

# “A little R&B with Jonah and the Ninnies”

## Jonah 3:1-10

### Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Let's just say the old TV show *Quantum Leap* was real-and you were transported into Jonah's body-what is going through your head as you enter the “important” city of Ninevah to “preach against” it?
- 2.) What goes through your mind when you see nations (particularly the Middle East) burn American flags and “preach against” America?
- 3.) Do you honestly care about them?

### Review:

- Jonah's Prayer of Thanksgiving
- God's Sovereignty
- God's mercy to save undeserving people

Verses 1-3

God's Compassion sets the stage:

- He doesn't give up on people
- The city is important

Verses 4-5

Theme Verse: “The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.” Jonah 3:5

- Repentance and faith are 2 sides of the same coin. With true repentance you have a turning to faith. With true faith you have real repentance: a turning from and a turning toward.

Verses 6-9

### ESPN Repentance Highlight Reel

#### 1.) Dischronology: *The Ninnies believed!*

a.) What it looks like

- Jonah preaches to Ninevites, they repent, call fast
- Then Jonah preaches to King, he repents and calls fast

b.) What is really happening

- Preaches to people and King, he declares fast, and they do it as well
- As the King goes the neighborhood

c.) Why do it

- To show people responded to Jonah's preaching, not merely responding to King's orders
- The need to explain it to the skeptical Israelite

d.) Another fish story?

## 2.) Fasting, Sackcloth, Ashes and Crying Out: Intensive-Desperation, humiliation, and repentance

"Just give me that old time religion..."

- Opposite of Cashmere

**sackcloth:** *cloth made of black goats' hair, coarse, rough, and thick, used for sacks, and also worn by mourners Ge 37:34 42:25 2Sa 3:31 Es 4:1,2 Ps 30:11 etc., and as a sign of repentance*

- "Ashes, ashes, we all fall down"

**Ashes:** *Among the ancient Hebrews and other Orientals, to sprinkle with or sit in ashes was a mark or token of grief, humiliation, or penitence. Ashes on the head was one of the ordinary signs of national humiliation, as when the children of Israel were assembled under Nehemiah "with fasting, and with sackcloth, and earth (ashes) upon them" (Neh 9:1), and when the people of Nineveh repented in sackcloth and ashes at the preaching of Jonah (Jon 3:5,6) The afflicted or penitent often sat in ashes (compare Job 2:8; 42:6: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"), or even wallowed in ashes.*

*However, these and various other modes of expressing grief, repentance, and humiliation among the Hebrews, such as rending the garments, tearing the hair and the like, were not of Divine appointment, but were simply the natural outbursts of the impassioned oriental temperament, and are still customary among eastern peoples.*

-George's dilemma

-About humility; to be covered in ashes; it was about desperation. If you covered yourself in sack cloth and ashes and cried out, you would have been totally dependent upon God. This was a sign of total repentance.

-Serious burden for serious nature of sins

-Fab four repentance signs

-Matter of life and death

- Simply Un-American

"Proud to be an American, because at least I know I'm free."

Not like America, Not like an American

Application: What do you cry out for? When do you do it? Do sins bother you?

Ex

Jeremiah 6:26

### B.) Model of Repentance and Crying out

-Just like sailors, more like Israel than Israel: What Israel was supposed to do

-Communal/individual flavor

-In response to situation and preaching

- Some Ex. of sack cloth/ashes in Israel history

Esther 4:3

*"In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes."*

Isaiah 37:1-4

*"When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the LORD. <sup>2</sup> He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. <sup>3</sup> They told him, "This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the point of birth and there is no strength to deliver them. <sup>4</sup> It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the LORD your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that still survives."*

Application-We don't like repentance; we don't like dependence. It's not necessarily comfortable. Does repentance and crying out ever go together?

Difference in repentance and penitence

Sorry Kobe....

But Dad, what did I do? "Evil Ways and Violence" (vs 8):

- 1.) Ruthless nation
- 2.) Injustice to poor

God's Judgment on nations-Obadiah and other prophets

Application: What are our contributions?

