

Week 12 – Series Conclusion – There is a Better Jonah (16NOV)

Jonah 3:1-5

God show His faithfulness to bring salvation and man's lack of faithfulness to share God's salvation with people in need – Jesus is better than Jonah

Action: We will worship God for giving Jesus who perfectly obeyed and saved us. We will strive to partner with God in His salvific work because we are saved!

Background Passages

Jonah 1:17 ESV, Jonah 2:10 ESV, Jonah 3:1-5 ESV

Focal Passage: Matthew 12:38-41

Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

Opening Idea

The historical account of Jonah and the salvation of the Ninevites ends abruptly. There seems to be more to this account. The story is a correct account of God's work to reconcile Jonah, save the Ninevites, and demonstrate God's power, glory, and mercy. Maybe God was also showing us that there would be someone who would come and bring God's mercy to man and do it perfectly. Where Jonah sinned and rebelled, there would be a better messenger who would come willingly and obey perfectly. Jonah was used by God effectively, but is there a better Jonah? Let's look at God's word and discover that there is a better Jonah to redeem man!

Merciful Question (SLIDE 2)

Do you do well to be angry?

Series Recap (SLIDE 3)

Through Jonah's account, we see that God is **merciful and He mercifully saves, corrects, reveals, keeps, reinstates, is patient, loving, and transforms.**

Let's read Matthew 12 and see God's mercy demonstrated in Jesus.

Read

Matthew 12:38-41 ESV

(SLIDE 4) **38** Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." **39** But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. **40** For just 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.

(SLIDE 5) **41** The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah...

Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

Context:

Jesus is performing miracles among the people, and the Pharisees and scribes gather and challenge Jesus and His works. The claim that Jesus is not of God, but an agent of Satan and the demonic spirits. While this is happening, the scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus to perform a sign. Jesus tells them something that is revealing of who they are. Jesus says that they are an evil and adulterous generation. They are not children of God (John 8:44) and that they are not faithfully loving God but are turning to other gods to fulfill their needs and offer their worship. Jesus proclaims that they will not be given a sign except a sign that has already been given to them and will be fulfilled at a future time. The sign they are given is what Jesus refers to as the “Sign of Jonah”. Jesus says that the sign revealing the Messiah will be when “the Son of Man” will be like Jonah – three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. This sign will show that the one who does this will be the Messiah. Jesus also reveals that this generation who do not believe will not believe. When the time of judgement arrives, God will bring forth the Ninevites and the Ninevites will condemn these unbelievers. The reason for the Ninevites judging the people is that the Ninevites heard the message from Jonah and repented. This generation does not repent.

Notes on Matthew 12:38-41

Knowledge without Faith is Inadequate (v. 38)

Jesus is speaking to the people gathered around him and a group of scribes (historians and writers) and Pharisees infiltrate the crowd and begin talking with Jesus. They address Jesus as teacher. This is an interesting choice of words. They acknowledge Jesus’ teaching, but do not refer to Him as Rabbi. This would have inferred a relationship and a sense of honor and respect. But Jesus isn’t their Rabbi. They call Jesus teacher, but they do not honor His teachings. The scribes and Pharisees ask for the “teacher” to show them a sign. Again, an interesting request. They acknowledge that Jesus has done signs before and they are asking Him to do another sign. There can be a hint of disrespect in their request. They are challenging Jesus (“do something, if you can”) or they are treating Jesus like an entertainment act. They ask Him to show them a sign, but it isn’t that they believe in Jesus as God or even sent from God. There isn’t a belief that Jesus is the Son of God and that He has authority over all the universe in such a way that creation will respond to Jesus’ will and commands. The religious leaders know who Jesus is. They know He has done signs before. They know Jesus teaches people. They know many things, but they lack faith to believe that Jesus is God the Son and is the anointed one sent from God to redeem God’s people. They know, but they don’t know!

