

Jonah - The Mercy of God and the Actions of Men

Week 2 – God Sends Salvation

Jonah 1:1-3

God commissions His people to take a message of salvation to condemned people. This message once drew us to God when we were also condemned. We disobey and don't share.

Action: We will join God in His saving work

Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

Opening Idea

Missouri Town at Risk, but not Told

In the 1970s, a town in Missouri contracted to have the town's dirt roads sprayed with oil to control "nuisance dust". This is a common practice and effective in controlling dust from dirt roads. The problem was that the oil had been contaminated with a chemical that caused illness and death in animals and people. The contractor and the town didn't know the oil was contaminated. Other sites were treated with contaminated oil, and it was discovered that the oil contained a chemical that poisoned people and animals. The town and the contractor were not told. Years later, both the town and the contractor received notice of the contamination, and the town was evacuated, cleaned, and is now a state park commemorating historical Route 66.

People were enraged when a message was given that could save lives, but it was not delivered. It seems cruel to know there are people at risk, to be given a message that the risk exists, the message would help save lives, and it was not delivered.

This is the context for the book of Jonah. There are people at risk of God's wrath for their sin and wickedness. God has a word to save the at-risk people. He commissions Jonah, His prophet, to take God's word to the Ninevites. Jonah flees from God.

Let's continue our study of the book of Jonah and see God's mercy and the actions of Man.

Reminder (SLIDE 2)

Do You Do Well To Be Angry?

- **Let this question guide us through the study of this book**
 - Reminder of God's Mercy
 - Reveals our Disobedience and Sin
 - Draws us to Confess and Receive Forgiveness

Read

Jonah 1:1-3 ESV (SLIDE 3)

1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, **2** “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” **3** But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

Series Graphic (SLIDE 4)

Notes on Jonah 1:1-3

A Sacred Word (v. 1)

Jonah records that the word that came to Him was from the Lord. This statement is vital to understanding three things. One, this is God’s word. God has revealed His word to Jonah. This verbiage is God revealing to Jonah and to all who read this book that this word is from God and not any man. Two, this word from God is inspired by God to be used by God’s people to teach, correct, rebuke, and train in righteousness. This word is to be used to make the believer complete and equipped for all good work God prepares. This is a powerful and effective word given to Jonah. Finally, God chose Jonah to receive this word, capture this word (write it down), and share this word. Jonah writes that this word was given specifically to him. Jonah specifies his identity, son of Amittai, so that there is no confusion or mistake. This is a sacred word given to a specific man!

God Commands Jonah (v. 2)

Knowing that what was recorded by Jonah from God and to Jonah, is important in the following book. In verse two, Jonah records that God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and give them a word from God. The specific command is, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” God commissions Jonah with a directive and a mission. Go and tell. The reason for the commissioning and the message is that God is dealing with Nineveh’s wickedness. The action God takes is to have mercy on the citizens of Nineveh and reveal their wickedness to them, call them to repentance, and stay their destruction. God’s method of delivering His message to the Ninevites is to give His word to Jonah and send Jonah to proclaim His word of repentance. Jonah is commissioned!

Jonah Arises and Goes...Away (v. 3a)

Jonah responds to God’s command and commission by arising and fleeing from God. Jonah is partially obedient to God in arising. Partial obedience is still disobedience. Jonah doesn’t passively ignore God and he doesn’t sit in place and defy God. Jonah actively rejects God and runs away from Him. Jonah goes to Joppa, a Mediterranean port city of Jerusalem where Jonah

would be able to find a ship heading to about anywhere Jonah would want to go. The text reads that Jonah found a ship in Joppa that was heading to Tarshish. It is unclear where Tarshish is located. The ancient city no longer exists and there is not enough information to deduce where the city might have been located. It is speculated that Tarshish might be a town in Spain called Tartessos. It was a major seaport and located on the known edge of the world at the time of Jonah. It would probably be as far away from Nineveh as Jonah could get. The town isn't as important as the condition of Jonah's heart and mind that is revealed through the fleeing action. Jonah flees from God!

Jonah Acts Purposefully (v. 3b)

The situation described in verse three reveals that Jonah's actions are purposeful with planning and execution. Jonah purposefully chooses to go to Joppa. This is a port city of Jerusalem (modern day Tel Aviv) that would have access to ships that would take Jonah anywhere he would want to go. Jonah finds a ship going as far away as he could possibly get from the destination to where God was sending. Tarshish could be considered the "ends of the earth" for Jonah (this is why I agree that the Spanish port of Tartessos is the Tarshish destination for Jonah). Jonah utilizes his resources and pays the fare required to get to Tarshish. This would likely have been the costliest fare for Jonah since it might be the farthest travel destination. Jonah might have had that amount of currency available, but it is likely he would have had to liquidate possessions to raise the currency. He might have liquidated all his valuable possessions to pay the fare. There is no documentation that Jonah had any cargo (clothes, possessions, etc.). That might mean that Jonah sold everything he had to make the journey or he knew that this journey would be a short one and God would step in. The truth is Jonah knew it was expensive and he pays the fare to go. Jonah, having done all he needed, then boards the ship to go with the crew and other passengers to Tarshish. Jonah flees from God!

