

Mission to the Community – Teaching Notes

(Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-9; 3/7/10)

Introduction: A key idea in today's lesson is God sends a word and the people repented. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to be word carriers and repent of our sins.

Body:

Read Jonah 1:1-3

I. Called to Bring Change. The word of the Lord came to Jonah. He was commanded to preach against the wickedness in Nineveh. Instead of obeying, Jonah sought to run away.

Applications –

- **God's care.** Notice in vss. 1-2 that God saw the condition of the people in Nineveh and sent a word through Jonah for the people. First, thank God that He still looks over us and sees us. Some people don't care enough about our communities to even look our way, not to mention do something to help. Second, God sends people to talk to us about what we should do about our situation. It was a word of warning before God's wrath was to come. *Let's be so thankful for God caring enough to send somebody to help us that we obey the word that He sends us.* Examples of this kind of response would be for us to participate in worship and witnessing, in tithing and using our gifts in church service, and in being a godly family and community member, all because these are teachings of God's word. The more we obey God, the more He blesses us. The more we don't obey God, the more punishment comes our way.

- **Don't run.** Notice in vs. 3 that Jonah tried to run from God's calling on his life. Nineveh's oppression of Jonah's people played a great part in Jonah not wanting to preach to them. It would be like a Black preacher preaching to Mississippi Whites in the 1850's. First, God's call supersedes our cultural and interpersonal problems. All people have some image of God in them. Consequently, God is calling us to get along with one another. Second, there seems to always be a way waiting for us to do wrong. Just like a boat was waiting on Jonah, someone can testify about a woman, a man, some drugs, or a partner in doing wrong waiting for us, when we were trying to do wrong. *Let's strive to obey God's calling on our lives, instead of being like Jonah.* For example, if God is calling us to be teachers, managers, and follow-up workers then we should obey the calling. We can figure out our calling by examining what needs God has given us the ability to respond to, the opportunity to respond to, and the desire or willingness to respond to. Since God is calling us to be workers, witnesses, and worshippers, we should obey the calling.

Read Jonah 3:1-2

II. Jonah's Second Chance. God sent word to Jonah again. It was the same word given before that fish belly drama. Jonah was to preach to Nineveh.

Applications –

- **Skip the fish belly.** Notice in vss. 1-2 that God gave Jonah a second chance to preach, after he spent some time in the belly of the fish. First, thank God that He gives us second, third, fourth, and many chances, as He sees fit. All of us have used up our first two or three chances to live according to God's calling on our lives. Second, we can skip the fish belly, by simply obeying God, now. We can shorten our time in the fish belly, by simply obeying, now. *Let's work on being obedient, now, instead of going through unnecessary fish belly drama.* Don't make the Lord take your job, house, car, and health, before you say, "yes," to His will.

Read Jonah 3:3-9

III. Nineveh Changed. Jonah preached about God's coming wrath. There was a great turning to God. The king and the people turned to God from their wicked ways.

Applications –

- **Put God's word out.** Notice in vs. 4 that Jonah put the Word of the Lord out and let people decide for themselves. There is power in the Word of God. *Let's work on putting the Word of the Lord on the minds and hearts of people,* so they can decide for themselves to obey God or to reject His warning. A benefit of reviewing the Membership Orientation material so frequently is that it allows us to become familiar with speaking truths that we should be sharing with others (esp. the "Plan of Salvation").

- **Turning to God.** Notice in vss. 5-9 that it took the changing of the people, leaders and followers, to stop the destruction of the city. The same is true today. From the leaders to the followers, there must be a turning from wickedness to righteousness, in order for our city to be saved from destruction. This is the case with our state, nation, and world. It is the case with our community, family, and church. Without people, including leaders and followers, turning to God's will, we are still on God's destruction list. *Let's work on helping people, leaders and followers, turn from wickedness to righteousness.* For example, in our communities, there is a need for justice for all and mercy for the less fortunate. In our churches, there is a need for more participation and less gossip and resistance towards following God's will. In our families, there is often a need for us be the spouses that God is calling us to be, instead of reacting to how our spouses carryout their roles. God can still send destruction on those who don't obey His will.

Conclusion: Let's work on being word carriers and repenting of our sins. God has much for those who obey His will.