



JONAH

TOO FAR GONE?

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, the evil empire of the day. Going to Nineveh to preach was like marching into ISIS headquarters or going into North Korea today. It would have been seen as a suicide mission to a people who would not listen. And so, naturally, this is where God tells the reluctant prophet Jonah to go.

So what happens? After the series of mishaps we've walked through already in this series, Jonah eventually was apart of bringing about one of the greatest revivals of all time. Of course, this doesn't mean that we will see the same result every time we share the gospel... but on the other hand, perhaps we should consider that if the people of Nineveh can be reached, who else can? Absolutely no one on earth is too far gone. We should always hope for the possibility that we can reach one more for Christ.

IN THE BIBLE.

Jonah 3:1-10

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it.

Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

1 Timothy 1:15-16

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

QUESTIONS.

- 1.) Who would be the equivalent of “Ninevah” to you?
- 2.) What fears would you have in bringing those people the gospel?
- 3.) What can you do to combat those fears?
- 4.) How has God’s grace impacted *your* life?

Challenge: If you haven’t already, think about how God’s radical love and grace has impacted your life and heart. Practice articulating that this week.

(Always be prepared to articulate a defense to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But respond with gentleness and respect...” 1 Peter: 3:15)

Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?