

Reaching the Lost

Introduction to “Reaching the lost” from last sermon on “Unity” in June

Text **Jonah Chapter 1**

Purpose – examine chapter 1 of the book of Jonah and see what parallels there are with our lives and our call to “Reach the Lost” today

Setting

- Book of Jonah written by Jonah sometime between 785 to 760 BC
- Jonah was a prophet...serving/ministering under Jeroboam II
- Prophet of that day...Proclaimed the message given from God...messgae not from man but from God
- Great City of Nineveh...Assyrians...Israels greatest enemy...722 conquer Israel
- Evil of that day...evil of that day...no different than today...

God's Plan

- **Jonah Ch 4:11**...Gods plan was to send Jonah to declare (prophecy) judgment over Nineveh that they might repent and be spared from destruction

Jonah's Plan

- **Jonah Ch 1:3**...Jonah's plan was to be disobedient and run in the opposite direction as far as he could

God's Power and Compassion at Work

- Jonah is running the other way...God sends a storm...Not a natural storm or sailors would not have set out
- Jonah is asleep in a boat that is being beat to pieces....very tired....?
- Sailors are praying to their Gods and tossing cargo over...serious...serious...
- Jonah is confronted is confronted and asked to pray...spare them all...

- NOTICE...It does not appear that Jonah prayed or even cared....not ready to repent and obey
- Crew casts lots...(superstition game)....God intervenes in the “casting of lots”Jonah fesses up
- **READ vs 9**...”I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of Heaven, who made the sea and the land”
- “Sailors were terrified” ...they knew of this God...this was the God of Israel
- They ask how to stop it....”Toss me overboard”...Then they row more...why ?
 - Fear of the Lord...they now knew who Jonah was...and he was a PROPHET of God...
 - They knew that the storm was from God...what would murdering His Prophet bring ?
 - The sailors show Jonah more grace than Jonah was willing to show Nineveh
- Jonah has decided that death would be better....still running....stubborn...”leave me alone God”
- Sailors toss Jonah...Jonah knew that the Storm would cease...but he didn’t know the Whale would save him....willing to die
- God sends the whale....an obedient whale...Gods timing is perfect every time...
- The seas immediately become calm and the Sailors repent aand commit to following Jonah's God
- Jonah repents while his body is in the belly of the whale...**READ PRAYER Ch 2**
- Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit out Jonah...

Our call to reach the lost....is it different than what Jonah went through...?

- TODAY...Like the city of Nineveh was evil....much evil around us...news...walk down the street...anger, violence, drugs, alcohol, sexual sin, hear of murder...maybe its right next door. Maybe for some this evil is not even next door or down the street. Closer that we care to admit...

- TODAY...Just like God had a plan for the wicked city of Nineveh....God has a plan for the evil around us today.
 - **2 Peter 3:3-9** Reference.....”He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.”
 - The only big difference Jonah’s time to ours....Grace through Jesus Christs work on the cross...not the Law....BUT...still must repent

- TODAY...Just like Jonah was called to spread the Word given him by God...so are we
 - **Mathew 28:16-20** Reference.....”go...make disciples of all the nations...baptizing them...teaching them to obey”
 - Just like Jonah had issues so do we....the Lord did not give up on Jonah...nor will he give up on us.....Jonahs struggle compared to ours.....
 - Like Jonah...Sometimes we know which way we are to go and yet we go the opposite...little or big things
 - Like Jonah was so tire from running so we get tired from running...Jonah so tired the ship was sinking around him and he was “fast asleep”. Are any of us in the same position...our ship is sinking but we are asleep because we played ourselves out running away from God instead of running in obedience ?
 - Like Jonah...when we finally realize whats going on do we repent or do we choose the belly of the whale ? Maybe some of us have been in the belly of “OUR WHALE” figuratively speaking...for so long we have started to make it as comfortable as possible....I know....my Personal Testimony reflects that belly...
 - If this resounds as true in your inner being...HEART...then repent like Jonah....just like he was redeemed so will you be.
ITS A PROMISE

- Just like Jonah...expect to be vomited back to life...
 - Jonah was a believer being reconciled back to the Lord.
 - We are believers and when we get right with God it can be no less dramatic
 - Its not by your works but by Gods mighty grace and mercy...
 - As fast and violent as a whale vomiting...Jonah didn't by his strength slowly crawl out of the whale...that would be impossible.....ONLY Gods power could transfer him to “dry land”

- How does this really empower us or teach us how to “Reaching the Lost”
 - Like Jonah.....once we are in right standing with the Lord...willing to walk in obedience...then we can watch and learn how God uses us to bring others to repentance and salvation...
 - Jonah Ch 3Nineveh and 120'000 repent...
 - Sailors...knew of the God of Israel....see his miracles and repent...the Lord can use all things for good...even Jonah's disobedience....but its better to obey....much less painful.
 - SPECIFICS....specifically how do we reach the lost around us ?

- Mechanic ...some rules...some flexibility...
- Ministry...some rule...some flexibility...
 - We are all members of His body...each has a purpose and different tools...when it comes to reaching the lost it can look different for each of us....but it won't contravene Gods Word nor can it be done in our own strength or power.
 - The key is to have a relationship with the Father that is deep enough to hear his voice and obey that voice...no matter what the cost
 - All of the principles are written in the Word...get into the Word
 - All the power is from Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit....get to know the Spirit and how the Spirit connects and directs your Spirit

 - God knows the direction for you...Just like Jonah heard God, so can you.....ask him through PRAYER and then when you receive your direction....obey no matter what

Prayer.....