

8-27-17
LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JONAH

The Book of Jonah is a great book that shows the conflict that arises, even in the greatest servants of the Lord, when we are faced with doing the will of the Lord rather than our own will.

In this life, we will struggle with the will of God and often there must be a surrender to that will. Sadly that only happens after our heart is bent to the mind of the Lord. So often, people claim to be doing the will of the Lord when it is, in fact, their will. To the will of God, we must surrender. In this book we will see how God worked in the life of one of His beloved servants to do His bidding. THE LORD SAID TO JONAH: GO PREACH TO NINEVEH. But where does Jonah go? He flees to Tarshish.

So it is, in our lives God says, "GO OR DO THIS OR DON'T DO THAT." And we often struggle with this command. In this struggle, we may find ourselves in uncomfortable spots, just like Jonah. Often, God's servants have had to surrender to the will of God in the belly of the operating table or in jail or in financial disaster or in marital distress or you fill in the blank. In this book, we need to learn the lesson - go when He says go, and come when He says come.

In this study we are going to look at some spiritual lessons we can learn from the book of Jonah.

I. LESSON ONE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GOD'S SERVANT REBELLS AGAINST THE LORD'S CALL IN HIS LIFE?

Jonah 1:1 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

Jonah 1:2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

Jonah 1:3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

Note: In the day that Jonah lived Tarshish was the furthest he could go in the opposite direction from Nineveh. Nineveh was about 550 Miles northeast of where Jonah Lived. Tarshish was 2500 miles west in the opposite direction. Tarshish was a city of Spain. It was the furthest point Jonah could go to get away from Nineveh.

1. JONAH FLED FROM DOING THE WILL OF GOD. WHY DO MEN FLEE FROM THE WILL OF GOD?

Isaiah 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Men will flee the will of God in their lives because they think differently than God.

Men will flee the will of God for their lives because their thoughts and ways are different than God's ways.

Now According to II Kings 19:36, Nineveh was the capital of of Assyria

According to II Kings 17:6-20, Assyria was that nation that God used to chasten Israel and send them into captivity.

II Kings 17:20 And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

II Kings 17:21 For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drew Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin.

II Kings 17:22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;

II Kings 17:23 Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

Note: The Assyrians were very cruel and brutal in their dealings with the Children of Israel. Often they would behead their captives, rape the women, and torture those they took captive. If this is how people treated your people, would you feel like preaching to them? Yet, God commanded Jonah to preach to Nineveh. Jonah would rather die himself than see the Ninevites blessed!

2. NOTICE WHAT MEN DO WHEN THEY ARE IN REBELLION AGAINST GOD.

Jonah 1:3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

He fled from the presence of God. HOW EXACTLY DO YOU DO THAT?

Psalms 139:8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

This is what Adam and Eve did when they rebelled against God.
They hid themselves from the presence of God.
How foolish we are.

When I was a child my Grandfather told me not to play in the alley. One day as he was coming home from work I thought I would hide from him. I closed my eyes and hid in the grass.. I thought if I could not see him he could not see me. How foolish I was, but this is the way a child thinks. How could a grown man think he could flee from God?

Did Jonah really think he could flee from God?
Did Adam and Eve really think they could hide from God?

Genesis 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

Genesis 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

Genesis 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

Genesis 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Genesis 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

3. Today men try to flee from God by avoiding hearing the Word of God.

I Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

What happens when men flee from God? Are their actions logical or illogical?

HOW FOOLISH, HOW CHILD LIKE WE ARE. HOW BLINDED WE BECOME WHEN WE TRY TO RUN FROM GOD.

II Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

II. LESSON TWO - GOD'S CALL IS AN EFFECTUAL CALL.

So Jonah paid the fare got on a ship, and headed for Tarshish. Hiding in the grass from God, thinking He could not see him..

Jonah 1:4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

Jonah 1:5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

Jonah 1:6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

Jonah 1:7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

Jonah 1:8 Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?

Jonah 1:9 And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

Jonah 1:10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

When God truly calls us to serve him, He will go to all kind of extremes to make sure we fulfill His purpose for us. In this account, we see how God pursued after Jonah even as he fled from God's presence.

Nineveh was a great city which encompassed about 48 miles; it also had about 120,000 babies in it, (Jonah 4:11). This was a city that Jonah had no heart for. The command to preach there was worrisome to him probably because Jonah feared the people of the city might repent. Jonah flees from the presence of the Lord which he probably associated with the land of Israel.

