

Please turn with me in your copies of God's Word to Jonah chapter 3. Our text this morning comes immediately following the great act of the Lord in raising Jonah from the belly of hell and bringing him unto dry land. We see there that after all that Jonah has gone through, the Lord is not finished with His prophet. Here in these four verses we get a look at the great mercies of God and how He continues to use weak and sinful instruments as the means of proclaiming His message of salvation. So give your attention now to the reading of God's holy Word from Jonah chapter 3 beginning at verse 1.

Read Jonah 3:1-4

Pray

Here we see the great restoration of the prophet after he has been brought to a profound brokenness for his sins and experienced the salvation and deliverance which is found only in the Lord. Back in the opening of chapter 1, we saw Jonah, a man chosen by God, receive the call of the Lord to journey to Nineveh and deliver a divine message of warning. However, instead of heeding this call of the Lord, he turned away and fled. His choice to escape the call of God led him into a terrible journey, one that brought him face to face with the overwhelming and fearsome wrath of God amidst a tempestuous sea, as he sought flee on a ship bound for Tarshish. When the gravity of his disobedience came crashing down upon him, he found himself cast overboard by his fellow sailors. Yet, even in this dire moment, the Lord brought a wondrous deliverance, preparing a great fish to swallow up Jonah. For three days and three nights, Jonah resided within the belly of the fish, an experience that brought him to a place of deep reflection and repentance. It's here, within the belly of his refuge, that Jonah's heart was transformed, his pride humbled, and his will aligned with that of his God. The Lord then commanded the fish to vomit up Jonah onto dry land, marking his emergence from the depths of his brokenness to the light of a renewed purpose. Now, as we find Jonah standing on the shore, he occupies a vastly different position – one of redemption

and restoration. His journey has taken him full circle, back to where he had first been called. From the depths of the grave to the belly of hell, Jonah has experienced a resurrection. This man, who once tried to flee the presence of God, now stands as renewed, and he receives a second calling. But this time he does not flee as he did at first, but instead humbly submits himself to the will of the Lord and goes about doing the work which he was called to do. With unwavering obedience, he embraces the calling that he had once fled from, the mission to go to Nineveh and proclaim the message of coming judgment. So we will take up this theme of the second calling of the Lord to Jonah by considering it under three heads: first, Jonah's commission; next, Jonah's obedience; and finally, Jonah's message.

First, let us consider Jonah's commission. Look again at verses 1 and 2, "And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." What an amazing thing this is. The once disgraced prophet has been fully restored to his original office, and not only that, but the Lord gives him once again his original call. The very notion of a 'second time' implies a God who not only forgives but persistently seeks to restore. This call to Jonah to arise and go unto Nineveh was not some suggestion from man or even some notion that he had in his own heart, but was a divine command of the Lord. It is a recommission of Jonah to that sacred office, showing that the Lord had fully pardoned this man from his previous transgressions and had now set out to use him in the way He has originally intended. Consider the profound implications of this recommission for Jonah. In the depths of his disobedience, he had turned away from his divine calling, seeking escape from the responsibilities placed upon him. Yet, God's mercy proved greater than Jonah's rebellion. This second call serves as a living testament to God's enduring commitment to His chosen vessels, even when they falter. Matthew Henry writes, "But, behold! the word of the Lord comes to him again, to show that when God forgives he forgets, and whom he forgives he gives a new heart and a new spirit to; he receives those into his family again, and restores them to their

former estate, that had been prodigal children and disobedient servants.” And so Jonah’s story becomes a canvas upon which the masterpiece of divine grace is painted – a grace that not only forgives but also entrusts anew.

And we notice that the second call that was given to him was the same as the first. In chapter 1 verses 1 and 2 we read, “Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.” Here in this second calling we read, “And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.” He doesn’t change the message that He gives to Jonah, despite everything that had happened. No, the call is for Jonah to go and to preach the very same message that was originally given to him, the same message which had originally caused him to flee. And so we see that the Word of God is unchangeable, that He doesn’t alter it to fit what we would like or what the hearers would prefer, but instead is a sure and steady word which must be proclaimed and obeyed. And praise God for this. Praise God that we don’t have to worry about whether or not the Word of the Lord will change and so we must be ever shifting in order to try to figure out what God says and stay in accordance with it. That is because this Word which came to Jonah is the same Word that we have today, both in Scripture and in the person of Jesus Christ. God’s Word is so attached to who He is that it possesses the very same attribute of immutability that He does. Numbers 23:19, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

