



Sr. Pastor: Kevin Flannery

"Mysterious-Outrageous Mercy: *External Conformity without Inward Transformation.*"

Jonah 3: 1-4

I. Family Ice breaker: Questions?!

- What are you most looking forward to as the weather warms up?

II. Read the following scripture passage from today's sermon together:

Then the LORD spoke to Jonah a second time: ²“Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you.” ³This time Jonah obeyed the LORD’s command and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all.^[a] ⁴On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: “Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!” - Jonah 3:1-4

III. Questions & Applications for Discussion with your kids:

Jonah has survived the traumatic rescue of the big fish and is now back on land. The word of the Lord comes to Jonah again to go to Nineveh and proclaim the Lord’s message. Jonah is not given the freedom to craft his own message, but it is a message from the Lord to the people of Nineveh.

- A. Jonah receives a second chance to change his attitude toward the people of Nineveh. Outwardly he complies, but Pastor Kevin pointed out that his attitude towards the mission remains the same. Jonah still hates the Assyrians. His external conformity is without inward transformation.
- How do you see God displaying mercy towards Jonah? What does he deserve? What do the people of Nineveh deserve?
 - Consider the times God displays His timeless character of mercy to you in your life and talk about it.
- B. Pastor Kevin told us on Sunday that according to the text, Jonah obeys and travels to Nineveh to deliver the message from the Lord. Just as his initial objection was silent (1:3); so now his compliance is also silent. The impression is that Jonah is now completely reformed. If it was not for the subtle hints in the more self-centered sections of Jonah’s prayer in chapter 2, we’d likely assume that we have just witnessed a classic example of complete repentance. The larger narrative peaks our suspicion and proves superficial. Jonah’s body is moving in another direction, but where is his heart asked Pastor Kevin?
- Looking ahead to chapter 4, we can see Jonah’s heart is not where it ought to be – he hasn’t really repented or surrendered his heart to the Lord.
 - Share an example where you have gone through the motions when on the outside it seemed you were obedient, but internally your heart was hardened towards what God was asking of you...How about a sibling story, or a situation at school/ sports?
- D. Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city. Although it is not in the text until we get to chapter 4, Jonah’s heart is not in this. It is as if Jonah is saying, “God, you can make my body move the right direction, and my mouth say the right words, but my heart still hates the Assyrians!” Jonah is angry that God loves his enemies.



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- Jonah proclaims, “40 more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” What significance does 40 days have? ***What other Old Testament events can you recall that lasted 40 years or days?***
 - How do you see God – God as Judge or God as merciful? What is the biblical perspective of God’s character as judge and mercy? How can these two contradictory characteristics be explained?
 - This message from the Lord was for both the Assyrians and for Jonah – God is giving Jonah a second chance This message from the Lord was for both the Assyrians and Jonah – God is giving Jonah a second chance just like he gives you and me a second (and multiple) chances. How does this message give you hope today?

40 is often used in the bible as a period of testing or trial. Genesis 6:9: 40 days and 40 nights of the flood a God’s judgment for the people’s wickedness; Exodus 16:35: 40 years of wandering in the wilderness; God’s judgment upon the nation of Israel for their unbelief when spies were sent out for 40 days into the land God promised (Numbers 13:25; Numbers 14:34); Exodus 32: Moses stays on Mt Sinai mountain with God for 40 days receiving the tablets with the Ten Commandments. Upon Moses return, the people are worshipping the golden calf. Moses pleads for Israel and God relents.

God uses the word “overthrown”. In the Hebrew, it could mean either overturn or turn. So, the Assyrians can either turn towards God or God will turn them over.

God is both a God of judgment and of mercy. In His justice, He judges us because of our sin. We are guilty. Yet in His mercy and lovingkindness, He sent His Son to pay the penalty of our sin. Christ satisfies the offense and those who believe in Him, are justified. Yet we still sin and fall short. We must continuously check our hearts and keep short accounts with God. When we repent and confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness/sin. (1 John 1:9). Our God is merciful!

This message of second chances – repentance, mercy and forgiveness - is the Good News. Who in your life needs to hear the gospel – that God is a God of second chances? Share with your group those names God placed on your heart and pray for them by name.

PRAY: Take time to pray together for what has been shared. Pray for those God has revealed to you who need to hear about His mercy and forgiveness.

APPLICATION: Take a few minutes to quietly search your heart. Is there an area in your life where you are just going through the motions in your obedience to God? Is your heart removed from God? Is there hatred in your heart for others (*person, culture or people group*) that requires your repentance?

By Katerina Simbo
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