

## OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

THE JONAH SYNDROME

WE REPENT LATER (JONAH 2)

APRIL 10-16, 2016



### MAIN POINT

God patiently corrects us and prods us towards repentance.

### THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. Have you ever found yourself accidentally driving the wrong way on a one-way street? How did you get into that situation? What made you realize you were going the wrong way?
2. This imagery of driving the wrong way sets up the idea of repentance well. Put the concept of repentance into your own words.

**Leader:** When Jesus began His public ministry, He called on people to “repent and believe” (Mark 1:15), and when He gave His followers their mission, the Great Commission, He commanded them to preach “repentance and forgiveness of sins” to the world (Luke 24:47). Repentance refers to turning from your sin toward God, and it is the way we respond to God’s convicting and correcting work in our lives. Keep in mind, as you talk through the value of repentance with your group, you may want to consider breaking up into gender groups in order to encourage open and honest conversation.

### DIGGING DEEPER

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

**Leader:** Paul spent 18 months in Corinth helping establish the church. He visited the church multiple times afterward, teaching and rebuking them to pursue holiness. Second Corinthians is Paul’s most pastoral letter of all his epistles. The church had resisted his teaching earlier. It had been a painful process for him to continue to rebuke their sin and call for repentance, especially in the face of accusations and doubts of Paul’s authority.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 6:16–7:1.

3. Before Paul addressed repentance with the Corinthians, he reminded them of God’s promises. How do these promises of God—that we are a living sanctuary of God and that God is with us—put our sin into perspective?

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 7:1-9.

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4. How did Paul use God to bring conviction and correction to the Corinthians (v. 9)? Has God ever used you in this way in someone else's life? If so, what did you learn about the need for and value of repentance from that experience?
5. Why was Paul so concerned about causing the Corinthians sorrow? How do you normally respond when someone points out the sin in your life? How *should* we respond?
6. Why is it important that we allow God to use people to convict us of our sin and urge us toward repentance? How as a group should we be doing this?

**Leader:** In light of the promises given to the church as the temple of God, followers of Christ have a responsibility, which Paul cast in terms of temple cleansing rituals. Paul insisted that the Corinthian believers purify themselves from everything that contaminates. What is the goal of this cleansing through repentance and renewal? It is to perfect holiness. Holiness, or separation from the world, is a condition given to true believers when they place their faith in Christ. This holiness is the goal of daily living. Repentance is an ongoing practice for the people of God, a willingness to continually examine one's life for unfaithfulness and then to make adjustments at the prompting of God's Spirit.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 7:10-14.

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7. In verse 10, Paul describes two types of sorrow—godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. What are the differences? What are the fruits of godly sorrow listed in verse 11?

**Leader:** Paul outlines the characteristics of genuine repentance in verses 10-11. God requires godly sorrow over sin, not worldly sorrow that brings about no change in our lives. Worldly sorrow is when we feel guilt over being caught, but lack the repentance that God's conviction brings. Godly sorrow, on the other hand, is characterized by a commitment to forsake that sin and walk in obedience to God.

8. What is the difference between confession and repentance? What makes repentance so difficult?
9. Describe a time in your life when you experienced genuine repentance. How did God convict you, and what steps did you take to turn to Christ and not continue to fall into that sin?

**Leader:** Paul indicates further that his letter was painful to read, yet it brought about salvation. Scripture puts repentance and faith together as two aspects of the one act of coming to Christ for salvation. When we turn to Christ for salvation, we turn away from the sin that we are asking Jesus to save us from. Initial saving faith and repentance occur only once—when we ask Jesus to be the absolute Lord of our lives—but it is not the only time

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

that these should be characteristic of who we are. Faith and genuine repentance are a daily posture of our heart in our relationship with God.

### DOING LIFE TOGETHER

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

- 10. God patiently corrects us and prods us toward repentance. What can you do this week to show God how much you appreciate His patient grace and correcting love?**
- 11. Read aloud David's prayer in Psalm 51, an example of the godly sorrow that leads to repentance. What attitudes of the heart do you need to develop that are like David's?**
- 12. Would you say our Growth Group is a place where conviction over sin is taking place and repentance is encouraged? If not, what is the first step we need to take toward that kind of environment?**

### PRAYER

Pray together that the Lord would grant honesty and receptivity to the rebuke of sin in our lives. Pray that we will realize our sin, regret our sin, and repent of our sin. Also pray that our group would be a place where people feel comfortable confessing their sins and allowing other people to help move them toward repentance, like Paul did for the church at Corinth.

