

Yesterday's Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less

Fishing with Jonah (Week 3) - One Day in Nineveh:



1) Many assume the story of Jonah is over after he's swallowed by the great sea creature, and then regurgitated by it onto the beach...not so, there are two equally entertaining and compelling chapters left.

2) God could have sent someone else to Nineveh to proclaim His message, but He didn't, because God by His very nature is a God of second chances (see Ps. 103.13 and 130.3, for example).

3) Thus, we can say with confidence that there is no past great gaffe, misstep, or act of outright defiance that precludes you from God using you powerfully in the present or future.

4) But we also see that avoiding what God asks of you usually just ensures that it'll come back around again.

5) So perhaps the reason we sometimes keep running into the same kinds of people or situations is that God is putting us at the same fork in the road, hoping that this time we'll make the good, kind, wise, or loving choice.

6) What happens in a single day at Nineveh seems impossible to believe, and proves that God can reach those we think unreachable, and that sometimes the most responsive to God are the ones we least expect to be (see here, for example, the parable of the great banquet in Luke 14.12-24, to which you'll find a link in section C. below).

7) Similar to something once said by Dorothy Day (well-known 20th-century Catholic social justice advocate), it should be said that I believe God is able to work in me only as much as I believe He is able to work in the person I least think He can.

8) And we ought not forget or gloss over the fact that there was one single trigger for the great revival in Nineveh - someone was willing to speak God's word (His message or truth) with courage.

9) However much we may regret from time to time things we've said, we ought also regret the times when God prompted us to speak - His encouragement, caution, wisdom, grace, love - and we didn't.

10) We'll let Rosa Ching Sao (Old Testament scholar in the Philippines) have the last word about Jonah 3: "The prophet Jonah was the right person to proclaim God's right message at the right time in the right place and to the right people."

For This Week

1) Scripture reading on God reaching the unreachable:

First from the gospels...

- Luke 14.15-24: [Luke 14.12-24 NRSV](#)

- Matthew 9.9-13: [Matthew 9.9-13 NRSV](#)- Luke 5.12-16: [Luke 5.12-16 NRSV](#)

And now about God reaching out to enfold Greco-Romans, an event most perplexing to the earliest Jewish Christians...

- [Acts 10.1-11.18 NRSV](#)

- [Acts 15.1-35 NRSV](#)

2) A prayer for the week - from the churches of southern India, used in yesterday's service, changed from 1st person plural to 1st person singular:

"O Lord, You have called me to be Your witness to my neighbors and all the nations. Have mercy on me who know what You want but have failed to do it. Free me from disinterest and laziness, and instead fill me with hope and zeal, so that I may bear Your cross, build Your Kingdom, and share the good news of Jesus. I offer this prayer to You, Father, Son, and Spirit, one God, world without end, amen."

3) A quote to remember about unsaid words from poet Tony DeLonge (2016):

"The things left unsaid, and the void those unspoken words leave, often have more impact than what is said. Words unspoken are insidious foes, never leaving our minds, sometimes choking in our throats, always regretted. Fear of speaking makes us fear more and more, and speak less and less, until we find our every word full of only emptiness."

4) A longer piece from Max Lucado about our God of second chances: [The Gospel of Second Chances - Max Lucado](#)

5) A practical piece on how Christians can reach those they think are unreachable (from a retired pastor and current Christian thought leader, podcaster, and influencer): [How To Reach Unchurched People Who Don't Think They Need God](#)