1. GOD BROUGHT A STORM IN JONAH'S LIFE TO GET HIS ATTENTION. AND TO CHASTEN HIM.

Jonah 1:4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

Jonah 1:5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Hebrews 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Hebrews 12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

Please note the following:

If we are truly called of the Lord, God will not let us just do our own thing!

God separates people to serve him and He will bring things to pass in their life to see to it they do what He has called them to do.

I believe God brought circumstances into my life because He wanted me to serve Him. I believe it was a calling because like Jonah I rebelled from this calling. This is why I wrote the tract, "NOT ME.."

Jonah knew the Lord and knew His will. He was rebelling against the will of God!

Notice how when we, as God's children, are out of the will of the Lord. God even uses non believers to rebuke us!

2. IN JONAH 1:6, HOW DID UNBELIEVERS VIEW THE ATTITUDE OF A BACKSLIDDEN SERVANT OF GOD?

A. Even unbelievers will be repulsed by the behavior of a backslider.

Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

B. NOTICE HOW GOD WILL NOT LET HIS SERVANTS GET AWAY WITH THEIR WAYWARD BEHAVIOR.

Jonah 1:4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

3. In Jonah 1:9, even in a believer's worse state, he is still here on earth for one purpose and that is to glorify the Lord.

Can you think of examples of people that God used to win others to Himself even though they were not right with Him?

4. In Jonah 1:10, the men, when they heard who Jonah was, were _____ afraid.

Jonah 1:10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

NOTE: It is pretty sad when unbelievers have to rebuke a believer and are amazed at a backsliders condition and foolishness.

5. Notice In Jonah 1:11-12, what Jonah tells the men to do to him?

Why would Jonah ask the men to cast him into the sea?

When people get out of the will of God, they do things that will only lead to their hurt and destruction.

Note: All sin is self destructive and leads to our hurt. We often think that God wants to make our lives miserable by asking us to do certain things and forbidding us to do other things. This is not true. God wants us to obey Him so He can bless us, (cf. Deut. 5:29). When we sin, we actually destroy our chances of living a life that we can enjoy. Sin leads to guilt and often to depression. Many people actually become suicidal because of this deep guilt and depression. Jonah was probably so depressed that he could care less if he lived. Jesus said:

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Notice, Satan lures us to sin that he might STEAL-KILL-DESTROY.

If sin is so pleasurable, then why is it that so many men of this world who have become famous in the entertainment world and sinful activities of this world, have ended their lives in suicide and drug overdoses?

Why would anyone want to do things to hurt themselves?

Read, II Timothy 2:25

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

II Timothy 2:26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Note: It is the Devil that works to cause a person to do things to go against common sense and even their own welfare. It is always the sins of others that seem so silly and stupid. However, when we are entangled in sin, suddenly we realize the magnitude of Satan's sway over our passions.

NO ONE EVER PLANS TO BE SNARED BY THE DEVIL.

When we are entrapped by him, we become captive to sin and become prisoners of our own passions and lust. What was the sin of Jonah that he became ensnared by?

6. *In Jonah 1:11-13, the men feared to hurt Jonah because they realized that he was a Prophet⁽²⁰⁾ of God.*

Even men of this world with common sense are willing to show patience with the servants of God, no matter how out of line they may be. This is a reflection of how much these unsaved sailors feared God. Today, men often show no respect for God or His servants. Here we have heathen men who had enough sense to realize that if the God that Jonah was running from was powerful enough to bring a storm to fetch Jonah back, he was powerful enough to destroy them too, if they acted unjustly towards Jonah. We need to realize what David meant when he refused to kill Saul.

I Samuel 26:9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless? I Samuel 26:11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed:

Here we have heathen men that had some fear and reverence for God and his servants.. Not so today!

7. *NOTICE HOW EVEN IN HIS BACKSLIDDEN STATE JONAH WAS USED IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS.*

Jonah 1:13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.

Jonah 1:14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

Note: The men rowed hard to keep from having to throw Jonah overboard. It was obvious that Jonah somehow gained, at least, their respect and favor even though he was out of the will of God. It is amazing that even in a backslider's worst state, they still can be used of God.

