

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

MAY 31 - JUNE 4, 2021



COURSE SERMON SERIES
5/9 - 8/1
CORRECTIONS

THE MINOR PROPHETS

MONDAY

Jonah 1-4; Isaiah 26:12

God chose Jonah to prophecy against Nineveh.

Would you have picked Jonah to take a message to Nineveh? I would not have chosen Jonah. It's true that he was a true prophet. It's true that he believed absolutely in the true God. But his heart was not in sync with God's. When he took the wrong ship going in the wrong direction, he knew he was the culprit in the storm. *"Throw me overboard,"* he advised the frightened mariners. The seas went calm, and God took care of Jonah. God directed a very large fish to rescue him.

When the fish disgorged its cargo on the beach, Jonah may have been partially digested. This effect may have given his message credibility to the Ninevites, who decided to take Jonah's message seriously. They fasted and prayed and repented to such an extent that God relented of His plans for their destruction. Jonah was not a happy prophet. It wasn't the bumpy ride that bothered him. It was God's change of heart.

It turns out God didn't just want a change of heart in the people of Nineveh. God also wanted a change of heart in His prophet. And the lesson for us is that God not only chooses us for a task in His kingdom purpose with an eye to introduce people into His kingdom, but He also wants our hearts to be more in tune with His heart in the process.

“All that we have accomplished You have done for us.” (Isaiah 26:12)

Do not balk at being used for God’s purposes, just because you are “not ready” in your heart. Present yourself for God’s service anyway, and do not buy a ticket going in the opposite direction.

QUESTIONS

Recall some specific times when you felt that you were being used for God’s purposes.

PRAYERS FOR MISSIO CHURCH IN PASADENA

Missio Church is an ECO church plant located in Pasadena, California. Please pray that as we return to in-person worship in June, it would create fresh opportunities to share Christ with friends and our community.

TUESDAY

Jonah 4:11

The book of Jonah gives a glimpse into God's heart.

“And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”
(Jonah 4:11)

The book of Jonah takes its place in the annals of the kingdom of God as testimony to the God of the kingdom of God. It tells us what God prioritizes: transparency, exposure of the devil's lies and slanders, love, mercy, forgiveness, righteousness, rescue (salvation), redirection of a misdirected prophet, redirection of a misdirected people, humility, a job well done giving glory to God.

God didn't have to send Jonah to warn Nineveh. God didn't have to come to earth in Jesus to save us. But He made these initiatives and undertook these actions instead of doing something else. And He does and is doing other deeds even now, because the kingdom of God is about Him and what is in His heart to do. He loves and cares about people enough to direct His attention to them and say, “No, you are doing it wrong” and “Yes, here's how you can do it right so that I don't have to destroy you.”

These are “God things.” They are all part of an amazing mystery that merits delving into and devoting one’s life to.

The book of Jonah sticks out like a sore thumb, like a lot of the Bible stories. It doesn’t seem to fit—like none of it fits. And yet it fits exactly, because it calls attention to something we might otherwise overlook—what God is all about, loving and rescuing people, loving and rescuing us.

Jonah got part of his assignment right—God hates unrighteousness. But He loves righteousness. In fact, in Jesus, love and righteousness go together. No righteousness; no love. No love; no righteousness. Jonah preached against the people’s unrighteousness, but he didn’t count on their repentance and God’s forgiving love. So he stewed under his shriveled shade.

QUESTIONS

Are we upset with the way God does things? Perhaps, we need to repent of our misjudgments.

PRAYERS FOR MISSIO CHURCH IN PASADENA

Pray for God to draw scientists in Pasadena to Himself, particularly after Missio Church’s recent “Science and Faith Examined” event.

WEDNESDAY

Jonah 2; Isaiah 40:30, 31; Mark 8:12; Matthew 12:38-42

If Jesus accepted the story of Jonah, so can we.

Jonah did not buy an E-ticket to ride inside the great fish at Disney World Mediterranean. God arranged for that.

When the Pharisees said they wanted a sign from Jesus, He said they had “*the sign of the prophet Jonah*” (Matthew 12:39). Jonah was swallowed by a great fish, and Jesus was swallowed by the “*bowels*” of the earth. Neither experience was pleasant. Both experiences were redemptive. In Jonah’s case, he prayed a prayer for himself to be saved; whereas, in Jesus’ case, He did it for others, for us. Here is Jonah’s prayer:

“I have been banished from Your sight; yet will I look again toward Your holy temple.” (Jonah 2:4)

“But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to You. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the LORD.’” (Jonah 2:9)

Some people doubt Jesus because they question whether the Bible contains a story that they cannot swallow about a big fish swallowing

Jonah. So, they wonder if the stories about Jesus are true. That was my situation until Jesus became real to me. Jesus turned me around, settling all these issues in an instant. Because Jesus accepted the veracity of the Jonah story, along with all the Law and the Prophets, then so can we.

