

OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

TELL OTHERS ABOUT JESUS – PART 2

JONAH 3:1-10

OCTOBER 6, 2019



SERMON OUTLINE

1. God has people on a journey B_____ they M_____ you

2. So... D_____ what God has been T_____ them

on their journey

3. Then... C_____ the N_____ S_____ on their journey

1 Cor 1:12; 16:12

1 Peter 3:15
Gal 5:25

Learn to have C_____, rather than give L_____

Col 4:6

What do I need to do with what I have heard today?

MAIN POINT

God is at work in the lives of all people. As followers of Christ, our role is to step into what God is already doing in the lives of others and tell them about Him.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. Share about a time you helped complete a project that another person had started

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

(possibly a work project, family chores, or something else)?

2. In this instance, why was it important to continue in the path laid by the other person rather than beginning a new plan from scratch?

Leader: At various points in life, we are all called to continue the work that another person began before us. In our spiritual journey, we are called to recognize that God is working in the lives of all people and often calls us to join in what He has already begun. To be clear, we in no way “finish” what God began, but He does use us to complete His purposes in the lives of others. The work is all of God, but we are called to join Him and tell others about Jesus, that His work might be accomplished in their lives.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JONAH 1:1-3.](#)

3. What did God call Jonah to do? What does this demonstrate about God’s desire and plans for the people of Nineveh?

4. What can we learn about the city of Nineveh from God’s words in these verses? How might this explain why Jonah fled in response to God’s call?

Leader: God called Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and preach against their evil. God called the city great and their sin had drawn His attention. From this description, we can infer that Nineveh would have been an intimidating audience for Jonah to preach a message of repentance before. Instead of trusting God and seeking to join Him in His purposes for Nineveh, Jonah decided to flee and seek to avoid God’s call for Him.

5. The people of Nineveh were a “stretch” for Jonah to consider as worthy of hearing the truth about God (see Jonah 4:1-2). Who in your life do you consider a “stretch” to hear and believe the gospel?

6. Read through Jonah 1:4-17 and 2:1-10. How do the events that took place in the remainder of Jonah 1 and throughout Jonah 2 remind us that it is safer to take a risk with God than to seek perceived safety apart from Him?

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

Leader: Jonah's decision to flee had great consequences. A storm arose and threatened the life of all who were on the ship to Tarshish with Jonah. Jonah admitted his guilt to the sailors who finally agreed to throw him overboard so that the storm would cease. Rather than being drowned in the sea, Jonah was rescued by a great fish. From inside the belly of the fish, Jonah prayed to God for rescue and the Lord heard his plea and delivered him back onto dry land. Despite the whirlwind of activity to this point, God was not done with Jonah or the people of Nineveh.

At this point, there may be a danger of discussion being derailed by a focus on the fish and group members' beliefs on the historical authenticity (or not) of these events. Seek to keep the group focused on God's commitment to use Jonah in the lives of the Ninevites rather than getting stuck on this point.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JONAH 3:1-10.

7. What do God's words to Jonah at the beginning of chapter 3 reveal about God's commitment to His work in the lives of the people of Nineveh?

8. What was Jonah's message to Nineveh? How did they respond? How does this show that God was already working in the people of Nineveh and it was by His power, not Jonah's words that the people were changed?

9. Throughout the book of Jonah, how do we see that God was preparing the message, the messenger, and the recipients according to His plan? How might this change our perspective on those we view as too far from the grace of God?

10. Reflecting on Jonah's role and Nineveh's response, what is our role in telling others about Jesus? What is not our role? Why is it important that we remember and focus on God's work in the lives of others rather than the power of our words?

Leader: Jonah's message was simple: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." We learn from Jonah four that this message was likely even delivered begrudgingly. Yet, God's purposes were sure to have their intended effect and the people of Nineveh repented before Him. The same is true today. We are called to obediently tell others about Jesus, but we should recognize that we are joining in with God's purposes, to be used by Him, and it is only by His power that true transformation occurs.

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

11. How does verse 10 show the end result of God's purpose in the lives of those in Nineveh? How might God use our "telling" to act similarly in the lives of those who don't know Him?

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

12. Who is God calling you to tell about Him that you might consider a "stretch"? How are you encouraged to know that God is already working in that person's life and is only calling you to obedience? How will you respond?

13. God prepared Jonah to be His messenger to the people of Nineveh. Through your story, how has God prepared you to share with others about Him?

PRAYER

Close in prayer and thank God that He is already working in the lives of all people. Ask Him for faithfulness to obey His call to tell others about Him, even those that we might consider unlikely to listen and respond.

MEMORIZE

¹ Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." – Jonah 3:1-2

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

JONAH 1-4

Jonah Flees (1:1-16)

To avoid his divine assignment Jonah tried to get as far away from Nineveh as possible. Nineveh was about five hundred miles to the east, so he headed for Tar-shish, probably what is now Spain, the farthest western location he knew, about two thousand miles. But God sent a storm and then a great fish to turn Jonah around. The sailors showed more compassion for Jonah than Jonah showed for Nineveh.

Jonah Prays (1:17-2:10)

Jonah, having been thrown overboard, thought his life was over. Suddenly he found himself alive inside a huge fish. The psalm of prayer Jonah uttered was an expression of thanks to God for saving his life. For his own deliverance Jonah was thankful, but Jonah would show a different attitude toward Nineveh's deliverance. In view of his rebellion in chapter 1, his anger in chapter 4, and the pagan sailors' response to God in 1:14-16, Jonah's vow of thanks in 2:8-9 sounds rather

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

self-serving. Also, there is no confession of sin or expression of repentance in Jonah's prayer.

The "three days and three nights" of 1:17 alluded to the notion popular at that time that the journey to the land of the dead (sheol) took that long. So Jonah's retrieval from the fish was like a retrieval from death (Matt. 12:39-40). The fish very likely dropped Jonah off at Joppa, where he had started.

Jonah Preaches (3:1-10)

Perhaps about a month later, Jonah arrived in the great city of Nineveh ("a very important city" is literally "a city great to God"). After Jonah preached for only a day rather than the expected three days, the people repented. The message God gave Jonah to preach did not explicitly call for their repentance. Rather, it told the Ninevites that they had angered Jonah's God and that punishment was on the way. The Ninevites did not presume that God could be appeased but repented in humility, hoping that "God may yet relent" (3:9; see 1:6), which He did. That God's judgment message was conditional is clear from His sending the prophet, giving them forty days' warning, and postponing Nineveh's destruction (see Jer. 18:7-10).

Jonah Fumes (4:1-11)

Jonah despised the Ninevites so much that he would rather die than live, knowing he helped them escape destruction. Still hoping God would give Nineveh what they deserved, Jonah waited and watched. Through the incident of the plant and the worm (sent by God like the wind and the fish in chap. 1), the Lord chided Jonah for his double standard. Jonah was concerned for the transitory plant that gave him shade but not for the 120,000 people of Nineveh who despite their limited knowledge had trusted God.