Before the men do throw Jonah overboard, what do they do? In verse 14, we read that they CRIED unto the LORD⁽²¹⁾.

Jonah 1:15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

Jonah 1:16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

In offering sacrifices and making vows to the God of Jonah, they showed their faith in JEHOVAH the God of the Hebrews and Israel.

According to John 15:16, who gets the glory for such conversions?

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

God uses his people to bear fruit even when they are not trying.

Matthew 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

GOD USES US TO BRING FRUIT IN SPITE OF OURSELVES!

8. NOTE WHAT GOD DOES TO BRING JONAH TO REPENTANCE
In Jonah 1:17, how does God continue to pursue Jonah to do His will?

Jonah 1:17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

This is evidence that God will go to great lengths to protect His children and keep us, as long as we have a job to do for Him and a purpose in this life for winning others to Himself.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

III. THE THIRD LESSON WE LEARN FROM THE BOOK OF JONAH
GOD WILL WORK IN US TO WILL AND DO HIS GOOD PLEASURE

LESSON THREE: WHAT TO DO WHEN WE FIND OURSELVES IN THE BELLY OF A WHALE.

1. NOTE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS GREAT FISH THAT SWALLOWED JONAH?

Jonah 1:17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

According to this passage, God had to PREPARE ⁽¹⁾ this great fish to swallow Jonah. So too, God prepares and orders circumstances in our lives to conform us to His will. The fish had to be there at the right time and in the right position in order to swallow Jonah. This should demonstrate that there are no accidents in the life of a servant of God.

God is working all things in our lives to bring us to himself and to conform us to His will.

Jonah did not want to preach at Nineveh.

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR OUR LIVES AND WE NEED TO YIELD TO HIS PLAN AND WILL.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure..

Jonah was not willing, but God had to put him in the belly of the whale for a while to convince him.

2. THE ONLY THING THAT A PERSON CAN DO WHEN THEY FIND THEMSELVES BEING CHASTENED OF GOD IN THE BELLY OF A WHALE, IS PRAY AND CRY OUT (Jonah 2:1-9).

Jonah 2:1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,

Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Hebrews 12:12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

Note: God has many ways of getting our attention. In this case, Jonah was forced into prayer.

3. Jonah 2:2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

Jonah 2:3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

God used Jonah's affliction to force him to pray and repent. What kind of afflictions has God used today to prompt people to repent and do his will?

When we find ourselves in deep dark depression and the uncomfortable position of being flat on our back, then is the time to do business with God and find our way to full repentance.

Can you imagine what it was like to be in this fishes stomach? I Peter 4:17 says,

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

WHAT ARE SOME WHALE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU HAVE GONE THROUGH IN ORDER THAT YOU WOULD DO THE WILL OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE?

God had to deal with me to surrender to preach, and then He had to deal with me again to be willing to go where He called me to preach!

4. Jonah 2:4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

According to Jonah 2:4, Jonah's first evidence of sincere repentance is found in the statement that he was going to look to the thy holy temple.

Notice when he fled from the presence of the Lord he fled from God's temple and people.

So it seems when people get out of the will of God they get away from His people and His Church or assembly. Which in the New Testament is his true temple.

Note, the parallel, "temple of God" today? (cf. II Cor. 6:16, Eph 2:19-21, I Peter 2:5, I Cor. 3:16-17)?

II Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

I Corinthians 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Note: Our bodies are called the temple of God and also, the church is called the temple of God. The church is where all the individual members (or stones, I Peter 2:5) gather together, and together we all make up that great temple called the Church, (Matt. 18:20). Note: Each member of the Church is likened to a stone in a great building; together, we make up the building.

Today, people who claim to repent but never resolve things between them and the church are fooling themselves. When Jonah fled from God, he fled from the Holy Temple of God. When people get out of the will of God, they usually cease coming to Church.

5. *Jonah 2:5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.*

Jonah 2:6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

Jonah 2:7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

After reading this passage, can you think of a time that a Christian can go through similar experiences? What was the cause of all this deep darkness and discouragement? IT WAS ALL BECAUSE HE WAS RUNNING FROM THE WILL OF GOD IN HIS LIFE..

To do God's will is usually to surrender to his will.

Like our Lord prayed, NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE!

