

# Ministry From Jonah 02

by Welcome Detweiler

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of heeding God's call, being born again, and trusting in Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection for salvation.*

**Duration:** 10:09

**Scripture:** Jonah 1:1-2, Jonah 2:10 - 3:2, Jonah 3:5, Jonah 3:10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 10:9

**Topics:** "Gods Love", "Repentance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Jonah and the city of Nineveh. He emphasizes that despite the wickedness of Nineveh, God loved and cared for the sinners in that city. The preacher explains that Jonah initially disobeyed God's command to deliver a message of warning and forgiveness to Nineveh, but eventually became obedient. The sermon highlights the importance of heeding the gospel call and the consequences of disobedience, as well as the opportunity for sinners to repent and receive salvation.

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## Transcript

In the first two chapters of the book of Jonah, we have the record of a disobedient prophet who passes through a very embarrassing experience. However, it turned into a very profitable experience, for Jonah is changed and becomes an obedient servant. Jonah lived some 860 years before Christ, and was sent by God with a message of warning and forgiveness to the sinful Gentile city of Nineveh.

His willpower was overcome by his won't-power, and he deliberately refused to go and fulfill the mission. As is always the case, he got into the middle of a whale of trouble. Whenever a person disobeys God, he is liable to do some fishy things.

God's call must always be treated with respect. In the case of the unsaved person, God's first call is the gospel call, calling men to repentance and to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Very sad are the consequences of the person who will ignore the loving gospel call.

It spells separation from God for all eternity. The great city of Nineveh was quite content to live in wickedness and cared nothing for God. But God loved and cared for the sinners in that city.

In grace he provided deliverance and salvation, and that is equally true of the world today in which your lot and mine is cast. The gospel call puts the hearer in the place of responsibility. He must either heed or turn

a deaf ear to the message of salvation.

Disobedience to the gospel call will lead to death and judgment. I trust that you, my listener, have already obeyed the gospel call, that you have already accepted the Lord Jesus Christ who loved you and died for you as your own personal Savior. But there's still another call that follows the gospel call, and it's the service call.

After we are saved by God's grace, we have the glorious privilege of working for Him. We dare not offer our service to God before we are saved, for that would be an insult to God's offer of salvation. It's only after we are saved that we are eligible to work for Him.

I hope you are clear on this subject, for it's impossible to earn salvation by your good deeds or good behavior. We must be born into God's family, and the new birth takes place when one acknowledges his lost and guilty condition and receives by faith the substitutionary work of Christ as a basis of salvation. When the sin question and the son question are definitely settled, God will call us to serve Him by one means or another.

In Jonah's case, the service call was to preach judgment to a sinful city. Jonah said no. God said yes.

And at the close of chapter 2 of the book of Jonah, we observe a repentant man who has learned through bitter experience that it's impossible to get away from God. God acknowledges his repentance and gives to him another chance to obey the service call. I read from chapter 3 in verse 1. And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I did thee.

Verse 2. Listen to the response. So Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh. That's altogether different from the response in the first chapter.

There we read, Jonah rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord. The lesson has been learned. When God speaks, you can't win by disobeying.

I'm sure that Jonah could wish that those first two chapters had never been written. But they had to be written. God is busy writing our life's history, and we furnish the material.

I suppose that in your case and mine, God has written a few unnecessary chapters, dark chapters, simply because we furnish dark material. I can almost hear Jonah saying, I wish my book contained began with chapter 3, giving an account of my obedience to God's command. I'm ashamed of those first two chapters.

If we are ashamed of certain chapters in our life's history, it's up to us to furnish better material. And Jonah provided better material for the writing of chapter 3. As he enters the great sinful city, he proclaims God's message. The message is, repent and believe, or be overthrown.

Verse 5. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them, even to the least of them. The deep-dyed sinners of Nineveh were evidently getting weary in wickedness, and they were no doubt keenly conscious of the necessary judgment that they so richly deserved. Sinners do get weary in their sins, and long for deliverance, and to such disgusted sinners God offers a full and a free salvation.

The judgment that hung over the city of Nineveh was suspended by a condition. If Nineveh repents and turns to God, the judgment will be stayed. If Nineveh rejects the offer, forty days remain.

Then the city will be visited with God's wrath. The citizens of that city were put in the place of responsibility. They had to make a choice.

They could cling to their sins, reject God's offer, and expect the promised judgment, or they could turn to God for salvation. In like manner, God puts you in the place of responsibility. You must choose, and God will act accordingly.

If you love your sins and cling to them, you must face the consequences. If you are sick of your sinful life, you have the privilege of turning to God, as did the inhabitants of Nineveh. A new life, a far better life, a happy life, will be the result of all who will make this sensible choice.

The clouds of judgment are hanging right over your head. If you must reject the Savior, you are asking for that judgment to fall. God will never allow one undeserving one to taste of His wrath.

All who ask for it, by rejecting the Savior, deserve eternal judgment. As the sinners in Nineveh snatch the opportunity of salvation, you too must lay hold of eternal life, which is offered to you through Christ and His adorning sacrifice. Some who are awakened to see the need of being saved make the dreadful mistake of turning to the wrong remedy.

Instead of heeding God's message and turning to Christ for salvation, they turn over a new leaf and begin to live better. This brings a good feeling, and alas, many depend on a good reformation to fit them for God's presence. The Bible states very clearly that heaven cannot be obtained by living a Christian life.

It's possible to turn from a sinful life to a much better and more respectable way of living without changing your status on God's record. In fact, it's possible to turn from your sins and join a church and become very religious without being born into God's family. Reformation is a subtle thing.

It appeases the conscience and leaves the victim under the impression that all is well with the soul. I ask you this searching question. Have you reformed, or are you born again? Those who have merely reformed usually depend on their good living to make them eligible for heaven.

It seems as though they don't know that God will never admit one on that ticket. Those who have come to Christ and are resting in His substitutionary death and resurrection alone for salvation have the assurance that they have passed from death unto life. If heaven could be obtained on the basis of good conduct, then the city of Nineveh was not eligible.

It was God's matchless and infinite grace that caused Him to offer salvation to an otherwise hopeless city. His grace provides an occasion to save the bad sinners as well as the self-righteous religious sinners. I don't know how bad you are.

I don't care to know. I don't know how good you are, but I do know that God offers to save, keep, and satisfy all, good and bad, who will trust His Son as Lord and Savior. When God saves bad people, they lose their badness and begin to live for the Savior.

When God saves good people, they lose their pride in their goodness and confess, as did the Apostle Paul, I am what I am by the grace of God. They thank God they have learned in time not to trust in their

goodness for salvation, but rather in the shed blood of God's only begotten Son. The people of Nineveh were booked for judgment, and they were only forty days from the experience.

But it didn't happen because they made the right choice. If you are unsaved, you are booked for judgment. God only knows how many days lie between you and that dreadful experience, but you have the opportunity of turning to Christ for He bore your judgment on Calvary.

If you will trust Him as your Lord and Savior, He will save you right where you are. Perhaps God has left on record the wise choice of the Ninevites in order to encourage you who stand in the same place of danger to follow their example. I ask you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

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