

Journeying with Jonah
Week 5 – A City Turning to God
Scripture: Jonah 3:1-10

Message Mate

- Jonah may have experienced déjà vu as he went to Nineveh since what is described in Jonah 3 mirrors that in Jonah 1, including his call by God, his response and the response of those around him. God was giving Jonah a second chance so that he would learn from his mistakes. Will you allow God to use the mistakes you have previously made? If so, God will give you an opportunity to learn, grow and do it better next time, for his glory.
- Nineveh was important to God. Despite the evil of the Ninevites, God offered them the opportunity for redemption. The message that Jonah preached, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown”. “Overthrown” can mean to turn the city over to destruction, but it can also mean that they could turn their hearts to God and repent. They took the second option and all the Ninevites believed God, started to fast and wore sackcloth.
- Even the King of Nineveh took a position of humility. When we are confronted with our sin, are we humble like this? The King issued a proclamation that all people and animals should fast and wear sackcloth, that they should call earnestly on God and turn their behaviour away from violence. Real repentance is to confess our sin and turn away from our wrong behaviour towards God.
- The people turned from their evil ways and God relented from his destruction of Nineveh. This shows us that God desires that we turn from evil and repent, and God responds to our repentance with love, grace and compassion.
- Jesus spoke about the significance of the repentance of the Ninevites (Matt 12:41). This is an invitation to us to confess our sins, repent and turn away from sinful habits, so that we may grow to become more like Jesus.

Some Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever had an experience of déjà vu, that feeling of having lived through a certain experience before? What was significant about it? Read Jonah 1:1-6 and 3:1-6 and discuss why Jonah may have felt déjà vu.
2. God used the mistakes in Jonah’s life and gave him a second chance. As you look back into your life, have you seen times when God has redeemed mistakes you have made and given you a second chance to do something better and for his glory?
3. The king of Nineveh took a position of absolute humility before God. How humble are we when we are confronted with our sins?

4. Consider how the response of the Ninevites affected so many parts of their lives, food, water, clothing, animals, behaviour and it included everyone in the city which would have brought about a societal change in the community. Discuss this in the context of how repentance in an area of sin can affect your life.
5. Read Joel 2:13, 14 and discuss the character of God in light of Jonah 3:9, 10.
6. Read Matthew 12:41 and consider how the life and message of Jesus calls us to repent of our sins – to acknowledge our sin, confess it and repent (to turn away from sin and turn towards God).

Pray –

Sometimes where there is an area of sin, we prefer to continue sitting on our own throne with our robes of self-righteousness. Ask the Lord to help you have the humility to come before his throne of grace and receive forgiveness and restoration.

Give thanks that God is a God of love, grace and compassion, who desires your redemption from sin.

Pray for the people in our city that we would bring God's word, that it would be heard, received and acted on.