6. *NOTICE JONAH'S PRAYER IN THE BELLY OF THE WHALE.*

Jonah 2:8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

Jonah 2:9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

In Jonah's prayer, he makes note of how he will not be like those who observe, lying vanities for these people forsake their own mercy.

Before we can be delivered from the depths of depression that often afflict us, we need to promise God that we will follow His truth and forsake the vain lies of Satan and of this world.

When we find ourselves in deep discouragement because we have run from the will of God in our lives, we must make holy vows and promises to God. In this prayer, Jonah promised God that if he was delivered, he would obey God's voice and sacrificially give to God what He required of him.

What was the sacrifice that God was looking for of Jonah? God called Jonah to preach to the NINEVITES!

Note: (Read, Psalm 51:17, Rom. 12:1-2) The sacrifice that God wanted Jonah to give Him was his service and obedience.

Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. When Jonah vowed to offer this sacrifice what happened in verse 10?

Jonah 2:10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

NOTE OF INTEREST:

Is it possible for man to survive being swallowed by a whale?

INTERESTING FACTS OF A MAN BEING SWALLOWED BY A WHALE:

FROM: Francis Fox, "Sixty-Three Years Of Engineering" London: J. Murry 1924 pp 298-300:

In Feb. 1891, the whaling ship "*Star of the East*" was in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands, and the lookout ship sighted a large sperm whale three miles away. Two boats were lowered and in a short time one of the harpooners was enabled to spear the whale. The second boat also attacked the whale but was then upset by the lash of it's tale, so that it's crew fell into the sea. One of them was drowned but the other, James Bartley simply disappeared without a trace. After the whale was killed, the crew set work with axes and spades removing blubber. They worked all day and part of the night. The next day they attached some tackle to the stomach which was hoisted on the deck. The sailors were startled by something in it which gave spasmodic signs of life. Inside the stomach was found the missing sailor doubled over and unconscious. He was laid on the deck and treated to a bath of sea water which soon revived him. At the end of the week he had entirely recovered from the shock and resumed his duties. His face and neck and hands were bleached to a deadly whiteness and took on the appearance of parchment. Bartley affirms that he would probably have lived inside his house of flesh until he starved, for he lost his senses through fright and not through lack of air.

IV. THE FOURTH LESSON WE CAN LEARN FROM THE BOOK OF JONAH:

JONAH LESSON 4

1. THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES MAKE REFERENCE TO JONAH BEING IN THE BELLY OF THE FISH.

Jonah 2:10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

Matthew 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

Matthew 12:39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Matthew 16:4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

Luke 11:30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

NOTE: According to these verses, what was used to cause the Ninevites to repent at the preaching of Jonah?

The Ninevites recognized how supernatural it was for a man to live in the belly of a whale for three days and three nights.

Why did the pharisees not recognize that Christ's resurrection was a supernatural sign from God, (cf., Matt. 28:11-15)?

Jonah's expulsion from the belly of the whale was a supernatural sign to the Ninevites that his preaching was from the Lord.

Probably Jonah's rebellion and flight to Tarshish and being swallowed by the whale was the very thing God used to authenticate his message from God. This was a sign to the Ninevites.

2. ***According to these verses, the death burial and resurrection of our Lord was a sign that should cause people to repent and believe the gospel message. This was much like Jonah's sign to the Ninevites***
3. ***Apparently, word reached the ears of the Ninevites that Jonah had survived being in the belly of the whale for three days and this caused them to be open to the message he preached.***
4. ***Notice: What is ironic about this whole situation....?***

What was Jonah afraid of that caused him to not want to preach at Nineveh, (cf., Jonah 4:1-2)? His greatest fear was that these people would repent and judgment would be averted.

When Jonah ran from God, it caused the very sign that brought forth their effectual repentance.

According to Luke 11:30, Jonah being in the belly of the whale was the great sign that the Lord used to cause the people to repent. If Jonah had not sought to run from God this sign would have never happened.

5. THE LORD TOLD PAUL IT IS HARD FOR THEE TO KICK AGAINST THE PRICKS!

6. AFTER A BEING CHASTENED OF GOD, DID JONAH OBEY S GOD'S CALL?

Jonah 3:1 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

Jonah 3:2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

Jonah 3:3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

Jonah 3:4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

A. NOTE HIS MESSAGE Judgment to come in 40 days!

How do you think Jonah preached this message?

