

Jonah - the Training of a Disciple - Part 2

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath emphasizes the transformative power of repentance in restoring our relationship with God and enabling us to live obediently as His disciples.

Duration: 27:06

Scripture: Jonah 2:2, Matthew 3:2, Luke 24:46-47, Acts 2:37-38, Acts 26:19-20, Hebrews 10:11, Revelation 2:5

Topics: "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of repentance in the preaching of the word of God. He references various biblical passages, such as John the Baptist preaching repentance for the kingdom of heaven and Peter's instruction to repent for the remission of sins. The preacher also mentions Paul's preaching of repentance to the Gentiles and the letters to the churches in Asia that call for repentance. He shares a personal experience of witnessing a powerful revival in Uganda, where repentance and confession of sin led to a spiritual awakening. The sermon concludes with the preacher reflecting on his own journey and the need for reliance on God's miracles.

Transcript

And preaching like fury from a pulpit and demanding obedience from a congregation which I wasn't giving, I had substituted my Bible for God. So proud of sermons which had three points beginning with the same letter, introduction and conclusion. So proud of this.

My Bible and now a textbook from which I got sermons, not the word of God from which I got life. Work instead of worship, orthodoxy instead of obedience, the Bible instead of God. Thy stroke hath consumed me, thy hand.

That's why this book of Jonah means so much to me, because I had to submit to heaven's testament. I was desperately afraid of banishment, for I'd lived for months with no sense of Jesus in my heart. All was dry and all was barren and all was dead.

I was so afraid of being put on the shelf. No use. But I had faith to believe that he had tasted me sore and not given me over to death.

And there was a day when he used the words that filled my heart since last evening. From sinking sands he lifted me, from shades of night to plains of night, all praise his name. He lifted me up, and I'm only at

this place today because there came a time in my life when I was shut up to miracle, shut up to miracle, and God has worked a miracle.

My doctor said to me, never preach for more than 20 minutes and never get excited. That's right, thank you. You know how I keep that one, don't you? Oh, how good is the God we adore! How good! It's not easy to tell you that from a pulpit, because I'm just confessing my own failures as a pastor.

That honest statement of what has taken place in my life would be used of God to prevent anybody making my mistakes. It'll be worth it. The Lord be glorified and save you, my friend, whoever you are, from work and no worship, from orthodoxy and no obedience, from Bible but no God.

Jonah's reaction. My last word. Jonah's resurrection.

Jonah's resurrection. Verse 10. The Lord spoke to the fish and it vomited up Jonah on dry land.

And I think, I think that fish had enough, had enough of that prayer warfare. Just couldn't take any more. So up goes Jonah and he lands on dry land.

Ah, but that prayer of repentance, that prayer has brought resurrection and Jonah is out into freedom and deliverance and liberty and power, free to sacrifice to God with a voice of thanksgiving, in verse 9, and free to pay his vows and obey the God he has rejected. Oh, if you feel like me, you could almost hit the roof. I don't know how you can sit there without saying hallelujah.

Honestly, I don't, because that hallelujah nearly makes me want to smash the pulpit and do anything, but just hallelujah that he brought me through and brought me out. Even me, and he can do the same to even you. And the great lesson, the great lesson that thrills my heart right here is a very simple one, but don't let's miss it.

The moment of repentance is the moment when communication with heaven is re-established. At the moment my heart is broken, at the moment I'm at the end of a rope, at the moment I'm the rock bottom, at the moment I've accepted his testament and said, sorry Lord, sorry, sorry, sorry, at that moment heaven's open and flood tides of blessing come. You know that's not theory, don't you? Bless your heart.

You may not have come my way, maybe you've had a much harder way to come. Many people have, but you know as I do, don't you, that prayerless praying and a closed bible are the portion of a Christian out of touch with God. But when I turn to him again, he's there.