### 3.) Animals-Extent of repentance

Did they treat their pets like people?

- 1.) Sin had effect on all of nature; destruction would have occurred to man and beast, perhaps women and children

- 2.) The animals were object lessons to remind the men of need for repentance; they saw in the animals their own condemnation in as much as innocent animals suffered because of them. The same would have been done of ceremonial washings to remind the Israelites of sin
- 3.) The extensive nature of the fast; no stone unturned

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Have you ever been in a situation where you had to cry out to God? Give three situations where you would find yourselves in the Ninevite's shoes.
- 2.) If Jonah came today and "preached against" America, what would he preach against?
- 3.) If Jonah "preached against" UPC, what would he preach against?
- 4.) If Jonah "preached against" YOU, what would he say?

Verses 9-10

## PART 2: Believe-Jonah 3:9-10

### A. Faith always produces repentance

Futato's Maxim: Always act in keeping with what you believe

They believed God and it was easy to see their external lives; for their lives showed it!

Faith: Ex of Atlanta Braves winning the World Series

### B. Faith is more about the object: God

- Who Knows?

The story is written from the point of view of the Ninevites, for it is coming directly from their lips. Put yourself in their shoes. They knew very little about the Lord, of his great mercy, of his great compassion. They had a brief message, which may/may not have included all the information they wanted.

- Reasons to doubt
  1. Not exactly the 4 Laws
  2. City had it coming

-“I don't know much, but I know I love you, and that may be all I need to know.”  
-Aaron Neville
- Was it real faith?
  1. Good grammar?
  2. Where'd they put their eggs?

Repented and put all their faith in God. They had nothing else to place faith in. This wasn't a plan B, or something to fall back on. All eggs in one basket. They came to God

with a sense of fear-they didn't want to get destroyed. I wouldn't have either. They came to God and would find out his great compassion.

3. Calvin said so-More evidence *of* faith than *lack of* faith

"We hence see that the king was in a harsh struggle; for though Jonah seemed to have closed the door and to shut out the king from any hope of deliverance, and though his own conscience held him fast bound, he yet perseveres and encourages himself; in short, he aspires to the hope of pardon...this form of expression expresses a difficulty rather than a mistrust...sets forth a difficulty"-Calvin *Jonah, Micah, and Nahum*, 111-112

4. The Oreo factor: Repentance and Faith go together

Question: What can you learn from this faith?

Our response: However, we come from the opposite side, already knowing He'll take us back. We come to him already knowing he receives us. So let us repent because we know of his compassion. We don't have to wonder if He will take us back.

- Was it perfect faith?

- 1.) If it's REAL, then its not PERFECT!
- 2.) Mark 9:23-Take it straight to the top
- 3.) The effect-Take it from Caedmon

"My faith is like shifting sand, so I stand on grace."

- 4.) Reword Aaron Neville's Song

"I don't know much, but I know you love me, and that may be all I need to know."

-All of Us

- Iran-Contra determinism/Fatalism

They asked the question, and God gave us the answer

- Self (Luke 15-Prodigal Son)
- Others (Rom 10:14)

Application: Fatalism questions-As far as evangelism goes-are you a fatalist, so to speak?

- 1.) Do you presume by looking at a person, that he or she will not come to faith? That it won't matter what you do, that person will never come to faith?
- 2.) Who is that person?
- 3.) Who is your enemy that you really wouldn't mind if he/she went to Hell?
- 4.) Who is that family member which would never turn to Christ?

- Visiting St. Augustine

Another Saint, another Monica, Another Vicki, \_\_\_\_\_ (Who's Next)

- College Dating, Repentance, and Prayer: Ask Early and Often

Do we live like fatalists?

Matter of belief

Never too late to repent of this

- Bible Jeopardy: Their question becomes Our answer

The Point: God never closes the door; It is never too late for some R&B  
God's contingency clause: R&B

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Where do you tend to place your confidence?
- 2.) What are areas in which you struggle with unbelief?
- 3.) How do/should/will *you* model faith before family, friends, church?
- 4.) Who have you "given up" on?