will be overthrown

A)Real Happy message: Seeker sensitive – 40 days going to Burn!

B)Smile on his face – I can't wait to watch!

C)But the people of Nineveh repented – in fact it was the greatest revival ever recorded in human history

1)A city of 600,000 residents, all turning to the Lord, everyone – amazing!!!!

And in verse 10 of chapter 3, we are told that God decided to accept their repentance, He was merciful and God decided not to destroy them!

A)Nineveh – these wicked people mattered to God

B)God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. – Ezekiel 18:23

1)He is not happy when People die and go to hell. It breaks his heart

C)I am sure that Jonah made it sound like God was happy to destroy them but that is not true. – NONE PERISH

D)So the whole city responds to the message – with fasting and seeking God – Revival is breaking out in Nineveh.

What happens next is the part of the story I find hard to believe!

A)No problem – God creating a fish – Swallow a man – We make Rockets that send people into space –

God can make a Big Fish – swallow a man

B)What I struggle to believe in Jonah's reaction to the Ninevites turning to God and God forgiving them

C)And after being the catalyst of the greatest revival in history, more saved than ever at a Billy Graham or Harvest crusade –

1)and what does Jonah do Verse one of chapter 4 – “It displeased Jonah and he was angry”

D)The Hebrew text is much stronger

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

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

B)Jonah says to God in v.2 This is why I didn't want to go to Nineveh because I knew this is what you would do – You are a gracious and

merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm

C) This should be a praise song – Not a complaint

D) Like Pete doing worship today – we are singing about the love and mercy of God and Afterwards

1) Pete is like – you know this really ticks me off

E) God is so loving – so forgiving – Ticks me off – really mad right now – **too much sun in the dessert**

Jonah – I knew you would do this - I knew if they repented you would forgive them – and quite frankly God I don't like them –

A) I wanted to see them Judged

3 "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!"

C) Are you Serious!

Instead of Dancing in Joy – Jonah is depressed – God is too Kind! Instead of loving on and discipling these new believers

A) V.5 He goes outside the city and sits on a hill to see what might happen –

B) No doubt he is thinking – there is still time for the Ninevites to blow this and reverse the whole thing – JUDGMENT AFTER ALL.

1) I believe that is what Jonah was hoping for!

C) Now if I am God at this point – I am done with Jonah – **Oy Vey – I give up**

But People matter to God – This time God pursues His POUTING prophet

A) God is not just patient with **repentant sinners** – He is also patient with **RIPENING SAINTS**.

B) ALL OF US ARE in that process of ripening right now. – some of us are farther along than others. - SEMI SWEET

C) Others Are REAL SOUR – always critical – always seeing the worst in situations -

1) Good news - God is committing to finishing the work that he began in us

D) God was committed to Jonah

He wanted Jonah to not only know that he was a God of love and grace and mercy –

A) He wanted Jonah to have that same HEART

B) a heart of grace and love and mercy toward all people.

C) **To be fair with Jonah** – let me ask you a question I heard this past week –

1) and I want you to consider your first response.

Which would you prefer happen to the leader of ISIS A) a bullet to the head or that he would be saved, follow Jesus

B) Be honest – **my first reaction – especially after Nice, France – bullet to the head.**

1) took a few minutes and I came around – saved – maybe affect the rest of them

C) God wants Jonah to have His heart –

1) So God **prepares 3 things** to once again work on Jonah's heart

1st God prepared a Wonder – a plant – brought shade.

A) Crazy – V.6 tells us that Jonah was very grateful – other translations – exceedingly glad.

B) The first time in the book that Jonah is seen happy

– **"I finally got it made in the shade."** – **Something finally going my way!!**

C) That night he goes to sleep – 2nd thing God did – V.7 **He prepared a worm – to eat the plant.**

1) Jonah wakes up in the morning and his shade tree is gone.

D) On top of that V.8 – God prepared a vehement East wind – not only is the sun beating down on him – the sand is blowing in his face.