Desires for the Spectacular and not the Son of God (v. 39)

Jesus responds to the religious leader’s request for a sign by exposing the darkened hearts and minds of the current generation. They have a desire for something supernatural, but they do not

worship God alone. Jesus says that they are evil and adulterous. This statement from Jesus shows that the religious leaders, as part of this generation, are spiritually ignorant of God and have turned to other things and not toward God. They have given their hearts to something other than God. They are not seeking for God and looking to Jesus as God's Son for salvation. They are looking for spectacular things to wow and amaze, but they are not searching for God. Therefore, God will not give them a new sign to entertain or amaze but has already given them a sign. But they are blind. The only sign they will have is the sign that God revealed through Jonah. The religious leaders know the story of Jonah and they know the work God did to Jonah and through Jonah. Jesus says that this sign was given to them and this is all they will get.

Pointing to Something Better (v. 40)

Jesus explains what the sign of Jonah is specifically. Jonah was tossed out of the boat and into the sea as an offering to God, the Lord who created the sea and the dry ground. In the sea and trapped on the sea bed by seaweed, a large fish is commanded to swallow Jonah and the fish does. Jonah is in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights. Then, the fish is commanded to vomit Jonah onto the land, and the fish obeys. Jonah is on the shore and God reaffirms His message and calling to Jonah. Jesus tells the religious leaders, and others who are there to hear, that just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights, the Son of Man will be 3 days and 3 nights in the "heart of the earth". This response has two implications attached to it. One, the sign through Jonah was given, it was recorded, and it was read and taught. This sign is enough to cause the religious believers to believe by faith. Then, Jesus connects this to something that has yet to happen. The burial of the Son of Man and His resurrection. Jesus' reference to the title "Son of Man" reveals that the one who will be buried and return to life will be a man, truly a man who will die and come back to life. This title also refers back to Daniel's prophetic words about the Son of Man (Daniel 7) which refers to one who will be exalted in heaven. Jesus doesn't directly refer to Himself as the exalted one, but He refers to Himself as the Son of Man at other times (Mark 14:64 and Matthew 8:20). Therefore, Jesus is referring to Himself as the one who will be buried and resurrected. Jonah was a sufficient sign, but there will be one who will reveal God more clearly and is the one Jonah was pointing to. There will be a better Jonah!

Faith is Superior to Birthright (v. 41)

Jesus, after telling them about the sign that was given and pointing to the sign that is to come, shares a prophecy with the religious leaders. The sign given to the Ninevites was sufficient to save. Jonah spoke God's 5/8 words and God caused the Ninevites to believe. Those Ninevites will then be raised up at the time when God judges man and God will use the Ninevites who believed through Jonah to condemn this evil and adulterous generation. The Ninevites, through God's work to cause Jonah to be in the fish for 3 days and then be vomited/spit onto shore, heard Jonah's preaching, believed in God and repented of their sin and evil. This generation, including the religious leaders, have heard Jonah's sermon and have heard God speak directly, yet they do

not believe. There is enough cause to condemn this generation due to Jonah's sermon, but Jesus reveals that "something greater than Jonah is here!" Birthright is not enough to cause them, or anyone, to believe. Belief is only by faith given by God. Without faith, no amount of preaching and signs will cause you to believe. Yet, by faith, wicked and evil people will believe in God after only 5/8 words are spoken. Faith is far superior to birthright!

Merciful Truth (SLIDE 7)

God's Message is Effective (SLIDE 8)

Man as the Messenger is Suspect (SLIDE 9)

Not faithful or trustworthy

- **To Keep the Message True**
- **To Deliver the Message**
- **To Obey with a Right Heart**

Son of God is Perfect! (SLIDE 10)

- **Source of the Message**
- **Faithful to Deliver the Pure Message**
- **Pure in Obedience and Heart**

We needed a better Jonah and Jesus Came!

Ways Jonah Draws Our Attention to Jesus

1) Commissioned Messenger

John 20:19-21 ESV

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,[a] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

2) Message of Mercy

Mark 1:15 ESV

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;[a] repent and believe in the gospel."

3) Sacrificed at the hands of wicked men

Mark 9:31-32 ESV

31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” 32 But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

4) Three Days in Darkness

Mark 8:31 ESV

31 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

5) Escaped Darkness

Matthew 28:5-6 ESV

5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

6) Proclaimed God’s Message

Luke 4:18-19 ESV

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

7) Sinners Saved

John 4:39-42 ESV

39 Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

Salvation in Jesus is God’s Act of Mercy Toward Us! (SLIDE 11)

Merciful Response (SLIDE 12)

Father, thank you for sending Jesus Christ, the better Jonah, and for giving me faith to believe in Jesus as your Son and hope for salvation!