Friends, this second calling, this commissioning once again of Jonah is a great comfort to us. I’m sure many of you here have gone through times in your life in which you feel as though you have

fallen too far into your sins, into your rebellion against the Lord, that you feel as though there is no hope for the Lord ever using you again. I want to tell you today that just as the Lord forgave Jonah, just as he restored this prophet back to his original position and gave him once again His original calling, the Lord can do the same for you. It doesn't matter how far you have fallen into your sins. You could be in a very belly of hell and it's not too far for the Lord to reach in and grab you and bring you up on to dry land and give you once again that calling which He has called you to. Where the calling of the Lord to Jonah was to go unto Nineveh and to proclaim the Word of the Lord to them, the calling to you is very similar. It is to rise up and go into the world and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to this lost in dying world. And the Word of the Lord, just as it did not change between the first calling in the second with Jonah, it is sure and unchanging, and it is the only thing that you can rely on for fulfilling this commission that the Lord has given to you. The Word has not changed. The Gospel is the same today as it was when you were first called from death unto life. Hear the calling of the Lord today, and do not flee as Jonah did originally. Accept this calling, accept this commission, just as that great prophet.

And in the change of the prophet we see a renewed purpose in him. When the Word of the Lord comes to him this second time, he doesn't do what he did last time and flee, but instead he submits himself to the calling of God and obeys. "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." There was no hesitation in the prophet, no wavering in responding to the call of the Lord. Instead Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh. Surely the apprehensions that he had previously had not entirely gone away. He was still a prophet of Jehovah going into a pagan nation declaring unto them the Word of the Lord. He was still going into the most powerful and great city of its time, one which was in no way friendly towards God or His people, and one with all the means available to completely destroy him if they had chosen to. And yet, there is no hint of fear or anxiety to be found in him. This is because

of everything that he had just been through. He had experienced quite possibly the worst encounters anyone could ever experience, and through it all the Lord was with him and protected him. He now had his experience as a shield against whatever may come his way. Calvin says that this was in order that “Jonah might gird up himself for the contest, that he might not afterwards fail in the middle of his course. This fear indeed frightened him at the beginning, so that he shunned the call of God; but he is not now moved in any degree by the greatness of the city, but resolutely follows where the Lord leads.”

And so with this courage and strength which is found only in the Lord, Jonah takes off on this mission to proclaim the Word of the Lord to those who are in Nineveh. His whole mind and will are now in immediate subjection to God. He immediately took off to fulfill his commission. At the time he was sent off he hadn't been given exactly what to say, but instead the Lord told him, “Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.” He knew he had to go and do what the Lord had commanded him to do, but he didn't yet have the whole picture of what that would look like. He must have felt like he was in a similar position that Abraham was in when the Lord told him, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.” (Genesis 12:1-2) In both cases the Lord suspended His communication with His servant until obedience had first been rendered to His commandment. In Hebrews 11:8 we read, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” Here by faith, in a like manner, Jonah arose and went to Nineveh to preach there, not yet knowing what exactly he was to preach, but trusting that the Lord would put the message into his mouth. And we see that once he got to Nineveh he did not delay in proclaiming his message. “And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried...” Calvin writes,

“We now then see how prompt he was in his obedience, who had before attempted to pass over the sea: he now takes hardly a moment to breathe, but he begins at the very entrance to testify that he had come in obedience to God.”

