

## Yet Forty Days, Jonah 3:1-5

### I. Powerful

#### A. God's message is powerful

1. I think we are caught up with power
2. Each of us wants to have or to be powerful
3. We want to control our own little patch of ground we stand on
4. But that is not true power (this is why we 'die to ourselves daily')
5. True power is the power to save (and we will never have that)
6. True power is taking someone who is broken and defiled and making them whole and clean again
7. Nothing else in this world matters, only people's souls
8. This is why these mass killings (whether by weapons or abortions) really get my blood boiling — because they take away the sanctity of life — they make life mean nothing
9. Genesis 1:26–27 (ESV); <sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
  - a) Our lives mean everything to God
  - b) He sacrificed His unique — only begotten — son for His creation... us!
  - c) We just don't understand how much we mean to the Creator
  - d) He created us knowing He would have to provide His Son as a sacrifice
  - e) Ephesians 1:4 (ESV); even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

#### B. The Word of the LORD

1. Not only did God provide a way for us to be reconciled to Him, He also gave us His word, the Holy Scriptures, to tell us how to live — B-I-B-L-E; Basic instructions Before Leaving Earth, doesn't even begin to capture the essence of the Scriptures
2. 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV); <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

#### C. Some people completely ignore this powerful message

1. We have studied, knocked doors, lived out the message with others in order that they might see the LORD and be moved by His Word
2. Yet, there are many in our city that ignore, even mock, God and His Word
3. I'm sure that we get discouraged by the lack of response to His message
4. "I want you to push that rock"

### II. Nineveh believed

#### A. Jonah 3:1–5 (ESV); <sup>1</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." <sup>3</sup> So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. <sup>4</sup> Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" <sup>5</sup> And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

#### B. Jonah's message was only 8 words

1. These were not words of hope and salvation
2. These were words of judgment and destruction

#### C. He had only traveled 1/3 of the way into the city and the people reacted

1. It didn't take very long for the Word of God to pierce men's hearts
2. It didn't take very long for the king to hear about it

#### D. Why don't people believe as readily today as they did (seemingly) in the first century?

1. The first sermon yielded 3000 saved — Acts 2:41
  2. By Acts 4:4 the number increased to 5000
  3. Jerusalem was filled with visitors for the feast days
  4. The Israelites had grown up looking forward to a savior
  5. One of Satan's biggest wins is to convince mankind that we are okay without God
  6. Genesis 3:4–5 (ESV); <sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
  7. Society has changed the truth so that what was once evil is now good and what was once good is now evil
  8. But, the truth doesn't change
  9. "The truth is not what you want it to be; it is what it is, and you must bend to its power or live a lie." Miyamoto Musashi (Japan's greatest swordsman, also a philosopher, writer and ronin)
  10. The majority of the 7 billion people in this world are living a lie
- E. The evidence of the risen Savior is plentiful and easy to find — people just need to be looking
- III. Sackcloth and Ashes
- A. Jonah 3:6–9 (ESV); <sup>6</sup> The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. <sup>7</sup> And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, <sup>8</sup> but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. <sup>9</sup> Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish."
  - B. Sackcloth and ashes were a symbol of mourning, of repentance, of humility
    1. The people of Nineveh believed
    2. I'm sure they had heard of the Israelites and their God
    3. The plagues of Egypt, the wandering in the desert for 40 years, the conquest of Canaan, King David's exploits, etc. (scholars put Jonah during the time of Jeroboam II, 2 Kings 14:25)
    4. A lot of these things happened generations before Jonah, but they were passed down as world events not mysterious legends
    5. The miraculous things God did with the Israelites were not seen as fables or fairytales — they were known as facts
    6. So the people of Nineveh believed!
  - C. They were not sure they would be spared, but did what was right anyway (verses 8-9)
    1. Daniel 3:17–18 (ESV); <sup>17</sup> If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."
    2. What faith from Gentiles!
    3. Luke 7:1-10
    4. God's Word is overflowing with power and many fail to recognize it
    5. They should dress themselves in sackcloth and ashes, yet they believe the lie they have been told — that they can achieve their own salvation without the blood of Jesus (basically)
  - D. It is through God's Word that we should recognize our sinfulness and need to dress ourselves in sackcloth and ashes
- IV. Gospel Power
- A. But only until we take off our sackcloth and ashes and cloth ourselves with the blood of Jesus

- B. Romans 1:16 (ESV); For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- C. God's Word has the power to heal the broken and cleanse the defiled
- D. We just need to believe in that power
- E. We just need to obey that power