

NORTH CHRISTIAN CHURCH PREP SCHOOL LESSON

Jonah Part 3

In Jonah chapter 2, we read that Jonah repented from his sin of disobedience while in the belly of the big fish and promised to obey God's command to go to Nineveh...

Jonah 2:10 *"And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land"*

Phew! After 3 days and nights in the fish's tummy, Jonah is finally free and out of the ocean! He must have been so relieved and probably soooo... needed a bath (lol)! Ok, so God gives him a second chance:

Jonah 3:1-2 *"Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.'"*

What did he do then? Did he hop on another ship? Did he run the other way? Did he hide in a cave?

Jonah 3:3a *"Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh."*

Yay! So, we read in the next few verses that Jonah spent 3 days walking throughout



Nineveh warning the people that in 40 days God would allow their city to be overthrown, taken over by other people, if they did not turn from their sinful ways. Let us stop and talk about the Ninevites for a moment. They were pagans, meaning they worshipped many gods and not THE God. The Bible also says God called them wicked. So, let us get this straight- God sent a Jewish prophet to a city of

wicked unbelievers, who were enemies of the Jewish people, in order to warn them that if they did not repent they would lose their homes and maybe even their lives. Why would He do that?

Romans 9:15 *"For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.'"*

Because He wanted to, that is why. Jonah neither understood why God was warning them nor did he like it, but our job is to simply trust and obey God. There will be many times in this life when we will not understand why things are happening. We may even think or say or hear others say things like, "Why is God letting this happen? It just does not seem fair!" In that moment, we must stop and remember that God is perfectly just, fair, and righteous.

Deuteronomy 32:4 *"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A*

faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”

We must also remember that God is in charge, that He created everything, and makes all of the rules. Then we must ask ourselves, who are we to question Him?

Romans 9:20 “But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’”

Ok, back to the story. How do you think these wicked pagans responded to Jonah? Did they laugh at him and throw him out of their city? Surprisingly enough, the Ninevites responded much like Jonah had- they repented, changed their mind about and regretted their sin! This included the King who commanded everyone to fast (stop eating) to show their regret and repentance:

Jonah 3:5,7 “The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. This is the proclamation he (the King) issued in Nineveh: ‘By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.’”

How do you think our faithful, compassionate, merciful God responded? It should be very obvious to you at this point.

Jonah 3:10 “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.”

This chapter should bring to mind the unbelievable mercy of God! God made it quite clear to both Jonah and the Ninevites that their disobedience and sin was unacceptable to Him. God warned them in different ways, but He got His message across, right? So it will also be for all of us. God may warn us in big, loud, scary ways like Jonah in the ocean and the belly's fish; or He may warn us a little more quietly through others- friends, families, and the authorities in our lives. Either way, it is our job to heed His warning- to listen to it, repent from our sin, and put our focus back on God and His Word. We must never forget how big God is, how powerful God is, and how faithful God is. He promises to save His children from sin by whatever means necessary and He does what He says He will do... and that is a very good thing.

Numbers 23:19 “God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”