Friends, this is a beautiful display of true repentance. Henry says, “The nature of repentance; it is the change of our mind and way, and a return to our work and duty, from which we had turned aside; it is doing that good which we had left undone.” This is precisely what Jonah displayed, and it is precisely what you are called to do as well. When you came to embrace Christ Jesus, when your heart was made new by the power of the Holy Spirit, you committed yourself to the absolute unquestioned supremacy of the Lord in your life. That includes unwavering obedience to His command. When you have experienced the love and mercy, kindness and graciousness, the true forgiveness of Jehovah in your soul, the only response is reverential submission to Him. There must be a longing and a desire to obey Him. You give up your own vain wisdom. You refuse to be governed by the things of this world. You do not fear whatever may be in front of you, whether it be famine or the sword or pestilence or war or persecution or even death. You face whatever peril may come your way, and you trust in the Lord and His faithfulness that because He has called you to this life of unwavering obedience, He will be there with you all along the way. Friends, if you are not walking in this sort of obedience, the time of immediate and unwavering obedience that Jonah walked in, then you must repent of your sin of hesitancy and disobedience, and conform yourself after the patterns which you are called to walk in. Rest in the arms of your God. Take comfort that He is with you in every step that you take. Take refuge in the fact that if He has called you to a life of obedience, then He will bless your faithfulness in that obedience, no matter what may be going on around you. Hear the call of the Lord to you, and be sure to obey that call.

And finally, let us take a moment to consider what is that he went to Nineveh to proclaim. Jonah’s message to the people of

Nineveh was a simple one, yet it was so profound. “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.” What’s interesting here is that Jonah himself had to heed the call to repentance in order to proclaim it to the Ninevites. This is a call that Jonah knows perfectly well is effectual to bring about change, because it worked in his own life. Don’t sit there and think that you cannot be used in this way because of the sins you have committed in the past, because of your previous unfaithfulness. God uses even those who have rejected His calling, turned a deaf ear to His word, and pursued a course of determined disobedience; otherwise, none of us could serve Him. If you have heeded the call to repentance, you too are qualified to proclaim that call. And that was the call to Nineveh, that unless they repent they would be destroyed in forty days. The Lord’s judgement is coming. More than likely there was more to the sermon that Jonah preached in Nineveh, but the summation was that the Lord will not leave the wicked unpunished. Surely there was an awareness brought to the sins of Nineveh; surely the hope of mercy was extended to them as it is so often when judgement is nigh; but even if those things were missing, the message is still clear.

The wickedness of cities ripens them for destruction, and their wealth and greatness cannot protect them from destruction when the measure of their iniquity is full and the measure of their vengeance has come. Great cities are easily overthrown when the great God comes to reckon with them. In the case of Nineveh, their iniquity had reached such staggering proportions that it became a beacon of condemnation, put on display for all to see, as though it were being broadcast through some emergency messaging system. The city’s malevolence was laid bare, each sin and wicked deed exposed like a blaring siren demanding attention. They were left utterly without excuse. The reckoning for their wickedness was imminent, and it would be swift and unrelenting, leaving nothing but ashes in its wake. As the psalmist declares, “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the

congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” Friends, this is what awaits those who are dead in their sins, those who do not submit themselves to the Lord in reliance upon Him. They will be utterly destroyed. If that is you today, then I am sorry to say I cannot cry as Jonah did and say, “Yet forty days, and you shall be overthrown.” The Lord displayed His mercy in granting the people of Nineveh forty days to repent. There is no promise that He will do the same for you. You are not promised forty days, forty minutes, or even forty seconds. Why delay? Repent now. Today is the day of salvation.

And dear saints, The Lord will judge the nations, so the nations must repent before the Lord. We will get into this further in our sermon next time, but this is important for us to see. Just as Jonah walked through the streets of Nineveh calling them unto repentance, so too must you call your own nation unto repentance. The evils done by Nineveh are made known through archeological history. They were a heinous violent people. But the evils of America are being displayed right before your eyes. Here in America we have a man masquerading as a woman who was commissioned as a four star admiral in the Public Health Service. Nearly one million children are slaughtered in the womb every year. Paganism and atheism are promoted and protected. Brothers and sisters the evil is right in front of you. Your message for this land must be the same as that of our prophet. Issue that simple call to repentance just as Jonah did.

Brothers and sisters, revival is needed, and we must pray for it. But evangelism is the divine command, and we must be obedient to it. Jonah had belief that when he went to Nineveh, when he obeyed the Lord’s commission on his life, that God would be merciful and grant repentance, but he did not know that. It is not our job to know when repentance will be granted. Our job is simply to call for to all who hear the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So learn from this great prophet, that the Lord can and will use you despite what

you have done or gone through. He has placed a calling on your life. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” That is your calling, to live a life of faithful obedience to the Lord and walk in good work. And that is what you are to call others to as well, repentance, salvation, hope, and obedience. This is your calling. Will you obey?