

# Jonah 3

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[0:00] All right. Good morning, everyone. Reminded as we're singing, apart from the Lord, we are nothing.

The best we have to offer is not of a whole lot of value. And all that to say is I need to pray.

Let's pray. Father, we do look to you and we're thankful you've given us your word. And we can take you at your word and trust you in it.

Father, we trust that you will accomplish that which you desire as your word goes forth. So we look to you, ask that you would just pour your spirit out upon us and teach us.

And we just acknowledge our need for you. In Jesus' name, amen. So this morning, we're going to Jonah chapter 3.

[1:13] We've been looking at it from time over a period of time as I've had the opportunity to share. And our studies so far, we've seen that Jonah was called by God to go to the capital city of Nineveh of the Assyrian Empire.

And to preach to the people, as God said, that their wickedness had come up before him. Jonah, knowing clearly that what God was calling him to, and he knows God, and that God's gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant and loving kindness.

Jonah's like, yeah, I don't like these people. And he heads off in the complete opposite direction. His disobedience lands him in the belly of a fish.

And for three days, he's there before he prays. And I think, yeah, I can relate because I can be kind of stiff-necked myself.

But it's hard to imagine that he would be there that long before he actually turns to the Lord and looks to him. But when he does, Ralph hurls him up on the shore.

[2:44] And that's where we pick up this week is I envision Jonah climbing out of a pile of fish vomit. So that's just me.

But chapter three is where we pick up. And, you know, we think about all of that. And we think just how incredible it is that a fish would swallow a guy and then throw him up on the shore.

And he'd live through all of that. We think that's pretty incredible. But in the book as a whole, it pales in comparison to what we'll see in chapter three.

So chapter three starts. And it says, then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. And you think God in his grace and mercy gives Jonah a second chance.

Jonah doing exactly the opposite of what God had called him to do. And then in repenting, changing, acknowledging that before the Lord and God gives him another chance.

[3:48] But it speaks of how incredible God's love is towards us. How he continually extends to the rebellious, to wayward children, the opportunity to do things right.

You know, I think about that. And if anybody could do exactly the opposite of what God wanted, that was Jonah.

But God just simply gives him a second chance, gives him another opportunity. And Jonah's had a change of heart. But God doesn't keep bringing it up before him and reminding him over and over again.

Well, remember when you ran away and you, you know, he doesn't do that. And he doesn't do that with us. He stands us up, so to speak, dusts us off and gives us additional opportunities.

He doesn't do that constant reminder thing of Jonah's failings. And to me, that speaks a lot. Now, that's hard for us to get our mind around.

[5:23] To me, it's always right here, right? You remember people that have done wrong and that's like always right here.

But God says, I don't do that. Now, he says, I will remember their sins no more. It doesn't say he forgot.

And I think that's important for us to grasp. He doesn't forget like I do.

I'm getting older, I forget more and more. God doesn't forget. He chooses not to remember. And there's a difference in that. And again, I think about our kids, probably more so I think about myself when I was a kid.

And, you know, my parents didn't tear up my birth certificate and say you're no longer mine because you ran amok and did stupid stuff.

[6:29] Right? We don't do those kinds of things. And God doesn't do that with us. There can be a breakdown in the relationship.

But I'm still my parents' son. My kids are still my kids. No matter how much conflict there may be, it doesn't change who we are.

And again, I think that's important. We remember from the scripture in Luke 15, the account of the prodigal son, that picture is that dad was just simply waiting for him to come back.

And that's God pictured here in Jonah, waiting for Jonah to acknowledge his sin, his failings to come back to him.

And now he's giving him that second chance. And I think he's coming up out of the vomit.

[7:35] Probably God hoses him off. And he sends him again on the task that he had initially given him. Right? He's not a former prophet, a non-profit.

He's still the one that God called. That hasn't changed. He still has a task for him. Our past sin does not necessarily disqualify us from service.

Now, depending on what it is, there may be some restrictions, or there may be some adjustments that are made. But Jonah is still God's prophet. Jonah still has a task that God would have him to do.

So for you and I, even in our failings, that doesn't change who we are in God's eyes. We're still his kids. He still has a task for us to do.

And I think it's important that we keep that in mind. That we can't use the excuse, well, I blew it, and now I can no longer do whatever it is.

[8:45] When God has given us a task, that's what he's called us to. So, again, we don't earn the right to serve the Lord.

