

A City in Sackcloth

by F.S. Webster

The sermon tells the story of the repentance of Nineveh, highlighting the unique outpouring of God's Holy Spirit and the impact of Jonah's message.

Scripture: Jonah 3:5-6, Jonah 3:8-10

Topics: "Repentance", "Holy Spirit"

Description

F.S. Webster preaches on the repentance of Nineveh, highlighting how God's Holy Spirit moved in a unique way to bring about a city-wide transformation. Despite the seemingly unlikely hearts of the Ninevites, God's Spirit stirred them to repentance through Jonah's message. The people of Nineveh, from the commoners to the royal palace, responded with genuine contrition, fasting, prayer, and a turning away from evil. Their repentance was accompanied by faith, hope, and a belief in God's mercy, leading to God relenting from the destruction He had planned.

Transcript

The repentance of Nineveh was the result of a special and unique outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. This is the Pentecost of the Old Testament, for, humanly speaking, no soil could be less promising than the hearts of these men of Nineveh. Their minds were sharpened by extensive commerce; their consciences were deadened by long enjoyment of every luxury and refinement. They were the least likely people in the world to be moved by any sudden call to repentance. It was no easy task to move such a city. And yet, when Jonah came to them, God's Spirit strove so mightily that the whole population became possessed with a sense of the nearness of God, and with a desire to repent.

It was a terrible message he had to deliver, but more terrible than the sentence of destruction itself was the man who uttered it. We are told that the Florentines looked upon Dante as he passed through their streets with awe, and whispered to each other: "This is the man who has looked into hell." Surely Jonah must have made a similar impression. Jonah was a sign to them - a sign of the severity and of the mercy of God. As he hurled upon their carnal tranquillity his terrible denunciation, in apparent defiance of their wealth and might, they saw that, behind his awful words, there lay an awful experience which impelled him to utter them, and convinced him that they were no exaggeration.

It was a hell-fire message, indeed, yet it was not lightly or carelessly uttered, but spoken in tenderness and deep earnestness by one who had himself experienced both the judgment and the mercy of God. So it came with power to the hearts of the people, and the whole city was moved to repentance.

Even in the royal palace the spirit of contrition was awakened. Then a royal proclamation went forth ordaining entire abstinence from food and drink for man and beast alike. So the whole city was wrapped in sackcloth, and gave itself up to mourning and prayer. The people wanted to pray, and it was not mere emotionalism. It was accompanied by reformation of life. As they cried mightily to God, they turned every one from his evil way, and from the violence that was in their hands.

Nor was their repentance without faith and hope. They believed in the mercy of God, free from all foolish defiance, and without any trace of despair. They believed God, and they turned to God in prayer and repentance, looking for mercy and not judgment. And they did not look in vain, for God, who delighteth in mercy, "saw their works that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which He said He would do unto them; and He did it not."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fs-webster/a-city-in-sackcloth/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net