Not only is Jonah's story true, there's a lesson for us—maybe several lessons. Like Jonah, Jesus was in the *“heart of the earth three days and three nights”* (Jonah 1:17; Matthew 12:40). We find ourselves in the *“belly”* of bad circumstances (sometimes for much longer than three days), because of bad choices, or through no fault of our own. Like Jonah, we cry out to God for His rescue.

“Whoever hopes in God shall renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not grow weary; they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)

QUESTIONS

What are you going through now that tempts you to feel like Jonah did?
What prayer might you pray in the form of a journal entry/letter to God?

PRAYERS FOR MISSIO CHURCH IN PASADENA

Pray that God would bring the right person to join our staff as Austin Blaszczyński, our Minister of Discipleship, left on May 2 for an internship at an ECO church in Georgia.

THURSDAY

**Matthew 5:44; 22:37-40; John 15:9-13; Romans 5:8;
Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 John 4:7-21**

Jesus raised the bar to the highest pinnacle of love (and righteousness).

“The greatest thing in all the world is loving You,” we sing to God. And that beautiful song is mostly true. But the greater truth is God’s love for us. The greatest reality and feeling is the sure knowledge of this love of God for you and me and everyone. It’s beyond amazing.

He loved us first. He loved us while we were still sinners. He loved us when we were His enemies. In turn, we are to love Him back. And we are to love others with this same love. And we are to love even our enemies, like God does.

In Jesus, the mightiest river of love flows from heaven to earth. But it’s not just a big, big river; it’s a big, big ocean of love—plenty to go around.

And that’s why Jesus can say (in so many words), “If a man tries to hoard love, he will lose it; but if he gives it away, he will keep it.” Or “If a forgiven man will not extend forgiveness, his own forgiveness will shrivel and be retracted.” Love and forgiveness must flow to and through us, or it dries up.

Loving enemies is a tough hill to climb. Jonah found this out. It's not complicated. But let's be real. As Paul said, "*The only thing that matters is faith working through love*" (Galatians 5:6). So let's roll up our sleeves and get to loving as we are loved. There is plenty of security in His love for us that we can risk loving others.

QUESTIONS

Who are your enemies? How can you show love to them?

PRAYERS FOR MISSIO CHURCH IN PASADENA

Please pray for God to release the gifts of the whole congregation as they continue to hear the sermon series on "Our God-Given Calling."

FRIDAY

Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:35-40; 28:18-20

God has given us the Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission.

Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Galatians 2:8). Jonah was a prophet to the Gentile city of Nineveh. Both men were successful in their journeys, but Jonah twice needed course correction. Jonah started off and ended on the wrong foot, requiring God to redirect his steps and his heart.

As a scholar in the Jewish law and the prophets, Paul knew the story of Jonah. He knew both the Hebrew and Greek (Septuagint) versions of the Scriptures. Like Jonah, Paul got his marching orders from God Himself (Acts 26:14-18; Jonah 1:1-3). Unlike Jonah, Paul was eager to obey God; and after preparation, Paul was willing to go wherever God led him.

Like Jonah, Paul was in a life-threatening storm at sea (Jonah 1; Acts 27:15-44). Both storms scared the seasoned sailors. God spoke into both situations (Acts 27:25, 44; Jonah 1) and saved all on board.

Jonah did not like the outcome of a foreign (enemy) city being spared, and he found it difficult to be thankful for God's change of

heart. Paul endured hardship “as a good soldier” (2 Timothy 2:3), and “was thankful in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

This comparison highlights two great lessons:

1. Be eager to obey God’s directions. There is great reward in obedience to God.
2. Love people, even enemies, like God love’s people. There is even greater reward in loving God and others.

The best, maybe the only way to make disciples is by loving people. If we “teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded” (Matthew 28:20), basically we are teaching them to love God and others.

QUESTIONS

How are we doing with Jesus’ command to teach others to obey everything that Jesus commanded?

PRAYERS FOR MISSIO CHURCH IN PASADENA

Pray for Pastor Len and his wife Amy as they seek to disciple their three teenage boys, pointing them to Jesus in natural ways.



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