We don't qualify ourselves to serve the Lord. He does all of that in us, right? He tells us, he says, in being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

He's the one that does the work in us that qualifies us in the first place. It's got nothing to do with me. So, how can I disqualify myself from something he has qualified me for?

And, again, I think that's what we're seeing in this with Jonah, right? Again, we're all works in progress. None of us have arrived. And that's Jonah.

Jonah's a work in progress. The fish was part of his training to get his head on straight, so to speak. So, again, all of this waywardness didn't alter God's plan.

[10:05] And failure doesn't relieve me from my responsibility, right? And I think it's comforting to know, again, when we blow it, that God's patient.

That the old King James word is long-suffering. I thoroughly love that word when it's in relationship to the Lord and how he sees me.

I don't like it so much when that's what he's calling me to in my life in relation to other people. That's hard. But, again, that's where he is doing that work in us.

So, again, we see that the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.

I'm old, so I'm kind of creaky up here. But, back in chapter 1, we saw God tell Jonah, he says, arise, go to Nineveh, and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come to me.

[11:18] Here, he says, arise, go to Nineveh, and preach to it the message that I tell you. And it's like, cry out against, preach to.

In my mind, there's a difference. Okay? The instruction has gone from speaking against them to speaking to them.

And I think, you know, there's a place for both. But it's important to know which it is that God is calling us to.

So, again, he says, arise and go to Nineveh and preach to it, what? The message that I tell you. See, we can think, I need to speak against this, or I need to talk to them, but which is it? We need the Lord to show us that, to tell us that, to point out the message that he would have spoken, not what I think.

[12:35] So, again, an important issue, because he knows their hearts. He knows where they're at and what they're ready and would be open and receptive to hear.

So, we have to trust him to show us what he would have shared. Right? And he tells Jonah to go to Nineveh and he says, and when you get there, I'm going to tell you what to say.

And I think, but that's just like God. When you get there, then I'll tell you. I want to know before I get there.

Right? And Jonah probably wants to know too, because he don't like these guys. He liked this whole thing about speaking out against them. Now you're telling me to go talk to them, Sarah. And I was reminded years ago, the Lord called us out of a particular denominational setting and the way in which he did so was he told me you need to leave.

Okay. Where am I going? Right? Because that's the natural response. So I'm asking, okay, so where am I going?

[14:00] And what does he tell me? You need to leave. Yeah, I got that. Where am I going? He said, no, you leave. I'll show you where you're going when you get there.

And different, but the same for Jonah, he's telling, I'll tell you what to say when you get there.

Because again, we talked about past studies.

Jonah knows God is gracious and he don't want to go there because he knows he's just the kind of God that will forgive them.

I don't want them forgiven. I hate these people. God doesn't tell him what the message is until you get there and it was the same with us. Now, and people say, so okay, Jeff, so how did God tell you this?

He told me in a Sunday school class going through the scripture. Right? when I hear, when I read what the text is we're going over in a Sunday school class, I didn't hear it audibly, but I might as well have.

[15:19] Okay? It was like a ton of bricks. God says, you need to leave. And I'm like, what? You need to leave. And then, like I said, that whole thing about, well, where am I going?

Blah, blah, blah. And, and he's like, you need to leave and I'll show you when you get there. Okay. And he did.

When we got there, I knew. How did I know? Through his word. when we got to the new place, the new fellowship, the new church home, the pastor was teaching from exactly the same passage that God spoke to me months earlier when he told me to leave.

And it wasn't just because they were going through that passage, though that was how he affirmed that. he can do so.

But, but, it comes through his word. It comes through the scripture. Right? The, the psalmist writes and he tells us, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

[16:44] And we think of that. How, how big was the lamp? how big was the lamp? Right? They didn't have halogen headlamps or LED lights.

When you're out walking, they had these little porcelain jobs that they dumped some olive oil in and stuck a little wick. So, that'd be kind of like walking around with your Bic lighter.

Except, you couldn't turn it up on high. Right? How far could you see? One step?

Two, if you're lucky. You can't see way out ahead. But that's how the Lord is. He doesn't give us way out ahead because if we saw two steps, three steps, if we saw miles down the road, if we saw years out into the future, we'd go, uh-uh, I ain't going there.

We'd be like Jonah. I don't like where this is headed. I don't like where you're leading me. Again, we look at Jonah and we make jokes and, you know, those kinds of things.