Jonah Flees God's Presence (v. 3c)

The final phrase in verse 3 matches the beginning phrase of verse 3. Jonah is fleeing from the presence of God. Jonah, being a prophet, is familiar with God and Jonah would know that God is always perfectly present in all spaces. God's presence fills every space in the universe. Knowing this, the phrase that starts and ends verse 3 may indicate more than just Jonah trying to hide from God. This is an act of willful rebellion against God in rejection of serving God. Jonah chooses to not serve God and flees. The willingness to reject serving God and fleeing is motivated by something great. Jonah will reveal in chapter four, verse one that he was angry. Jonah was angry that God would show the Ninevites grace, mercy, temper His anger and show the Ninevites steadfast love. Jonah knew that God would withhold their destruction and save them. This angered Jonah and Jonah's anger led him to sin. Jonah shows that he lacks mercy, judges God as wrong and doing something wicked, and refuses to serve God by taking God's message of repentance and forgiveness to the Ninevites. Jonah isn't passively escaping something difficult by taking a pleasure cruise. Jonah is "shipwrecked" in his heart and his reaction to his wrecked heart is to disobey and run from serving God.

God Mercifully Sends Salvation (SLIDE 5)

God Proclaims His Saving Message

He Commissions His People to Share His Message

We Rebel and Flee from God (SLIDE 6)

We Sinfully Disobey

We Refuse to Serve God

We Need God's Mercy (SLIDE 7)

Our Sin Causes Us to Look Like Jonah

Disobedient

Fleeing from God

God's Mercy Shapes Us to Look Like Christ

Withholds Wrath

Forgives

Invites Us into His Work

Merciful Response (SLIDE 8)

Send Me with Your Salvation

Acknowledge Your Sin, Confess, and Receive Forgiveness

Praise God for His Mercy

Plead for Help to Serve God

Read

Mark 10:45 ESV (SLIDE 9)

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Series Graphic (SLIDE 10)

Daily Readings

Week 2 – God Sends Salvation

Day 1

Mark 10:45 ESV

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus came and served God and willingly gave His life for God’s people to receive mercy and be saved. Jesus is God’s word of salvation to all who would believe. You received this message and believed it by faith. The more you obey and serve God to share His message of salvation, the more you look like Jesus and the less you look like Jonah. Pray today asking God to show you mercy and cause you to obey and serve. God still sends His saving message today!

Day 2

2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The word that God gave Jonah, both the message of salvation and the commission to write the book of Jonah, are precious for you. You are God’s person, and God uses His word to grow you and equip you to do good work. Pray and ask God to use His word in the book of Jonah to grow you in gratitude for God’s mercy and cause you to share His message of salvation in Jesus Christ! God still sends His saving message today!

Day 3

Psalms 139:5 ESV

5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

God is always present and knows you. He knew you and was present before you were born and He has not stopped being present and working since your birth. You cannot run from His presence, nor would you. When God withdraws His presence from the world, it will be destroyed. Ask God to forgive you for not thinking of Him and for thinking you could hide from Him. Receive His forgiveness and ask Him to cause you to seek after Him and enjoy His presence and work in you. Pursue Him and don’t flee from Him. God still sends His saving message today!

Day 4

Isaiah 40:27 ESV

27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God”?

You belong to God. He dwells in you, and you are regarded as a beloved and precious son or daughter in Christ. You cannot and do not want to hide from Him. You have been brought out of separation and into God’s family. God is not absent, and He is always present with you. Give thanks for God’s presence and for His deep love and affection for you! The message that saved you is still being shared today!

Day 5

Acts 13:47-48 ESV

47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’” **48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

You received God’s message of salvation and, by faith, believed. This salvation was proclaimed in ancient times and continues being shared today. Rejoice that you heard it, by faith you believed in Jesus Christ, and you belong to God. This command remains for you. You are commanded and commissioned to share the salvation that is in Christ. Rejoice and glorify God that you believed and have eternal life in Jesus Christ. Celebrate that God has called you to share this message with others. God includes you in His work to save others! God’s still sends His message of salvation today!