1 Peter 1:3 ESV (SLIDE 13)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Series Graphic (SLIDE 14)

Daily Readings – 7 Days

Week 12 – Jesus is the Better Jonah

Day 1 (Sunday)

1 Peter 1:3 ESV

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Praise God today for His great mercy that caused you to be born again to a living home through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. You were once dead, but God gave you faith and caused you to live. Think about the life God has given you. Praise God for Jesus Christ. Give thanks for your salvation. Take inventory of the good things you have because of faith in Jesus Christ while asking God to cause you to share this joy and hope with others. Jesus is God's mercy to you, share that act of mercy with someone this week!

Day 2 (Monday)

Commissioned Messenger

John 20:19-21 ESV

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

Begin today giving thanks for Jesus as the commissioned messenger bringing hope and salvation to wicked and condemned man. Jesus perfectly carried out His commissioning, and you were saved. Praise God for the Perfect Messenger through singing, meditating, talking, and/or sharing Jesus' work with someone. As Jesus was sent, so are you! Go!

Day 3 (Tuesday)

Message of Mercy

Mark 1:15 ESV

15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Begin today praising God and thanking Him for sending the message of mercy. Sin set you up for God’s wrath and punishment. He would have been just to judge you for your sin and destroy you. God could have spoken a message of wrath, but He didn’t. God revealed your sin but called you to “repent and believe in the gospel.” God sent a message and that message was because of His mercy and it was a merciful message. Tell someone today about that message.

Day 4 (Wednesday)

Sacrificed at the hands of wicked men

Mark 9:31-32 ESV

31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” 32 But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Begin today in humility grieving your sin and being thankful for Jesus’ obedience. Jesus was handed over to wicked men who would deny His deity and kill Him. It was prophesied of, and it happened. Jesus knew this injustice would happen and He submitted to it. It was necessary for Jesus to be treated this way, to die at the hands of wicked men, and to be buried. Take a moment and feel the grief of what your sins caused. Now, praise God that Jesus willingly and perfectly obeyed. When Jesus died, he was buried in the ground for three days. On the third day, Jesus defeated death and came back to life. His victory over death has given you life and hope. Praise God for Jesus’ obedience and the life He gives you!

Day 5 (Thursday)

Three Days in Darkness

Mark 8:31 ESV

31 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Escaped Darkness

Matthew 28:5-6 ESV

5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

Begin today with a quiet moment in reverence. Remember that Jesus laid dead in darkness for three days. On the third day, Jesus came back to life and walked out of the tomb! Give thanks that Jesus truly died, was in the tomb three days, and came back to life. Praise God that Jesus is truly the Messiah and did the necessary work to reconcile man to God and make you alive in Jesus Christ!

Day 6 (Friday)

Proclaimed God's Message

Luke 4:18-19 ESV

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Begin today praising God that instead of keeping God's message secret or keeping it for only a certain race, God gave His message to Jesus Christ and Jesus faithfully proclaimed God's message for all to hear. That message was repeated, recorded, preserved, and read to countless people for generations. Jesus proclaimed liberty, recovered sight, set oppressed people free, and proclaimed The Lord's favor. This merciful message was proclaimed to you and God caused you to believe and experience the truth of that message. Celebrate your freedom, your sight, your liberty, and that you have received God's favor in Jesus Christ!

Day 7 (Saturday)

Sinners Saved

John 4:39-42 ESV

39 Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

Begin today praising God and celebrating God's work to save sinners. God captured the words of Jesus, and you heard those words from someone, or you read them in the Bible. God caused your heart and mind to hear those words and believe. You believed that Jesus was the savior of the world and that you needed Him to save you. You were a sinner who was saved. Just as God saved you, He is also saving other sinners. Praise God for his life saving work and ask Him to cause you to be a part of His work to save sinners. What a fantastic day celebrating salvation and life in Jesus Christ. Celebrate!