[18:00] But the reality is that would be all of us or any of us. So, again, he gives us what we need for today, for the next step.

should be coming through his word and him teaching us through those things so that we can learn to walk by faith.

So, the word of the Lord let me find where I am.

I laugh. Technology always gets me. Wow, I skipped a bunch. Or did I? No, I didn't. I'm in my right place. Don't mind me.

So, yeah, how do you know when you've arrived? Again, when God's word tells us. He says, now therefore go and I will be with your mouth and teach you what to say.

[19:15] So, giving us the things that we need is what he does. Right? In Mark 13, Jesus says, when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand or premeditate what you will speak.

But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that. For it's not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. So, when the Lord opens our eyes, puts us in situations, we have to trust him and what it is that he would have to be shared.

Again, how do we know? it's his word. By the Spirit teaching us, bringing to remembrance that which he would have spoken.

Jesus said in John 14, the helper of the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance the things that I've said.

So, to remember means what? It has to be in there in the first place. How can I remember something I never knew? You can't.

[20:45] But if I don't spend time here in the scripture, he can't remind me of those things that I haven't read, that I haven't heard presented, that I haven't studied.

So again, he wants to use us to speak to people the truth of his word, but we have to put it in in the first place. So it does give us some responsibility in that.

Because again, his heart's for the people. faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word. It's not my eloquence of speech or lack thereof.

It's the truth of his word. The spirit working through the word ministering to the hearts of people. So, all of that to remind us.

Right? So Jonah rose and he went to Nineveh according to the word of God. I think again, he's being obedient.

[22:02] He's receptive to God's word. And that's what he's moving on. He's doing things right, finally. Right?

Because he's hearing the Lord and he's being obedient. So Jonah rose, went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord.

And now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days journey in extent. Now this is speaking about the size, and I'll call it a metropolis.

And I'm thinking to myself, how do you explain this? Right? Is it Nineveh proper? Is it the metropolitan area? I think, well, we got Grand Rapids, right? There's Grand Rapids, but there's Wyoming, there's Byron Center, there's Walker, there's name your little suburbs all around.

To me, it's Grand Rapids, right? They run one end to the other. If you don't notice the sign, you can't tell the difference. So that's what's being expressed here.

[23:07] And it says it's a very large city. We talked before, it's a walled city. And scholars say it's probably in the neighborhood of 60 miles across.

So it takes him days to go through. And that's what the Lord is expressing to us here. It says, And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk.

Then he cried out and said, Yet 40 days in Nineveh shall be overthrown. Okay, here's Jonah in Nineveh.

The watchmen on the wall see this figure approaching from a distance. And they're looking and it looks like a ghost.

ghost. And as he gets closer, they figure this dude really looks like a ghost. He's all pale. We talked about this before.

[24:08] You spend three days in the gastric juices of a fish. He's all bleached. Probably has no hair left on his body. He looks really weird and he's walking into town.

Right? So, by this time, people are noticing. And he looks really strange. And initially as he comes in, he doesn't say a word.

But everybody notices. Right? Because Jonah himself is the message. Right? A living testimony, if you will. And just like Jesus said, as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.

Right? So, not only does Jonah speak the word of God, his very presence is a testimony of the Lord.

And again, I think that's what he calls us to be. And why Jesus would say in Matthew 5 that we're to be salt and light, that we're to so let our light shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

[25 : 29] Does the way we live point to the Lord? Do we live differently than the world around us?

Do we stand out like some bleached hairless dude? Are we different?

Right? Peter would state in 1 Peter, he says that you're a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special, and again, King James just expresses things sometimes.

You're peculiar. people, that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Again, we should stand out, not for being weird, but for being different. We should see us as peculiar compared to the world around us.

[26 : 38] Jonah was definitely a living testimony of being different. And again, I believe what the Lord calls us to.

Right? So he's strolling through town looking like a dead man walking. Pale. And everybody notices. And then about that time he starts yelling, 41, 40 days and none of us shall be overthrown. Jonah hates these people. I'm thinking his eyes are flashing. He's probably got a sneer, maybe a grin. Maybe he's all excited.

You guys got 40 days and you're all going to fry. Like I said, he hates them.

But this is the word that God gave him to share. He's like, I like this message, God. Send me.

[27 : 49] Fry them all. That's where he's at. And again, it's like crazy.

But the word overthrown, the Hebrew, is the same word used back in Genesis with Sodom and Gomorrah and their destruction.