He's always been looking for me, waiting for that moment when I would return, and he's come and filled and filled my heart and sent me back and recommissioned me and put me to work and to serve him once again. With his difference, with his difference, success, popularity, what people think don't matter now anymore. With this difference that Jesus matters and that somehow he may strengthen me to reach out a loving hand, to restless with the troubled sea.

And if you are down, down, down, down, oh just telling it all about it this morning in this Bible reading in this tent, maybe you are as I speak to you, and he'll come to you and I tell you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shall shine into your heart. But will you allow me just a few more minutes? I think I have just time because we touched upon and dealt with a very important experience and a very important word, and I want to be sure that you really know its meaning. The three words you should have over this chapter are reward the hand of God, reaction Jonah pray, resurrection

Jonah's thrown out, free to serve the Lord again.

But it all centered around one word which was our last word yesterday morning, and in spite of the long time that your chairman gave me, I didn't have time to deal with it. I want to turn a minute to this word, and the word is repentance. Maybe, maybe I said something enough from experience to show you what repentance is, but I want to be clear because you see since this that I went through in my heart, I studied this word repentance, and I was positively amazed to find the place it takes in the new testament.

Just forget for a couple of minutes, Jonah, for a moment, and just think of this with me. John the Baptist begins the new testament, a dispensation with the word repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus, after his battle in the wilderness, after his victory, after his total victory in the will of God, begins to preach.

That shakes me. He began to preach after the battle. I began to preach long before I knew anything about it.

He had 30 years preparation for three years preaching. I hadn't any preparation for about 30 years preaching. Most of us settle for three years preparation at the best.

He had 20, 30 years preaching preparation and three years preaching, and he began to preach repentance for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and he says to with the close of Luke's gospel, lest it behold the son of man to suffer and be slain and to be raised again, that repentance and remission of sins would be preached in his name to all nations. And Peter, explaining Pentecost, said to them when the congregation said, oh God, what shall we do? And would to the Lord that more people said that these days, what shall we do? He said, repent, every one of you, and we were baptized for the remission of sins. And Paul, before Agrippa, says, Agrippa, I wasn't disobedient to the heavenly vision, but preached in Damascus and Jerusalem and Judea, and to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God.

And out of the seven letters written to the church in Asia, seven, five out of the seven say, repent, or else the risen Lord. And my beloved friend, I don't think I exaggerate when I say that this is the missing chord in the evangelical symphony of 1970. Believe! Believe! Believe! The Bible comes back at us.

Repent! Repent! Repent! What does repentance mean? Not doing penance, as the Roman Catholic view. Not doing penance. Oh, I mustn't allow myself to get diverted too far, but I can't resist that wonderful verse, isn't it? Hebrews 10, verse 11.

It's the most monotonous verse in the Bible, I think. Every priest standeth daily, ministering and offering oftentimes sacrifices which can never take away sin. What a verse.

Poor fellow. Standing daily, ministering and offering the same sacrifices which can never take away sin. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down on the right hand of God.

There was some strange furniture in the tabernacle, tables and altars, and I tell you, there wasn't a chair. The chap couldn't sit down, never finished, and just stand up all the time. Job was never done, never any rest from it.

But this man, when he had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down. That's where Jesus is today, bless his name, sat down. No, repentance isn't penance.

Penance, no absolution, no repetition of the cross, no mass. I don't object to conversations with Roman Catholics. I think perhaps it does us all good.

I've nothing to be afraid of them. I'd go and teach the Pope if he'd listen to me. I'm not afraid of that.

But as long as the Roman Catholics in their system have the mass and penance and absolution and the priesthood, no place for me. It's not penance. It's not remorse either, because remorse means you're being sorry for yourself, not for your sin.

You know there are 11 commandments, not 10. You know what the 11th is? Thou shalt not be found out. And in the permissive society today, everything's okay as long as you're not so stupid as to go and get found out.

Because if you're found out, you suffer for remorse. You see, you're sorry about it. You leave yourself at the center of the picture, though.