Jonah is like this is unbelievable – I can't get a break

A) First I run from God – sends a storm – I ask the sailors to throw me overboard so I can die – God sends a fish

B)I finally give in and tell God I will deliver the message - the Fish barfs me on the beach – Skin is now bleached white – hair is all gone – acids in the fish

C)I go to Nineveh – I Deliver the message – the people I wanted destroyed – repent

D)God does what I knew that He would – He forgives them

I go up on this hill to pout – Hoping God will change his mind or that the Ninevites will mess up

A)God sends a plant to shade me – finally something is going good for me

B)Now my shade tree is gone and now this wind is blowing in my face

1)Life Stinks –

Reminded me of the story of the Grandkids who played a joke on their grandpa –

Grandpa was a sound sleeper

Each afternoon Grandpa would lie down for a nap. One day, the kids decided to put **Limburger cheese in his moustache**. It wasn't long before he awoke sniffing.

“Why, this room stinks,” he said as he got up and went out into the kitchen. He wasn't there long until he decided that the kitchen smelled too, **so he walked outdoors for a breath of fresh air.**

Much to Grandpa's surprise, the open air brought no relief, and he proclaimed, “The whole world stinks!”

C)The whole world stinks – that is Jonah – life stinks and I just want to die - Ever feel that way?

1)Not a bad idea –THE RIGHT WAY TO DO IT

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Galatians 2:20

What is God doing? He is stripping everything away from Jonah so he can see what really matters.

A)God will do that –When we start getting focused on other things – **When we get distracted from the big picture.**

B)God strips away the things that are clouding our view.

C)For some of you that happened in 2008 – there was a stripping

1)Hard but it was good. – God did a good work in your hearts – DEEPER – more in love with Jesus

Our Church – 2008 – Building project – it wasn't that we had lost sight of people or the big picture – Hoping ministry to do more – and do it better

A)But the Property and the Building project was a big focus.

B)Suddenly comes to a grinding halt and all around us – people were hurting like never before. –

1)We can't help them – No money – it is all tied up in the property

C)**The dream became an albatross** –

1)The very thing that was keeping us from being able to better take care of people.

D)God had us sell it – Settle in here –

Sometimes God has a way of stripping things down – to getting us better focused on what really matters.

A)That is what God is doing in the life of Jonah –

B)V.9 He asks **Jonah a pertinent question** – heart and sole of the book

Then God said to Jonah, “*Is it* right for you to be angry about the plant?”

And he said, “*It is* right for me to be angry, even to death!”

¹⁰But the LORD said, “You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?”

C)Jonah people matter to me – All people

The Book ends – abruptly – no answer by Jonah – Why?

A)Jonah is not writing this is real time – (No quill and paper in the belly of the big fish)

B)He is looking back and reflecting upon his horrible attitude, - all the gory details – selfish / stupid -

1)He is reflecting on his bad attitude – he doesn't candy coat it at all!

C)I AM SUCH AN IDIOT!

When God asked this question – I believe Jonah is undone – He can't write any more – puts down his pen.

A)Nothing more to be said – no excuses no explanations –

B)But the point is very Clear – PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD! – ALL PEOPLE!

Our day and age – Chaos – the shootings – police of black civilians

A)Then the sniper of the Police in Dallas – all indicative of the sad state our country is in.

B)**Seen the post – Black lives matter** – I understand that – I understand the frustration – and feeling the need to make that point.

C)But the Cross of Jesus Christ – reminds – us – Jesus – “I did this because all lives matter!

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. – John 3:16,17

You matter to God

A)Not saved – sent Jesus to save you.

B)Rebellion – Pursuing you

C)Pouting – everything is going wrong in your mind. Pursues you – stripping away.

D)He wants your heart – focus on Him

1)Your heart – His heart

Story of the Prodigal son – sinned – not worthy

A)Dad ran – arms around him

B)Feast – Son lost is found – celebrate

C)Older brother – not going – He doesn't deserve that from you.

1)Jonah is the older brother

D)AM I – Are you?

People matter – Green tags – Red tags

A)Eternal things or Temporal things

B)You matter – close

C>Your heart – His heart