Same word. So, he's looking forward to this. Here comes the hammer and you're done.

He's not concerned about making them comfortable. He's not concerned about pleasing them. He's not concerned about a nice fluffy message that doesn't offend anyone.

He's simply proclaiming the truth of God's word. And I think, you know, we're blessed. our pastor shoots straight, gives us the word.

[29 : 00] But how many churches in our day and age today are concerned about how people feel in neglect of the truth of the scripture?

How many are more concerned about video clips and a five-point sermon outline and making things rhyme and whatever?

Now, again, using technology, take it or leave it. It's not that a clicker's bad. It's not that videos are bad. It's not that any of those things are bad, but at what expense?

If it's an aid in promoting the truth and presenting the scripture, great, fine. But if it's a detriment too, just to make people be more entertained to fill the seats, and I don't know if you've heard, but I've heard a number of times, it's all about nickels and noses filling the seats up so they give more money, not about the truth, that's the problem.

Jonah didn't, obviously wasn't concerned about making the people happy. He's being obedient and proclaiming the truth, and it was a harsh message.

[30 : 20] but it's one that needed to be given. So, that's, yeah, that's where it's at.

And it is. What does it mean to be saved? The scripture is focused.

Really, one main message. people are lost and in need of salvation.

The whole, right? And Jesus says, he's new, who is not with me, is against me.

There's two camps. You're either in Christ or you're not. plain and simple, straightforward.

[31 : 23] It's not, are you a part of the church? It's not, did I raise my hand? Did I walk an aisle? Did I get baptized? The question is, am I in Christ or you're not?

It's that simple. I like the way the Philippian jailer expressed that in Acts 16. He asked the question simply, what must I do to be saved?

And they give him the answer. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved, you and your whole household. Now, it doesn't mean him getting saved gets his whole family saved.

It means him getting saved does what? It affects how he lives his life and that has an influence on the people around him. But his salvation is based on believing in the Lord.

It's that simple. It's not here. It's that beliefful trust. Right?

[32 : 30] Not an action that I do. Not walking an aisle. Not filling out a membership form. Trusting in the finished work of the cross.

Jesus paying the price for my sin. Just as the scripture says, that's it. That's all it takes. Recognizing I can't do anything.

It's everything he's done on my behalf and I receive it fully. That's it. But that doesn't fit our way of thinking many times.

Right? We get confused about how important is eschatology and times, you know, am I pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib? We don't have to go into all that.

Is it God's sovereignty or is it man's responsibility? Yes. But we don't need to go into all of that. Do you know Jesus?

[33 : 38] More importantly, does Jesus know you? Because apart from that, nothing else matters. He's more than capable of teaching us all of these other things.

And I'm not trying to say that they're not important. But that is not the initial message that needs to be brought. The initial message is do you know Jesus?

Because if not, 40 days into judgment's coming, baby. That's it.

It's coming. And we think, you know, that's a pretty narrow message. But it was a very effective message. verse 5.

So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. The people believed.

[34 : 52] They believed. God. Right? The scripture tells us in several places, but Paul in the letter to the churches of Galatia says, Abraham believed God.

It was accounted to him for righteousness. Simple faith made him righteous. Simple faith for you and I makes us righteous.

Because my simple faith is simply trusting in everything that Jesus did and what he gives to me. That's it. Right?

They heard the word, they received it, they believed it. They turn to the Lord from their sin. Right? And we use the word repentance. though it's not, the particular word is not used here, but the example is given.

[36 : 05] True repentance is an action. It's not something we claim, it's something that we do. And how do we know that the Ninevites actually repented?

They put on sackcloth and ashes, which was an expression of mourning, and they fasted. They denied themselves. James tells us faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

I can claim all day to have faith. If it hasn't changed anything in my life, it's of no value. James goes on and tells us, well, even the demons believe and tremble, but the demons aren't saved.

They're not in a right relationship with the Lord. They have a head knowledge. They don't have that heart relationship. true faith acts.

Okay? That's what it means. It's like saying, I'm going to go to Colorado.

[37 : 35] That means I have to leave Michigan, right? I can claim all day I'm going somewhere, but if I never leave, I'm not actually going.

If I claim to have faith in the Lord, but I still live the way I've always lived, I don't really have faith in the Lord.

You see my point? There has to be a change. Something has to shift, if you will. You can't turn to the Lord without turning away from the habits, the practice, the life of sin.

