

God of Second Chances – Part 2: Jonah's Repentance

- *Jonah 1:17 – 4:10*

- **Just as a brief recap on what has taken place in Jonah's life in chapter 1:**
 - **Jonah Deliberately Disobeyed God. (v.1-3)**
 - The Bible tells us that the word of the Lord came to Jonah and instructed him to go to Nineveh and preach to the people b/c of the wickedness that was taking place.
 - Jonah disliked the Assyrians b/c of the way they had treated the Israelites over the years.
 - He knew that if they confessed their sins that God's love and mercy would extend enough to forgive them. Jonah was seeking punishment, not forgiveness.
 - **Jonah's Troubles Began (v. 4-10)**
 - He lost God's protection.
 - He lost God's voice.
 - He lost God's power through prayer.
 - He lost his testimony.
 - **Jonah's Suffering Began (v.11-17)**
 - The sailors pleaded with Jonah & his God for deliverance from the storm.
 - As a last resort, they threw Jonah into the sea.
 - The storm ceased.
- **Many have argued over the reality of whether or not this account of Jonah is true or not. Is it possible for a man to be swallowed alive by a whale?**
 - I am not going to get into a debate over how Jonah was swallowed or how he stayed alive for 3 days in the belly of the whale.
 - This much I know, there are no doubt mammals today that are large enough to swallow a human whole.
 - Blue Whale (80-100', Weight up to 200 tons, consumes 4 tons of krill each day)
 - Sperm Whale (50' long, Weight 40 tons, consume 1 ton of squid each day)
 - But aside from that, I believe just as the Bible says that God was able to create a fish just for this situation. (1:17)
- **To be honest with you, the important thing here is not that Jonah was swallowed by a whale, but instead the repentance that Jonah showed to God during this time in his life.**

I. **Jonah's Prayer For Help (2:1-10)**

- a. **Jonah truly realized what it meant to have a second chance given to him by God, and chapter 2 is sort of a prayer of thankfulness to God for sparing his life.**
 - i. No doubt Jonah had done some praying as he was sinking to the bottom of the ocean and he is rejoicing now that God had heard his cry.
 - ii. There are some people who will only cry out to God when they are in the midst of a tragedy in their lives and they need help or they want their pain to stop or their circumstance to change.
 - iii. We may criticize Jonah for this prayer of help, but at least he came to his senses and realized Who was in control of every situation and even his life.
- b. **Though he succumbs to the Lord's will for his life, it is only b/c he has no other choice as he sits in the belly of the fish.**
 - i. He realizes that he has escaped death once in the storm, what a tragedy it would be if he still refused God's will and wound up dying in the belly of this great fish.
- c. **In many ways, Jonah was getting a taste of what the people of Nineveh were going through.**

- i. They were helpless and hopeless in the current condition that they were in, just like Jonah.
- ii. It was only through the mercy of God that either of their lives or situations could be changed.

II. Jonah's Second Chance At God's Will (3:1-5)

a. The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. (3:1)

- i. What a marvelous thing that even after the way that Jonah treated the Lord in Chapter 1, God is still willing to give him another chance.
- ii. Many times, we turn our backs on God and have to face some storms in our life simply b/c we refuse to obey God. But if we will repent, God will forgive.
- iii. We see that even in the belly of this great fish, God was there with him and so He is with us.

b. God provided Jonah with a new beginning.

- i. George Morrison said, "The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings."
 - 1. The failures of the past, let them remain in the past and under the blood of Jesus.
 - 2. We cannot worry with what the future may hold, instead let us trust in Him who holds tomorrow.
- ii. When we have fallen and disobeyed God it is easy to just give up and that is exactly what Satan desires for us to do.
 - 1. Our ministry is over
 - 2. There is no hope for our lives
 - 3. We are a failure
- iii. Jonah realized that through God's power, he could continue God's plan for his life.
 - 1. Abraham fled to Egypt, where he lied about his wife, but God gave him another chance ([Gen. 12:10-13:4](#)).
 - 2. Jacob lied to his father Isaac, but God restored him and used him to build the nation of Israel.
 - 3. Moses killed a man and fled from Egypt, but God called him to be the leader of His people.
 - 4. Peter denied the Lord three times, but Jesus forgave him and said, "Follow Me" ([John 21:19](#)).
 - 5. Over and over again, God restores His people to do bigger and greater things in their life for His purpose.

III. Jonah's Challenge From God (3:6-10)

a. Four times we see in this book that the city of Nineveh is referred to as a "great city".

- i. It was great in history for it was founded by Noah's great-grandson Nimrod.
- ii. It was great in size:
 - 1. Circumference of the city was 60 miles.
 - 2. Population was over 600,000
- iii. It was great in sin:
 - 1. The Assyrians were known widely for their violence.
 - 2. They impaled live victims on poles & left them to roast under the desert sun.
 - 3. The beheaded people by the thousands and stacked the skulls at the city gate.
 - 4. They skinned people alive.
 - 5. They killed babies and infants just for the fact that they did not want to take care of them.
- iv. This was the mission field that Jonah was led to so he could proclaim the message of repentance.

b. A great revival spread across Nineveh.

- i. The Bible tells us that as Jonah delivered the message of the Lord (v.4), the people repented of their sins and God chose to do away with their punishment.
- ii. This could have been a time of great rejoicing for Jonah b/c God had used him to change the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people in one day.
- iii. But instead, it became a day of misery and discontentment.

c. Jonah's pouting at God's mercy. (4:1-5)

- i. READ (vv.1-4)
- ii. Jonah knew this is what would happen. This was the very reason he sought to run from God. Though he obeyed God's plan and delivered His message, it is clear that his heart was not in it.
 1. In the belly of that great fish, he had a change of mind, but never a change of heart.
- iii. His reputation would be ruined b/c of this great revival. What would his Jewish friends think of him now? Because of his message, the Assyrians were spared from judgment!
- iv. How quick he was to forget that God's mercy extends to all, even Jonah just a few days before.
 1. He was happy when God chose to forgive him.
 2. But now he had rather die than to see the people of Nineveh forgiven. (4:3)

d. God protects Jonah . . . AGAIN (4:6-10)

- i. We see that after delivering his message, he left the city and sat on the outer banks.
- ii. What a tremendous influence he could have had on the people by giving them his testimony. But instead he missed out on the blessings of God.
- iii. While sulking in the sun, God provided a vine for him to rest under and protect him from the sun.
- iv. He seemed more concerned about God taking the vine than he was about the people of Nineveh that had repented of their sins.

➤ **This is a story about a man:**

- **Who ran from God's will for his life.**
- **Who had a change of mind, but never had a change of heart.**
- **Obeded God's will, but did not have his heart in it.**
- **More concerned about his own feelings than the repentance of others.**

➤ **Are you running from God's will for your life?**

➤ **Are you living the Christian life just to escape punishment?**

➤ **Is your heart in the ministry?**

➤ **Are you wasting opportunities that God gives you to make a difference in others lives?**

➤ **Are you going through a storm right now that you just need to surrender to God?**