



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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The Prophet Jonah!

Lesson Text: Jonah 1-4

Focus Verse: Jonah 4:11 - And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

Truth About Covenant: God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy.

Covenant Context: After God opened the door for the world to be in covenant with Him, He sent a prophet named Jonah to the Gentile nation of Assyria to preach repentance from sins. Although Jonah was reluctant to preach to Assyria, God was willing to show them mercy, thus extending covenant to people beyond the Jews. God's mercy is greater than we can imagine.

When God saw how vulnerable His people were, He sent them a prophet named Jonah and used him to help restore and reclaim Israel's borders and national identity. *"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me"* (Jonah 1:2). Jonah disobeyed God and fled to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. However, he got caught in a mighty tempest storm and it broke up the ship. Once Jonah sank into the sea, the storm calmed. Jonah did not expect the storm, but it brought him to repentance. **Remorse may lead us to repentance, but remorse is incomplete without repentance.**

Jonah understood God's mercy, but he rejected it and also God's calling (Jonah 4:8-9). Initially he refused to preach to the Ninevites because he understood God enough to know God would forgive them if they repented (Jonah 3:10; 4:1-2). Lest we look down on Jonah, we must examine our own hearts. Paul was right to write: *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). Every one of us needs God's mercy, so we should be quick to share God's mercy.

From the king to the commoners, all of Nineveh repented. Unfortunately, their repentance was short lived. About 150 years later, God used another prophet named Nahum to prophesy to Nineveh of God's impending judgment in the book that bears Nahum's name. Nineveh practiced their wickedness and even peddled it to corrupt the nations around them—an abomination in God's eyes.

We have been saved by the mercy of God, having drifted off course from His original plan for our lives. A life separated from God is nothing less than a survival mission. However, God's mercy turns our survival into salvation. In the Book of Jonah, it's about the lengths God's mercy will go to save people. God extends His mercy to those who are far from His ways, and He even helps those who lose their way, like Jonah.

We learn some lessons the hard way. Doing the will of God is not always easy, but it is always right. If you feel reluctant to do what God is calling you to do, simply repent and say **"yes, Lord"** to the will of God. You will find what Jonah found—God is more merciful than we realize.

No doubt other people have hurt you or hurt people you love. Human nature wants to see them judged for what they have done, but God wants to bring them to repentance so He can forgive them. Part of that process is us being willing to share God's mercy and gospel with them and pray for God to forgive them, not judge them. Although we don't know how Jonah responded to God's probing question at the end of Jonah 4, we still have the opportunity to rejoice when God is merciful: merciful to us and to those who have hurt us. After all, as Jesus taught, only the merciful will obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7).

As people of God's New Covenant, we must live out our mission of mercy with all who need mercy. Yes we live in a wicked world, but so did Jonah. While wickedness was going up to God, God's mercy was coming down to humanity. Jonah confessed that God mercifully saved his life, but when God wanted to use Jonah to help save others, Jonah became angry. Thankfully, God is patient and willing to show us mercy when we struggle to understand why He chooses to operate in the manner He does. **May God baptize all of us with a fresh revelation of the vast richness of His mercy.**