And then it says in here, from the greatest to the least. the ground at the foot of the cross is level. It takes the same thing for the greatest as it does for the least, for the king and for the lowliest of slaves. It takes the same thing, all of them.

[38 : 57] Verse six shows us that. the word came to the king of Nineveh. And he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself, and sat cloth and sat in the ashes.

And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles saying, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything.

do not let them eat or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily to God.

Yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. So again, same for all of them.

But the king is making this proclamation and I think again, it's like, what would we do if we turn on the radio or turned on the TV and see the president declaring a nationwide mandatory fast?  
[40:14] And everybody has to dress in a burlap bag. denying yourself and expressing how disgusting we are.

That's what's taking place. The ruler of the metropolitan area is requiring this of everyone. And not only the people, but the animals. words. And I think to myself, this guy is taking the word of God very seriously.

Jonah, speaking the word, is saying judgment is coming. And it is serious. But then again, I think, do we?

Do we take the word of God seriously? Or do we dabble a little here and there? Do we, you know, put on a nice front?

[41:23] Depending on who's around, do we use the right terminology in the right crowd? Or is this my life?

do I look weird to some people? And again, that's, that's the issue.

They're, they're taking it very seriously. And he says in here, right? And let everyone turn away from evil and from the violence that's in his hands.

Is that part of Jonah's message? no. But he knows. He knows that their ways are evil.

He sees the excess of violence and he's calling to have them put a stop to it. But that's not anything that God ever spoke to them.

[42:30] right? We have this thing called a conscience. Innately, we know. And, and that's what he's dealing with.

Right? He's not trying to make excuses. they're repenting.

Across the board. And then verse 8, it says in here, they cried out mightily to God.

And I'm thinking, what's that mean to cry out mightily? Passion? Exuberance? New American Standard and the New Living Translation both use the word earnestly.

Okay? They're serious. Serious. It's not casual or flippant.

[43:44] It's a serious issue. Right? And, they're serious about their sin. They're serious about repenting. And, they're serious about their pursuit of the Lord.

Right? Repentance is not what a person does in order to come to the Lord. It is coming to the Lord.

Okay? We've, I don't remember here Thursday nights. We've talked I've talked about repentance.

Repentance simply means to turn. But, if I turn this way, that means I turned away from that way.

Okay? Repentance simply means to turn. God, to turn to God means I have to turn away from sin.

Now, I can turn away from sin X and turn into sin Y. That's a turning. But, in order to turn to God, I have to turn away from sin.

[45:02] sin. And, that's what they're doing. Again, not at the instruction of God, but simply because that's what is in, they know that they've been violent and doing horrible things.

So, they're repenting, they're changing, and they're doing so passionately. who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from his fierce anger, so that we might not perish?

Good question. Right? They understand that Jonah's message offered no hope. Jonah's message was 40 days and you're dead.

What do we got to lose? 40 days and I'm dead. Who knows? Maybe God will change. Right?

That's it. 40 days. I think that's not the gospel message. Where's the good news?

[46:22] Good news. There isn't any. Not given. Today, we have a much greater message, don't we?

Today, we're offered hope, promise of forgiveness. John tells us, 1 John 1:9, we know this passage. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us.

That's what we're offered. heard. They weren't. Again, over and over, God promises that if we repent and if we turn to him, that he'll be merciful and gracious to us.

But what none of her heard is judgment's coming. judgment. And it was true. But they repent anyways.

On the basis of what? Who knows? Maybe God will reconsider, not blast us. Right? We know he's gracious, loving, and forgiving.

[47:44] They didn't have that. Scripture tells us though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow.

In John 6, Jesus says, the one who comes to me, I will by no means cast out.  
Again, that's the hope, the promise, the assurance that we have. They weren't getting that. verse 10 says, then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways, and God relented from the disaster that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.  
Right? He saw their works, and he relented. King James says that God repented.  
The New Living says he changed his mind. Wait a minute. Does God change his mind? Some heads nod, some heads shake.

[49 : 10] Does God repent? repent? we just read that. Maybe we did.

Right? But the scripture tells us, Malachi 3, I am the Lord, I do not change. I just read that he did, but here it says he didn't.

Let's look at another one. Numbers 23, 19. God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Ha!

It's a contradiction. No, it's not. I put this big word up here, and I even spaced it out so you can write it down, or try to spell it if you want.