How could men repent under the preaching of Jonah when his heart was not right nor was his motive?

I Corinthians 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

I Corinthians 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

I Corinthians 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

B. Nineveh was called a great city of three days journey.

Note: A man can usually walk 20 miles in a day even in a slow walk. Therefore, Nineveh was a city that was approximately 60 miles long. Historians say that the walls of the city were 100 feet high and on them were 1500 towers that were 200 feet high. It was said that three chariots could drive on the top of the walls abreast.

Notice the preaching of Jonah in verse 4. Jonah, it says, CRIED OUT that in forty days Nineveh shall be overthrown. If we are God's messengers, we too must cry out the message of God so men might repent.

7. NOTE THE REACTION OF THE CITIZENS OF NINEVEH TO JONAH'S PREACHING.

Jonah 3:5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

Jonah 3:6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

Jonah 3:7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

Jonah 3:8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

Jonah 3:9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

- A. *Jonah 3:5, says that the people believed God and proclaimed a fast. Notice that this was a city wide revival and repentance.***
- B. *Jonah 3:6, says that the command came even from the king that everyone in the city should fast and cry out to God.***

What do you think was the greatest reason these men repented?

Luke 11:30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

C. *What is so unusual about this revival?*

Notice, that in Jonah 3:5-6, it says that from the least of them to the GREATEST of them, they all repented. According to I Cor. 1:26, this revival was unusual because usually not many WISE or NOBLE are willing to repent and come humbly before God.

D. *WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT, "GOD WILL TURN AND REPENT" OF HIS ANGER?*

Jonah 3:9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

The word, "repent," comes from the Hebrew word, "NACHAM," which means, to breathe strongly or sigh. The idea is that they wanted God to sigh and breathe out with emotion and pity towards them and change His mind about punishing them. The idea here is, they were simply seeking pity from God.

8. *CONSIDER HOW DID THE NINEVITES REPENT AND HOW DO WE REPENT?*

Jonah 3:10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

The idea of repentance on the part of the Ninevites has the idea of TURNING from their EVIL WAYS.

Does God ever have to repent like this?

Note: The idea of repentance on God's part is that He would respond in pity towards the humble crying out of sinners who deserve His wrath and punishment.

The Greek word for repent is, "METANOEO," this is a compound word:

Meta means A Changed Position to Vary _____⁽¹³⁾

..... *after afterward again against among between follow followed freely hence hereafter joyfully on setting since together when without*

meta, met-ah'; a prim. prep. (often used adv.); prop. denoting

accompaniment; "amid" (local or causal); modified variously according to the case (gen. association, or acc. succession) with which it is joined; occupying an intermediate position (between 575 or 1537 and 1519 or 4314; less intimate than 1722, X and less close than 4862):-after (-ward), X that be again, against, among, X and, + follow, hence, hereafter, in, of, (up-) on, + our, X and setting, since, (un-) to, + together, when, with (+ -out). Often used in composition, in substantially the same relations of participation or proximity, and transfer or sequence.

Noieo means _Mind thoughts.. etc_ ⁽¹⁴⁾

noieo, noy-eh'-o; from 3563; to exercise the mind (observe), i.e. (fig.) to comprehend, heed:-consider, perceive, think, understand.
consider perceive think understand understood

metanoeo, met-an-o-eh'-o; from 3326 and 3539; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (mor. feel compunction):-repent.

The idea of this word is that a person who repents has a total change of mind and attitude about his/her sin. This involves a turning away from sin and turning to God for mercy and forgiveness.

V. JONAH'S PREACHING BROUGHT TO PEOPLE OF NINEVEH TO REPENTANCE

A FORMULA FOR REPENTANCE THAT BRINGS REVIVAL:

Jonah 3:10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

1. THEY TURNED FROM THEIR EVIL WAY:

Jonah 3:10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

2. NOTE WHAT FOLLOWS TRUE AND SINCERE REPENTANCE?

After the people of Nineveh recognized that their ways were indeed evil, they needed to turn from their evil way before they could experience the blessings of God. We are not saved to continue in sin but that we might cease from sinning.

Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

According to Acts 26:20, when a person truly repents of their sin, they need to do WORKS that are proper and meet for repentance.

