

Turning Around

Jonah 3

Leader Discussion guide

Quotes used:

- Martin Luther's Thesis #1: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

Illustrations Used:

- Legoland – Forgot tickets
- Peter, how many times must I forgive? 70 x's 7. (Matt. 18:21-22)
- God doesn't negotiate based on our disobedience.
- Tornado country. Tornado sirens. Would go to the basement shelter. The storm of God's wrath is coming.
- Mark and the Christmas tree cutting incident.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Read Jonah 3 out loud. Summarize the content together.
2. Verse 1 says that the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. What does this teach us about God?
3. Mark: "This never happens: God gives a command. We say no, I am not going to do that. Then God says, oh I didn't realize you felt so strongly about that. Let's work something out." What is God actually like? Is this good... why? If God is like this, what does that mean for us?
4. Martin Luther's Thesis #1: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." What does this mean?
 - a. Application: What does this look like in everyday life? How can we grow in this?
5. How are we to interpret God's warnings to us? (Tornado illustration). How does God warn us?
6. What is the response of the King of Nineveh to the warnings of God? What does God do?

Application Questions:

1. God gave Jonah a second chance. Jonah didn't want give Nineveh a first chance.
 - a. Is there anyone in your life that you have difficulty giving a second chance to?
 - b. How much are we supposed to forgive?
 - c. How does God's example here and Jesus' work on the cross help us to give forgiveness?
2. (God graciously initiates our repentance.) Have you ever felt (do you feel right now) like God was looking down at you in your sin with condemnation just waiting to pour out justice? What is God's posture toward someone in sin? (When we sin, God graciously pursues us and initiates our repentance. Think of Jonah. Think of Jesus who God sent to pursue a rebellious humanity)
3. RACO - God calls us to shape our life, "according to the word of the Lord." He speaks through the Bible.
 - a. 4 steps of RACO - Read the Bible. / Ask God what he wants me to do, think, feel, believe / Confess failure and need for help / Obey.
 - b. Last week we prayed, "Lord help me." This week is RACO. These are worth remembering and challenging each other to do all the time.

Extended Outline:

Illus: Turning around to get LegoLand passes.

App: In our life with God, turning around can be hard. It can even be painful. But it is absolutely necessary. The Bible calls this practice of turning around, repentance. Jesus and Peter preached, "repent." The Thessalonian Christians "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). In Jonah 3 we see two examples of people repenting. As we look at their repentance we will see several truths we need to know about turning around. Repentance is an ongoing thing: Martin Luther's Thesis #1: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

1. Repentance is possible because God is a God of second chances.

- a. 3:1 – then the word of the Lord came to Jonah. "A SECOND TIME."
 - i. **Illus:** Think of Genesis 3. Think of Israel. Think of Peter. Of us.
- b. **App:** We should not be presumptuous. We should be grateful.
- c. **App:** And we should be merciful. Jonah 3 comes after Jonah 2 on purpose. People like Jonah, and people like us, are not supposed to begrudge God's mercy to anyone else.
- d. **App:** Are we like God – giving second chances? Is there someone you have written off? Some individual or group of people you don't want good for?
- e. **Illus:** Peter, how many times must I forgive? 70 x's 7. (Matt. 18:21-22)

2. Repentance is necessary because God doesn't change.

- a. V2 - God's will hasn't changed. The same command: Go to Nineveh."
 - i. **Illus:** God doesn't negotiate based on our disobedience.
- b. **App:** Sometimes we don't turn back to God, because we know what He is going to say. We don't want to change.

3. Real repentance is turning to live according to God's will.

- a. In chapter 1, Jonah chose a self-directed life. Now Jonah has repented. V3 – "Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, **according to the word of the Lord.**"
 - i. The confession of a Christian is "Jesus is Lord."
- b. **App:** There is no 2nd tier type of Christianity, where we enjoy His presence, and blessings, and fellowship with Him, but we're in charge.
- c. **Illus:** During seminary I was offered a different job than I applied for.
 - i. **App:** Listen, God isn't open to a change in job description.
- d. **App: V3** - God calls us to. shape our life, "according to the word of the Lord." He speaks through the Bible.
 - i. 4 steps of RACO - Read the Bible. / Ask God what he wants me to do, think, feel, believe / Confess failure and need for help / Obey.

4. God warns us in order to awaken us.

a. V4 - Jonah goes, as God's ambassador to warn Nineveh.

- i. V4 – 5 words. This is likely a summary of his message.
 1. Warning of judgment: The city will be overthrown.
 2. Time to turn around: 40 days.
- ii. The Bible is full of warnings of God's judgment:
 1. For example: Heb 9:27 / Rev. 20:15 / Matthew 25:31-46.
- iii. **App:** He tells us this, in order to awaken us.
- iv. **Illus:** Louisville, Tornado country. Tornado sirens. Would go to the basement shelter. The storm of God's wrath is coming. You can find shelter in Christ. Christ came and stepped into our place.

5. Repentance happens when a heart change leads to a life change.

- a. In the NT two main words are used to describe repentance:
 - i. Metanoia = change of mind and heart. Not behavior modification.
 - ii. Epistrepheo = “to turn around/about.” If the inward change occurs it will reveal itself outwardly.
- b. V5 – “The people believed God.”
 - i. They believe what God says. Change of mind.
 - ii. **App:** We won’t turn around if we think we are going the right way.
 - iii. **Illus:** Me and the Christmas tree cutting incident.
- c. Sorrow for sin.
 - i. V5b - They fasted. Put on sackcloth. V6 – The king joins the fast.
 - ii. Sorrow is a part of repentance: Matthew 5:4; Isaiah 6:5; James 4:9.
 - iii. **Note:** sorrow doesn’t necessarily mean repentance is happening: 2 Cor. 7:10: “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret whereas worldly grief produces death.”
- d. Change of direction. An outward change.
 - i. In v8 the king calls for an outward change. Turn from their evil way, and from the violence in their hands. **V10** – that is what God sees.
 - ii. Summary: Repentance is when a heart change leads to an outward change.
- e. **Illus:** John the Baptist: “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.” (Mt. 3:8)
 - i. **Illus:** “Fruit stapling” is not repentance. Mere agreement that something is sin is not repentance. Feeling bad is not repentance.
 - ii. **App:** Let us seek deep down, heart repentance, in which we believe God, turn from our sin, and live according to God’s word.

6. God responds to repentance with mercy.

- a. V9 – The king says, “who knows?” They do turn.
- b. V10 - God relents. They repented and God relented. **App:** We know that God responds to humble turning with mercy.
 - i. Example of Jonah/ Nineveh / Peter / Paul. And of millions of others.
 - ii. We have God’s word. Ezekiel 33:11 – “As I live, declared the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die.”
 - iii. But God is not just sitting back, waiting on us.

7. God graciously initiates our repentance.

- a. God pursued Jonah. God sent the warning to Nineveh.
- b. God sent Christ to pursue a rebellious humanity. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). And God has sent this word to us today. Turn from whatever you are holding on to. Let us run to Christ, as our Savior/forgiver. And as our Lord/leader.