### MEMORIZE

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. –2 Corinthians 7:10

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

2 CORINTHIANS 6:16–7:14

**6:16-18.** Paul turned to speak of believers and unbelievers as the temple of God and the temple of ... idols. This manner of speaking summed up Paul's outlooks so well that he elaborated on it for the next two verses. His lengthy attention to this matter suggests that his chief concern throughout this passage was the Corinthians' involvement in pagan idolatry.

Paul first clarified that believers are the temple of the living God. The Old Testament speaks of the God of Israel as the living God because he is active and responsive to his people. God differs dramatically from the dead idols of paganism that can do nothing. The fact that believers are the temple of the living God as opposed to that of idols demonstrates why believers must remain separate from the practices of idolatry.

To fill out his assertion, Paul grouped together several Old Testament passages that illustrated the intimate involvement between the living God and his people. He first alluded to Exodus 25:8 and 29:45 where God said, I will live with them. The living God does not remain distant from his people. He is personally present among them, thus making the people themselves the temple of God.

**7:1.** The promises of God are strong reasons for us to follow after holiness. We are called to seek to be holy, as God is holy. His grace and the moving of the Holy Spirit alone can purify us, but holiness should be the object of our prayers and intentions as well.

**7:2-4.** Paul addressed the concerns that many may have had after hearing some leaders in the community doubt his authority or his intention. Paul reminds them that he had wronged no one. On their past visits to Corinth, they had been careful to treat each person well, had spoken with honesty and integrity, and had sought God and genuine repentance in their own life. Paul also asserted that he had great care for them, and was rebuking them in love, not in haughty spirit. Paul wrote them a letter that was painful to read for their spiritual betterment and refinement, not for their harm.

**7:5-9.** Paul and Titus rejoiced in the response of the church at Corinth to their teaching. The church desired Paul to come and continue to teach them, which was a great encouragement to Paul. This indicated that they were being receptive to Paul's message, even though it was difficult. Rebuking of sin causes sorrow, but when it is godly sorrow and not worldly sorrow then it leads to salvation, as it is a characteristic of genuine repentance. They saw that Paul's rebuke was not directed from Paul personally, but was truth directly from Scripture that they needed to hear as to renew their obedience to Christ, despite the deteriorating morality in the culture around them.

**7:10-14.** Paul outlines genuine repentance and that which brings great sorrow over sin and leads to salvation. Faith and repentance coupled together lead to initial repentance, but there also is a need for continued faith and repentance as God restores and renews a believer in purity. Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ. Repentance, like faith, is an intellectual understanding that sin is wrong, an emotional approval of the teachings of Scripture regarding sin (a sorrow for sin and a hatred of it), and a personal decision to turn from it (a renouncing of sin and a decision of the will to forsake it and lead a life of obedience to Christ instead). Genuine repentance will always result in a changed life. However, we should never require that there be a period of time in which a person actually lives a changed life before we give assurance of forgiveness. Repentance is something that occurs in the heart and involves the whole person in a decision to turn from sin.

It also is important to realize that simply being sorrowful for one's actions does not constitute genuine repentance unless it is accompanied by a sincere decision to forsake sin that is being committed against God. Paul preached about "repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). A worldly sorrow may include being sorrowful for one's actions and fear of punishment, but no commitment to life change or renouncing of sin. Genuine repentance and faith that leads to salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit and is not something that we can conjure up for ourselves. Jesus invites us to come to Him and take up His yoke and learn from Him (Matthew 11:28-29). This means we are subject to His guidance and direction, being

obedient to Him. If we are unwilling to make such a commitment, then we have not truly placed our trust in Him. Scripture frequently connects genuine repentance and faith (See Isaiah 55:6-7, Acts 20:21, Hebrews 6:1).

When Jesus encounters people personally throughout the Gospels, He requires them to turn from their sin before they come to follow Him (rich young ruler: Luke 18:18-30, Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), the woman at the well (John 4:16), and Nicodemus (John 3:1-21). Preaching faith without repentance is only preaching half of the Gospel.