3. TODAY MANY PEOPLE THINK THEY CAN REPENT BUT NOT TURN FROM SIN?

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Romans 6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Romans 6:7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Some people misunderstand the LONGSUFFERING AND MERCY of God and think it is a license to sin. When a person truly responds to the gospel message, i.e. of the judgment of God against sin but mercy to those who repent; they will turn from their sin to God in sincere repentance. God promises to give the Holy Spirit to everyone that truly repents and through His gift and grace, they will have the power to walk in obedience to His will. (cf., Phil 2:13)

4. *NOTE How Jonah's experience in the belly of the whale illustrates the gospel message.*

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: Before Jonah was put in the the belly of the whale, what was he doing? What did God use in Jonah's life to get him to conform to the will of God and to go preach in Nineveh? What had to happen then, to Jonah, while he was in the belly of the whale?

NOTE: In the belly of the whale, Jonah had to die to sin and self will and rebellion against God. He realized that he wasn't going to get out of the whale's belly until he surrendered to walk in obedience to God's command to go preach in Nineveh.

5. *What did Jesus say about Jonah's experience in the belly of the whale?*

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Jesus said that Jonah's experience in the whale's belly was an illustration of His work on the cross and His burial and resurrection.

6. *Note the difference between the attitude of the Ninevites to Jonah's preaching in comparison to the attitude of so many people today?*

The Ninevites recognized the hand of God in the circumstances surrounding Jonah and his preaching. In comparison to this, people so often make light of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord.

What is a greater and more urgent message? According to John 3:19, why do you think that so many are apathetic towards the gospel message and God's messengers?

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

THE GREAT REASON MEN WILL NOT REPENT TODAY IS BECAUSE THEY LOVE darkness rather than light because their DEEDS are evil.

Men do not want to turn from their evil ways, and therefore, God will bring judgment to this evil generation, (cf., Matt. 24:21-29).

According to the Bible, that day of judgment that will try and chasten the world (the current day Ninevites) is called the great tribulation.

According to Rev. 11:3, the two prophets will prophecy 3.5 years preaching repentance.

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

So the Ninevites were convinced of God's future judgment on them and repented of their sinful ways and God had mercy on them.

VI. LESSON 6 JONAH CHAPTER 4:1-3

Intro: The men of Nineveh repented and a great revival broke out in that city. In this chapter, we will look at Jonah's reaction to that revival and draw some applications to us today:

TEXT:

Jonah 4:1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

Jonah 4:2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

Jonah 4:3 Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.

1. CONSIDER WHY JONAH WAS ANGRY ABOUT THIS REVIVAL?

Read, Isa. 55:8-9:

Jonah was not looking at this revival with the mind of God.

Note: Many times in our prayer life, we are viewing things from our mind and thinking. This is one reason why we don't receive our prayer requests. What did Jonah pray in verse 3 and what did God do instead? Did Jonah have the mind of God? As a prophet, why did he not see things from God's perspective?

Read, Acts 11:1-18 and Gal. 2:11-15 and notice how, even in the New Testament, ministers of God can be influenced to not have the mind of God.

1. According to Rom. 12:2, our minds need to be transformed ⁽²⁾ by separating from the world and setting our attention on the word of God.

2. **According to II Cor. 10:4-5, our thoughts must be brought into Subjection to the obedience of Christ.**
3. **According to Philip 2:3, we must let God work in us both to will and to do His good pleasure.**
4. **Read I Cor. 2:12-16, and answer the following:**
 - A. **According to I Cor. 2:12, we must receive the SPIRIT of GOD before we can have the mind of God and understand His thoughts.**
 - B. **I Cor. 2:13: We cannot understand the things of God through man's MIND but only through the teaching of the WORD OF GOD ⁽⁷⁾.**
 - C. **I Cor. 2:14: What does it mean to compare spiritual things with spiritual things (cf., Isa. 29:9-10)?**
 - D. **I Cor. 2:14: Why does the natural man receive not the things of the spirit of God?**
 - E. **I Cor. 2:16: In order that we can see things from God's perspective, we need the Mind of Christ**

VII. LESSON 7 JONAH 4:4-5 GETTING ANGRY AT THE WILL OF GOD

Jonah 4:4 Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

Jonah 4:5 So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.

When a person does not see things from God's perspective, they get angry. Are we not like little children who want their own way? What does a little child do when they do not get their way?

What are some things that people get angry about when it comes to the will of God?

