

“INTERCEPTED BY THE SPIRIT”

Text: Jonah 1:1-3, 15-17; 2:1-10; 3:1-10

Subject: “How God will go to Great lengths to get our attention”

Introduction

- ◆ The book of Jonah is a marvelous picture of the grace of God.
- ◆ It reveals the heart of God to embrace every one of us.
- ◆ It reveals how God is a God of a second chance.
- ◆ It shows us how the Lord will interrupt us when we least expect it.
- ◆ It shows us how the Lord will intercept us when we desperately need it.

The Setting Of Our Text

Fact: Jonah was a real person (and he went to real people).

Fact: He was the son of Amittai, born in Gath-hepher.

Fact: He was called to the place of Nineveh.

Fact: Nineveh was the Capital of the Assyrian Empire.

Fact: Nineveh was a place despised by the Jews.

Fact: Nineveh was a city in heathen darkness.

Fact: The Assyrians were cruel and showed no mercy to their enemies.

Fact: Nineveh deserved to be judged instead of forgiven.

(But Nineveh Would Experience The Grace Of God)

Question: How did Jonah respond to the call of God?

Question: Why did he flee from the presence of the Lord?

Question: How did God intercept Jonah on the run?

Question: What did Jonah pray in the belly of the whale?

Question: Why did God give Jonah a second chance?

Question: Why is it useless to resist and run from God?

Question: Why do other people benefit when we individually repent?

Question: What are the lessons from Jonah to your heart and mine?

(Remember Now)

- ◆ The main character in this book is not Jonah.
- ◆ The main character is not the Ninevites.
- ◆ The main character is not the fish.
- ◆ The main character is not the sailors.

Question: Who is the main character?

Answer: The main character is God (who is mentioned 38 times).

- ◆ Let's experience God and let Him make a deep impression upon our hearts!!!

(The Secrets Of The Second Chance)

I. Jonah Is Interrupted (By a call from God)

(Chapter 1, v.2) “Arise go to Nineveh, that great city and cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before me”.

(Why Is God Burdened For Nineveh?)

- #1. Nineveh was filled with pride and splendor.
- #2. Nineveh was growing in population and power.
- #3. Nineveh was being filled with the spoils from the Monarchs of Assyria.

(But Most Of All In V. 2)

“Cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before me”

Question: Why did Jonah receive the call of God to do something?

Answer: Because Nineveh was filled with people who were alienated from God.

Question: Why did God send Jonah with a message of repentance?

Answer: Because God loves people and doesn't want one person to be lost and unsaved.

Question: What does it mean (in v. 2) to "Cry against" someone?

Answer:

#1. It means to give an alarm with intense feeling.

#2. It means to proclaim as a herald that danger is ahead.

#3. It means to expose the impending consequences of unforgiven sin.

#4. It means to cry aloud and spare not, and warn the unsaved lest they be lost for eternity.

#5. It means that the sins of a city must be met with the testimony of the righteous.

#6. It means that the church has a mission and cannot keep silent.

#7. It means that you have a part and a place in the rescue 911 plan of God.

- ◆ You have a purpose, a destiny, a place, a privilege, a responsibility, a partnership with God to touch your world.

Question: Are you willing to be interrupted like Jonah was interrupted?

Question: Are you willing to let your plans in life be superseded by God's plan in life?

Question: Are you willing to hear the voice of God, narrow your interests and be used of the Lord?

Question: Are you willing to accept the fact and the responsibility (that God wants to use you somewhere in His Kingdom)?

(#1. Jonah was interrupted!!!)

Question: How many of you are willing for God to interrupt your plans and schedule, if it means the rescuing of someone else?

Question: How many of you believe that earthly interruptions could very well be Divine Appointments?

II. Jonah Is Intimidated (By surrounding conditions)

Question: What did Jonah do when he heard the call?

Answer: (V. 3) "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa, found a ship, paid the fare and went down into it, to flee from the presence of the Lord.

Question: What did Jonah do with the will of God for his life?

Answer: He resisted and he ran.

Question: Is it possible to outrun the Lord and escape His conviction?

Answer: (V.7) The lot (or token) fell upon Jonah and singled him out.

- ◆ The Lord used the sailors to point the finger at Jonah.

Question: Are there consequences to disobedience to the known will of God?

Answer: (V. 12) "Throw me overboard, for I know that it is my fault the storm is upon you".

Question: Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh?

Answer: Not because he was afraid of failure (but he refused because he feared success).

- ◆ He knew that God would spare those who repented.
- ◆ He knew that God was going to save undeserving sinners.
- ◆ And, Jonah didn't want Nineveh to escape the wrath of God's judgment.

(It Is The Spirit Of The Prodigals Elder Brother)

- ◆ He just can't stand it, that God will be gracious to the sinner deep in sin.
- ◆ He can't swallow the fact, that God will spare people from what they really deserve.
- ◆ He is convicted by the truth, that he doesn't love people the way that God loves people.

