

Mission to the Community Jonah 1:1-3, 3:1-9

Introduction

In this scripture, the reluctant Jonah is given a mission from God.

The Word Came: The Prophet Retreated (vv. 1:1-3)

God spoke from Heaven and commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against the wickedness of the people there. Nineveh was a long-standing enemy of the Israelites. Jonah did not want the mission so he decided that he would try to run away from God and go to Tarshish. He would find out that there was no way he could ever distance himself from the Lord's presence.

The Word Came Again: The Prophet Responded (vv. 3:1-4)

After the experience Jonah had while fleeing his calling, God called him again for the mission he had fled to avoid. This time he was obedient. Jonah went to Nineveh and gave them the message that they would be overthrown in forty days.

The Word Came: The People Repented (vv. 3:5-9)

Jonah's eight word message struck the people of Nineveh to the core. Everyone immediately went into repentance mode. They all put on sackcloth and fasted as a sign of their penitence. Even the king was touched. He put on sackcloth, fasted and commanded that everyone in the kingdom do the same. Because Jonah obediently delivered the message a nation was changed.

Life Application

There will be times that like Jonah, we are reluctant to bring God's message to the ones we've been charged to bring it to. What we need to remember is that fulfilling God's mission is paramount. We have a responsibility to spread God's message of mercy and love to the world. Jesus died for the sins of all men, not some. If we don't do our job we may be blocking someone's salvation. Who are we to decide who gets the message?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. -John 3:16 (NIV)

Questions for Discussion and Meditation

Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh?

Who was more obedient, Jonah or the Ninevites?

Preview of Next Week's Lesson

In Jonah 3, Jonah expresses his displeasure with the mercy the Ninevites received