

Jonah 3:1-5,10

Mark 1:14-20

1 Cor. 7:29-31

“In God there is deliverance and honor,
our strong rock and our refuge.” AMEN!

(Sing)

“And you run and you run
to catch up with the sun but it’s sinking

Racing around to come up behind you again

The sun is the same in a relative way,
but you’re older

Shorter of breath and one day closer to death.”

The song is “Time” by Pink Floyd.

Roger Waters wrote the song
when he realized he was no longer
preparing for anything in life,

but there he was right in the middle of it.

How sad it is when a person is
no longer preparing for anything in life. (Pause)

The connection between preparation and time

is a major theme in our texts today.

In Jonah, we are told that
the word of the Lord came
a 2nd time to Jonah.

Prepare the people to change their ways.

In Paul's letter to the church in Corinth,
we are told that the
appointed time has grown short.

The time to prepare was limited.

Then Paul gave a list of advice that leads,
even the one who is paying attention,
to give it a second read.

These two mentions of time have to do
with a special kind of time.

That is, God's time.

This kind is not the "tick-took on the clock" kind.

It is the kind that contracts on itself.

The kind that flies by when you're having fun
or the kind that slips away

without realization when we're grieving.

A future that once felt to be far off,
is now, right around the corner.

This is the kind of time we are speaking about here.

It is kairos time... God's time.

What we mean when we say,
"The time has come,"

be it to make a change, or
lay down your weapons, or
return to God, or
believe in the good news. (Pause)

The Bible is full of this kind of
"contracting" kairos time.

Recognizing this, and utilizing this,
understanding makes reading the Bible
much more relatable for us.

How was God's time revealed in
the calling of the disciples in Mark?

It seemed like it hardly took
any time at all for Simon, Andrew,

James, and John to leave
their profession as fishermen and
follow Jesus.

But, before that happened, we are told
that Jesus was going about saying,

“The time is fulfilled, and the
kingdom of God has come near;
repent and believe the good news.”

A fulfilled time that included
John the baptizer being arrested.

Was it Jesus' anger that propelled him
to make this sudden move?

Jesus built on John the baptizer's call
for repentance with a message about time and
a calling for belief.

Then he intruded into the lives of people. (Pause)

Walking by the lake and he called out the names
of everyday people and said come follow me.

Would you?

The wording used in the gospel is
the kind of wording that means
the action was done in the past
but it continues on into the future.

It is what scholars call... the perfect tense.

God's time...

The people I mostly relate to are
the ones who understand
(as much as we can)
about God's time.

There's a sense of non-anxious presence;
a patience in them.

It's not a "do nothing" thing,
it's an offering of God's presence
in the doing and we are participating
with God in it.

Since we are anticipating the Lord coming again,
then we are encouraging one another sometimes,
challenging one another at times, and
even warning one another.

Where we get into trouble or conflict is
when it becomes about me, or about you, or

about a certain belief or religion. (Pause)

What I mean to communicate here is
that what you were doing before you
were called matters.

In the text today, Jesus called
a bunch of fisherman, but he never said
that their previous calling didn't matter.

In fact, Jesus affirmed that their
former professions mattered by saying
you'll be fishing for people.

Not in a way that is coercive or self-serving.

Not in a programmatic way that will get
butts into the pews, but in a way
that makes clear God's
unshakable commitment to compassion.

Because like it or not...
There's a little Jonah in all of us.

We want God to forgive only a select
few according to our approval.

But, God is compassionate even to
the worst of the worst.

The quicker we realize this the more in step
with God's unshakable compassion we will be.

An example of this comes in a
midrash teaching about
the Pharaoh in Exodus.

The plagues were over,
the Israelites escaped Egypt and
Pharaoh stands at the
edge of the Red Sea contemplating
everything that had occurred.

His land was grieving and his army was
at the bottom of the sea.

The midrash continued the story and
we find Pharaoh wandering the wilderness
much like the Israelites did.

Until one day when he came to a
burgeoning city and he knocked on the gated wall.

They allowed him passage and recognized
he came from royalty by his dress and
his education.

So they made him king.

The city was Ninevah.

The wretched and horrible capital
of the Assyrian empire.

Merciless and brutal were the Assyrians.

Who would have mercy upon them?

Not Jonah, but he followed the word of the Lord
and went to that place to proclaim repentance
and then look.

Verse 6 says, “When the king of Ninevah heard
Jonah’s message he took on the
act of repentance and the people followed
and the city was saved.

Whoever wrote that midrash knew
God’s compassion even fell upon the worst of
the worst.

Our hallmark calling therefore is not church growth.

It is compassion.

AMEN!