Question: What does the storm reveal to Jonah (and you and me?)

Answer:

#1. That when I run from God, a storm awaits to arrest my attention.

#2. That when I hesitate, trouble will track me down.

#3. That when I resist the Lord, He'll use stronger means to break my will.

- #4. That when I refuse to die to myself, disobedience will rob me of a clear conscience.
- #5. That changing my location, doesn't change God's will.
- #6. That my attitude towards guilty people who deserve judgment, reveals the true spirituality and depth of my heart.

Question: Why do we frown (instead of smile) when God blesses our enemies?

Answer: Because the carnal man doesn't want God to bless those who don't deserve it.

(Guess What?)

- ◆ How did God treat you and me when we didn't deserve it?
- ◆ He treated us the same way he treated the Ninevites (Mercy, Mercy, Mercy)

III. **Jonah Is Intercepted (By providential circumstances)**

(1:17) "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah"

Question: How did the Lord intercept Jonah on the run?

Answer: #1. The Lord set up a plan with a boat, some sailors, a storm and a fish.
#2. The Lord brought Jonah down to an altar of prayer:

- ◆ (2:1) "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fishes belly"

Question: Did Jonah deserve to be heard in prayer?

Answer: Not hardly; he was a spiritual deserter!

Question: Did the Lord hear Jonah in the place of prayer?

Answer: (2:2) "...And He heard me"

Question: What do you do when you hit bottom?

Answer: (V. 7) "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord".

Question: What is the awesome revelation when all the crutches are stripped away?

Question: What is the one great lesson that Jonah teaches all of us?

(Chapter 2:8)

"They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy"

(One Of The Greatest Revelations In Scripture)

- ◆ The words "Lying Vanities" mean: "Any Idol" ◆ The words "Their Own Mercy" means "God"

(God Is Saying Here)

- ◆ That to turn from God and His will for your life, is stupidity and will end in emptiness.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ "Lying Vanities" are things that draw us away from God and leave us unfulfilled.
- ◆ "Lying Vanities" are pursuits we follow that leave us in ashes.
- ◆ "Lying Vanities" are foolish ambitions of worldly success that lead us astray and end up in foam.
- ◆ "Lying Vanities" (Jonah discovered) are the surest way to spiritual suicide.

(Notice V. 8 Again)

"They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy"

Question: What does it mean to "Forsake your own mercy"?

Answer: It means: To pursue anything that God is not attached to - is self-inflicted loss and self-inflicted pain!

(It Is Wisdom From The Belly Of A Whale)

- ◆ That to chase after any pursuit that is vain and temporary - will leave us with an empty bag,
- ◆ That to live to do anything except God's will, will have no lasting advantage in your life.

- ◆ To pursue any job, any position, any promotion, any relationship that is not God's will for you will leave you frustrated, disillusioned and full of regret!!!

(It Is Attention Time For Jonah)

- #1. In (V. 4), he looks again to the place of prayer,
- #2. In (V. 6), he hits bottom,
- #3. In (V. 7), he faints in his soul,
- #4. In (V. 8), he finally sees the subtleness of enemy lies.
- #5. In (V. 9), he agrees to agree with God.

(And How Does God Respond?)

IV. Jonah Is Introduced (To the Grace of God)

(3.1) "And the Word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time".

Question: What does the Lord reveal to us here?

Answer: That God offers renewed opportunities to those who forfeited the previous opportunity.

Question: What are the consequences when someone truly repents in humility before God?

Answer:

- #1. Jonah is Restored to God.
- #2. Jonah is Reinstated to preach.
- #3. Jonah is Recommissioned to Nineveh.
- #4. Jonah is Renewed on the inside.

- ◆ In Rebellion (Jonah ran to Tarshish).
- ◆ In Repentance (Jonah ran to God).
- ◆ In Restoration (Jonah ran to Nineveh)

(It Is A Revelation Of The Grace Of God)

Question: Why didn't Jonah deserve God's Grace?

- #1. He fled from the presence of the Lord.
- #2. He resisted the call to go to Nineveh.
- #3. He didn't like the people who he was sent to.
- #4. He had no love in his heart for his audience.
- #5. He offered no prayers on behalf of the sinners.
- #6. He was so angry (in chapter 4) that he asked God to kill him.
- #7. He pouted after undeserving Nineveh was spared God's judgment.

Question: Then why is Jonah in Scripture?

Answer: To reveal the God of a second chance.

Question: How do you experience this God who restores and reinstates and renews?

(Chapter 3)

- ◆ In (Vs. 1-4), Jonah repents (and obeys God).
- ◆ In (Vs. 5-9), Nineveh repents (and obeys God's Word).
- ◆ In (V. 10), God repents (and "did it not") what He said He would do. (Why?)
- ◆ Because people met the condition that God required.

Question: What was the condition?

Answer: **R E P E N T A N C E!**

AMEN!

(Altar Call)
Bill Kirk, Pastor