1. What was Jonah angry about?

Read, Matt. 20:1-15:

Study the parable in Matt. 20:1-15, and notice some principles that can be applied to this lesson in the life of Jonah.

2. In Matt. 20:11-12, what did the servants of the Lord murmur about?

Matthew 20:1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

Matthew 20:8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

Matthew 20:9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

Matthew 20:10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

Matthew 20:11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

Matthew 20:12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

Matthew 20:13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

Matthew 20:14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

Notice: in the parable, these men were upset that the Lord seemed more gracious to others than to them. However, what did they forget?

Before they were hired by the good master, they were without a job..

cf., Matt. 20:2. They, no doubt, were happy to receive the agreed upon wages. Why did they become unhappy?

3. According to Matt. 20:15, these servants were upset that the Lord showed MERCY to those who did not deserve it.

4. What was the difference between the fellow who worked 12 hours and the fellow that worked only 1 hour and received a penny? The fellow that worked 12 hours was trusting in his WORKS. The fellow that worked only 1 hour was trusting in the MERCY of his master.

5. Why was Jonah upset about God showing mercy on the Ninevites?

Jonah forgot that God was showing mercy on the Israelites also.

6. HOW SAD IT IS THAT WE FORGET WE ALL ARE RECIPIENTS OF GOD'S MERCY.

Read, Luke 15:11-32: THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

Why was the older son upset in this parable?

Can you think of some times that Christians may act this way even in the church? List below some circumstances that cause people to get angry at God:

A. Psalm 37:1, Christians can fret when they become envious over the wicked.

B. Christians can get angry when they experience the chastening of this present life, (I Peter 4:12-14).

C. Can you think of other times Christians can get bitter about the will of God, (Heb. 12:15)?

7. WE NEED TO LEARN TO DEAL WITH ANGER AND BITTERNESS.

Jonah 4:6 And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.

Jonah 4:7 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

Jonah 4:8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

Jonah 4:9 And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.

Jonah 4:10 Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

Jonah 4:11 And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

8. JONAH HAD TO LEARN LESSONS FROM THE GOURD.

A. Note: when a person sins and violates God's Word they are chastened of God. What did God first use to chasten Jonah's outward rebellion? According to Jonah 1:17, He used a great fish or whale.

B. Sometimes, it is not only our outward actions that need to be chastened but also, our attitudes. What was a warning sign that Jonah did not have a right spirit and attitude towards doing the will of God, cf., Jonah 4:1-4. Note how he got _____⁽⁸⁾ when God spared the city.

C. Note how unrepented anger leads to greater chastening and anger: God prepared a gourd to comfort Jonah and then, He prepared a worm to destroy the gourd. When Jonah got angry that the gourd died, who was he angry at? Why did God prepare an east wind to scorch Jonah further?

D. Does God bring uncomfortable situations in our lives to get us to see things from His perspective?

When we get angry at others or adverse circumstances, we should look to see if God is not using these in our life as a source of rebuke for our failure to do what He commanded us to do.

E. How many things did God prepare in Jonah's life to get him to see what He wanted him to see?

Jonah 1:4 God prepared a great Storm

Jonah 1:17 He prepared a Great Fish

Jonah 3:5 God prepared the hearts of the people of Nineveh to receive Jonah's message.

Jonah 4:6 God prepared a Gourd to comfort Jonah because he was angry about the outcome of his preaching.

Jonah 4:7 God prepared a WORM to destroy the gourd to teach Jonah a lesson about his wrong priorities.

Jonah 4:8 God prepared a vehement EAST WIND to afflict Jonah so he would really be angry for the loss of the gourd.

Jonah 4:11 It is obvious God prepared Jonah to have a repentant heart about his attitude and Jonah, no doubt, recorded this experience in this book that we have.

Note: in all this, who was working? God used this lesson with Jonah to teach His people for generations to come how they need to see things from His perspective and not from our own bias.

8. IN ALL THIS WHAT WAS GOD TRYING TO TEACH JONAH?

Jonah 4:10 Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

Jonah 4:11 And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

- A. *Jonah had more compassion and love for a gourd than for the lost souls in Nineveh. What things do Christians today have a greater heart for than for the lost?***
- B. *How do Christians today act like Jonah? Do we have a heart for the lost like Christ would have us to have? What are the, "gourds," in our life?***