



Sunday, July 26, 2020
Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Jonah 3:1-10

Our church tradition has sometimes propagated the idea that repentance is an optional “extra” in the Christian life. In this teaching, faith is what is necessary for salvation, but repentance may or may not be connected to faith, and therefore is not necessary. This teaching is not only incorrect but harmful. The response to the gospel has always included the need for repentance. Jesus’s own teaching ministry was characterized by a proclamation that the kingdom of God had come near, and the only proper response was repentance (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15).

Even though Jonah did not preach such a holistic gospel as to include the Messiah and the coming of the kingdom, His message from the living God was essentially the same. Though he did not say the word in what we have recorded, the outcome and the response of the people from the greatest to the least demonstrate that this was the desired outcome of the word of the LORD to the people of Nineveh. What’s more, it is still the LORD’s desired outcome for His people today.

Context

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire. This empire was wicked and ruthless. For over a century, they harassed and threatened the people of Israel. Finally, they came and conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and nearly conquered the southern kingdom of Judah had the LORD not intervened in the days of Hezekiah. Nevertheless, it is easy to understand why Jonah was reluctant to go there. But in seeing their response to Jonah’s preaching and the response of the LORD to their repentance, it is easier for us to magnify the grace of God in our minds and hearts as we see a wicked people turn from their sin in earnest and be spared the punishment they rightfully deserved.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Jonah 3:1-10

“The Right Response Is Everything”

Prophet Responds...obedient

- Divine message
- Divine grace
- Repentance

City Responds...repentance

- Great city
- Prophet's entrance

Steps to repentance

- Believe God's word
- Humble yourself
- Cry out for help
- Turn from your sin
- Hope for mercy

God Responds...compassion

- Warning
- Welcome

Discuss

- 1) Why might someone think of repentance as an optional “extra” to the Christian life? Has this ever been true of you?

- 2) What particular teachings in the Bible ought to lead us to repentance?

- 3) Of the steps to repentance that Pastor Don listed, which is the most difficult for you? Why?

- 4) Pastor Don also said, “You cannot repent too soon because you don’t know how soon will be too late.” Why might someone be tempted to delay repenting?

- 5) A full understanding of the gospel is incomplete unless there is a clear call to repentance. In your gospel conversations, how easy or difficult is it to talk about this aspect of the gospel? Why do you think that is?