That's not repentance. What is repentance? I'm not clever. I'm not trying to be clever.

I'm just using a young's concordance with a certain amount of intelligence, I hope. But the word for repentance in Greek is the word metanoia. Two words, really.

Meta means after. Noia means think or thought. Like the man who had two sons and said, go work today in my vineyard.

And one said, no, I won't go. And then he repented and went. Repentance means a change of mind that leads to a change of behavior.

And when I'm at rock bottom and I'm repenting, I change my mind about lots of things. I change my mind about God. I know he's on my side.

I thought he was against me, but I know he's not. He's on my side. I change my mind about God.

I change my mind about myself. I used to think I was quite a decent sort of fellow. I used to think, you know, I'm getting along all right now.

I've been 30 years a Christian, after all. Have you ever read Romans 7 18? Before my stroke, his stroke, I'd preached 51 times from that text. Not necessarily the same sermon, but from that text.

Romans 7 18. I know that in me and my flesh dwelleth no good thing. I've never dared preach on it since, but I'm not sure that I really understood it until I saw, I saw the Living Letters paraphrase of it, which says, I know that as far as my sinful nature is concerned, I am rotten through and through.

Hallelujah. So it doesn't matter anymore about me. Doesn't matter anymore what people say about me, because anything, whatever they say, isn't a hundredth part as bad as the truth.

The Lord tells me I'm rotten through and through. Praise the Lord! And I'll always be the same, because God has said to me in these days, through these experiences, this is the kind of man with all your foul thinking and all your bad language and all your, all your temptation to impurities. This is the kind of man you are, really are, and you always will be, but for the grace of God.

The only good thing about me is Jesus. And that's always going to be the truth. So you see, repentance, I changed my mind about myself.

I touched rock bottom, and I'm glad I have. Have you repented? I changed my mind about other people too. The man ahead, the man I don't like, the fellow I always criticize, the fellow who's so desperately difficult to get on with, the fellow who's on my deacon's court, can't stand beside him, wish he was off, can't get rid of him anyhow.

I changed my mind about it. You know what I started doing? Amid I in the kindergarten, actually having me here to preach when I'm really only, you know, I've just learned not too long ago to put someone on my prayer list every time, every day, who I don't like. You don't find it hard to do that.

Just find somebody you don't like and pray for them. I'll do something to you. Oh no, it doesn't make you like them, makes you love them though.

I can't, I don't like everybody. You're not expected to do that, but you can love them. Henceforth know I no man after the flesh.

Once I used to know Jesus like that, but I don't know him like that anymore. I have a living fellowship by the Spirit in my heart with Christ, and on that same basis I can have fellowship with people I don't like. I changed my mind.

You see, when I repent about other people, that would save many a split in the church. It would save many a casualty on the mission field. It would answer the great crying need in 1971 for Holy Ghost revival.

More to say about that tomorrow. I changed my mind about all these things when I repent. My great friend of recent days, not days, years, was Dr. A.W. Tozer.

Oh, I wish I could tell you about that man. What a giant. He, if I may say, I would think he would be the Dr. Lloyd-Jones of America.

If I ever wanted to speak to him, he gave me so kindly the privilege, if I ever wanted to, but I hardly ever took it. If I ever wanted to speak to him, do you know what I had to do? Go down to the south shore of Lake Michigan any morning at five o'clock, and I would find him on the sands with his open Bible, usually flat on his face. That's what made him the man he was.

There's no substitute for that. My beloved friend, oh, most of my ministry is in the past. It's over.

There are some of you here are going into it or are right in it. I beseech you, I plead with you, my brother, I plead with you that you may become a man like that who doesn't stand in the pulpit to say just something that someone else has said or something he's got from a textbook, but something that's come straight to your heart, from the heart of God in heaven, and you can never do that unless you're alone with him. And Dr. Tozer, in his book, one of his books, writes this, listen to it.