Anthropomorphism. the scripture describes God in a way in which we can understand.

[50 : 20] Okay? Gives human attributes to him, though he's not human, so that we can get our mind around an aspect.

the appearance is God might change his mind, though the scripture says, I do not change. It gives the appearance that he repented, turned, though the scripture says, I'm not a man that I should repent.

So, again, how do we get our minds around that? How do we understand God if he's not explained in a way in which we can relate? And in part, we have the picture of Christ, God in human flesh, so that we can get our mind around the aspects of God, some aspects of a God.

Okay? That's where these things come from. All right? Because, again, the reality is God is acting totally in agreement with his word, though we're looking at an apparent contradiction.

But, Jeremiah 18, the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, the pluck up, the pull down, the destroy, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

[52 : 09] It's just what he said he would do. If they change, great. God would God send Jonah to Nineveh simply with a message that I'm going to destroy you, why wouldn't he just plain flat out destroy them?

Give him an opportunity to change, but I'm still going to destroy you anyway. that don't make sense. Right? There's an implied invitation for repentance in Jonah's message.

In agreement with what the scripture says. God's not simply looking to destroy people.

Ezekiel 33 11. As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked would turn from his way and live.

God's heart for the people of Nineveh was that they would turn from their wickedness. His heart for us is that we would turn from our wickedness because if that repentance doesn't come, we face destruction just like they did.

[53 : 45] He's loving, he's merciful, he's long suffering toward us. See, again, I like that towards me because I need it. It's not willing that any would perish, but that all would come to repentance.

repentance. We see it in the Old Testament, we see it in the New. It's been his heart from the beginning. So, we see here probably the greatest revival in world history.

history. The whole city, kingdom turning to the Lord.

Like I said at the beginning, the whole issue of Jonah being in the belly of the fish for three days and surviving that was cool and great. But this is way bigger.

This is huge. huge. This is multiple thousands of lives being spared, getting right with the Lord.

[55 : 01] But all of that said, the book of Nahum tells us 100, 150 years later, God destroys the city of Nineveh.

And we think that's sad. but how many individual lives were spared?

How many Ninevites will we see in heaven? Because God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, slow to wrath, and gave them the opportunity to make that change.

Right? He's always ready to show compassion on anyone who would look to him, turn to him.

Right?

Again, it's not our hearing of his word that's pleasing. It's our response to what he says that's pleasing.

[56 : 21] Spurgeon put it this way, says, faith and obedience are bound up in the same bundle. He who obeys God trusts God, and he who trusts God obeys.

We can't claim to trust God and not obey. again, we see an active change in the Ninevites.

That's what Jesus says, both in Matthew and in Luke. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

We have a much greater message than they did. With that comes much greater responsibility. We refuse the sacrifice of the Son of God.

The judgment that will come would be much greater greater than what befell Nineveh, because we have more information. So the people of Nineveh, they were attentive to God's word.

[57 : 56] Right? They had the promise of judgment, but they took it to heart. Right? And it changed their lives. I think, we got way more.

What do we do with it? Do we take it to heart? Does it change our lives? Or do we just continue on as is?

Right? Are we open and receptive? Do we allow God's word under the ministry of the Spirit to change us?

Right? Again, he's working. We're going to have our failings, but there's a big difference between an incident and instance of failure and a life chosen to live in rebellion.

Big difference. Right? Again, we got 1 John 1, 9 written to the church, I might add.

[59 : 20] If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive. And to cleanse. That's to the believer. That's for the instance of sin.

The life has to be surrendered. The life has to be mortified.

We have to turn away from. but most importantly turn to the Lord. Right? That is the demonstration of a changed heart.

Not walking through the doors of a church on Sunday and then living the rest of the week like the world around us. That our life would be changed.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your faithfulness to your word. We thank you for the example that you give us not only in Jonah but in the people of Nineveh that you love.

[60 : 33] And help us to remember that you love us so incredibly that you would give your son on our behalf. That if we would simply receive the gift that you offer.

That we would trust in the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf. We could be saved. And it's that simple. But may your word ministered by your spirit affect us and change us.

That we would live a life desiring to honor and please you. That the world around us would recognize it as different and that they too would look to you.

We thank you for your faithfulness to teach us. That you know us and you love us dearly. And that we'll always be your children when we've come to you.

God would help us walk in a manner that is reflective of that family resemblance. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[61 : 55] Amen.