

# CHASING JONAH

aka the prodigal prophet

## **Lesson Four: Jonah's Unfaithful Heart**

**First Baptist Church Chappell Hill, May 23, 2021**

# Some Preliminaries

- Few people live above their culture.
  - “Cancel culture” judges people of the past for not living above their culture, but the people judging do the same
  - But God calls us to experience real life change and live above our culture (2 Peter 1:2-9)
- When we fail God may bring us back to the place of failure to give us the opportunity for restoration.
- **John 18:18** And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.
- **John 21:9** As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.
- Jonah 3 provides a chance for restoration for Jonah and Israel

# Jonah's Unfaithful Heart (ch 3)

**Jonah 3:1** And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, **2 Arise, go unto Nineveh**, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. **3** So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was **an exceeding great city of three days' journey**.

- God takes Jonah back to the circumstances of his failure
- Jonah's job as a prophet is to faithfully deliver God's Word (compare Ezekiel 3:17-19)
- Jonah obeys but chapter 4 confirms no inward change
- Obedience purely external; he is not of one accord with God
- He doesn't want the people of Nineveh to change
- Christians can emulate what they think a Christian walk looks like but we cannot hide our hearts from God (example of Zech. 7)

# Jonah's Unfaithful Heart (ch 3)

**Jonah 3:4** And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, **Yet forty days**, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. **5** So the people of Nineveh **believed** God, and **proclaimed** a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

- Jonah's recorded message is 5 words in Hebrew
- Nineveh's response reflects inward reception and outward reflection
- They proclaim a fast and wear sackcloth, signs of genuine remorse over their sin and repentance
- Not isolated — from the greatest to the least — but what did they believe? (what about their “gods”? cf. Joshua 2:9-10; Hebrews 11:31)
- 40 days for Nineveh, 40 years for Israel (Matthew 12:38-42)
- Prodigal nation? Prodigal churches? Biggest lie Christians believe?

# Jonah's Unfaithful Heart (ch 3)

**Jonah 3:6** For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. **7** And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: **8** But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands.

- King is likely Asher-Dan III, and he repents (Israel's Jeroboam II should do the same)
- Unlike Jonah (Israel), the people of Nineveh are convicted of their sin, admit their sin, stop sinning, and pray to God for forgiveness
  - What is the key ingredient people need so they will see and admit their faults and not be prodigals? (James 4:1-10)
- In the U.S. we have “moments of silence” — the book of Jonah declares to Israel and us, “what’s your excuse?”

# Jonah's Unfaithful Heart (ch 3)

**Jonah 3:9** Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? **10** And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

- Their actions show people can change
- **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- **2 Timothy 3:16** All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness
- Some Christians treat life as a costume party — there is the real person they are and the person we see and hear. There is no room for costume Christianity.

# Application Points

- God often brings us to the circumstances of our failure to ready us for our restoration.
- Our external obedience should flow from a faithful heart.
- QUESTIONS
  - Why do you think Jonah's preaching was so effective with the people of Nineveh?
  - Should we expect to see similar revivals today?
  - Should Christians fast, and if so, how? When? And for what purpose?
  - What are the necessary elements of genuine repentance and turning to God?