The whole life of the faithful should be an act of repentance. To rule out repentance from the Christian is to invite another Dunkirk or another Pearl Harbor into Christian warfare. Repentance is invalid unless it produces mortification of the flesh.

It must get into every relationship of life with your wife, your church. No area of life is unaffected by it. For sin to be forgiven, it must be forsaken, and the tragedy today is that we have learned to live with it.

Avoid he being now dead, yet speaketh. Jonah had learned to repent. May I just close with this.

Have you ever heard the name Mr. Guy Playfair? He was director of the Sudan Interior Mission until some few years ago when he passed on to glory and Dr. Davis took his place. He was a member of Moody Church, and he used to come back on furlough, and every time he came we always gladly gave him the opportunity to preach. Do you know he came back four times during my period there, and you know every time he preached on the same text.

I have somewhat against thee, in that thou hast left thy first love. And every time he came back he used to say, when I come back to the states, every time I come I find the church with more machinery but less power, with more equipment but no endowment, with more things but less Holy Spirit unction, no power to move men to God. And once again, to show you what I'm like really by nature, I got resentful with him.

What do you think I'm doing 16 hours a day almost seven days a week? Sweating my life out in the service of the Lord, yes I know. I didn't understand him until one day at his suggestion I went to the country of Tanzania, and I went to a church, an Anglican church, before doing so on the Saturday night I was at the missionary's house and sat and talked to two Tanzanian pastors. I couldn't understand a word they said, and they couldn't understand me, but they were talking to each other, and you know I got a chaotic blessing by just looking at them.

Their faces glowed and shone. I knew they were talking about the Lord, and the missionary told me they were. The next morning I went into the Anglican church, and I'm always a bit, pardon me, I was a bit fearful when I go into an Anglican church.

I'm not quite sure what's going to happen, I'm not equally as fearful as any other church, and I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw the minister. I knew him. I'd met him 10 years ago in London, or more than that.

I said hello, and he said hello, it's wonderful to meet you, and I said yes it's wonderful to meet you, and then just as I was about to go and preach he said, hold it a minute will you? Before you go into the pulpit may I just say something to you? I said what? I had to come to Tanzania to get to know Jesus. You could have blown me over the feather. I said rubbish, rubbish, rubbish man, you were a crusader leader in London, you were an active leader in the church.

You, you knew all, he said no wait a minute, I knew about him, but I didn't know him, and when I'm into the church that morning, oh boy, oh boy, I've never seen anything like it. It was a church, international church, black, white, brown, yellow, all kinds, every race, and I tell you the singing, it was tremendous, not the noise, just that the sheer, the depth, the quality, the majesty of it. It was a church living in its first life, and oh how I longed for my own little island home, and from America, how I longed for that.

They weren't ignorant people who'd never heard the gospel, they were educated people from many different countries, and do you know how it all began? Two or three Africans, black people, not white. I trust that the Lord has taken from your heart long ago the sense of white superiority a deadly business, and these two or three Africans got together and they began to talk about Jesus, and they saw that the basis of the relationship was repentance, and that involved confession, and there had been terrific confession of sin, and a breaking of heart, and suddenly the flame began to burn, and it spread throughout that whole area through Uganda. Oh yes, oh yes, I was so thankful for what Mr. Teng said yesterday.

Whenever you have, did he hear him? Whenever you get someone wanting from, wanting revival, you get other people thinking he's unbalanced. What a commentary on the deadness of our orthodoxy today. If you don't tell the party line, if you don't absolutely subscribe to what we do, we're afraid of it.

May God break through this convention and give us a breath, not of insanity, but a revival, which will mean confession no wider than the area of sin, but as wide as the area which sin has affected. It will mean confession, it will mean tears, it will mean breaking of heart, but it will mean glory to God. Forgive me for wandering from Jonah, but have you accepted his chastisement? Have you faith in re-establishment? And is your great fear this morning, your fear of being chastised?

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