

Theme: God sends flawed rebel servants like Jonah and us to proclaim His Word to rebels who do not know Him so that they might turn to Him and be saved.

I. Intro – Groundhog Day

- A. Bill Murray in *Groundhog Day*
- B. The same day repeated endlessly
- C. It is driving him crazy - until he changes
- D. Finally he is released from the cycle
- E. Jonah might have felt that way - deja vu!
- F. How will he respond this time?

II. The Rebel Commissioned - Again

- A. Back at the beginning of the story
 - 1. First phrase of 3:1 identical to Jonah 1:1 in Hebrew
 - 2. The rebel recommissioned - (1:2 and 3:2)
 - 3. The difference this time - no but! (Jonah 3:3)
 - 4. All of Jonah's running accomplished nothing!
 - 5. He will go to Nineveh and proclaim YHWH's word
- B. God's amazing grace - even to rebel servants!
 - 1. Jonah rebelled and ran - but God pursued!
 - 2. Still not in tune with God's heart - but God will use Him
 - 3. God uses flawed people - like Jonah, you and me!

III. The Rebel Proclaims God's Powerful Word

- A. Jonah's simple proclamation of God's powerful Word
 - 1. Jonah's simple message - Jonah 3:4
 - 2. Overthrown - הפך (hafak) - Gen 19:25
 - 3. The threatening of the law - destruction for sinners
- B. Where is the Gospel?
 - 1. No mention of repentance, forgiveness (3:4)
 - 2. Some ambiguity in הפך (hafak) - changed (1 Sam 10:6)
 - 3. Nineveh will be changed - one way or the other!
 - 4. The universal promise (Jer 18:7-8)
 - a. Jer 18:8 & Jonah 3:10 have same key Hebrew words
 - b. Turn; evil; repent/relent; evil/disaster
 - 5. Jonah may not have made clear - but God did!
 - 6. Today we must proclaim the powerful Gospel clearly
 - 7. We must proclaim the powerful Gospel prominently

IV. The Rebels Transformed by God's Word

- A. The Ninevites respond to God and His Word
 - 1. Ninevites believe God, fast - Jonah 3:5
 - 2. A broad and deep response - Jonah 3:5-8
 - a. Least to greatest - even the King!
 - b. Proclamation to all - even the animals!
 - c. Cry out to God - and stop doing evil!

- B. This is a supernatural work of the Spirit!
 - 1. Notice how Jonah is not mentioned after verse 4
 - 2. v5 - Ninevites believed God - like Abram (Gen 15:6)
 - 3. No presumption - just humble repentance (Jon 3:9)
 - 4. How different than our age that presumes God's grace!
 - 5. This is a sign of God's Spirit at work!

V. **God's Gracious Response to the Rebels**

- A. They repented of evil, so God did not send disaster
 - 1. v10 - they turned from evil, so God did not send evil
 - 2. Same Hebrew word - a key play on words
- B. This shows the merciful character of God
 - 1. The Assyrians were notoriously wicked people
 - 2. Yet God is gracious and compassionate
 - 3. Our Father loves to forgive prodigals - like us!

VI. **Applying the Word**

- A. Have you tasted God's great mercy personally?
 - 1. Do you understand that you deserve wrath - not mercy?
 - 2. Do you realize you can't presume on God's grace?
 - 3. But take cheer - God is merciful and forgiving
 - 4. True even of the worst sinners (1 Timothy 1:15)
 - 5. He showed mercy to Nineveh & Paul - He will to us!

- 6. Cry out to Him - and He will pardon!

- B. Do we believe in the power of God's Word & Spirit?
 - 1. Note that the response was not because of Jonah!
 - 2. He is hardly mentioned in Nineveh itself!
 - 3. God's Word is powerful to break through to others
 - 4. God's Spirit uses the Word to change others
 - 5. Trust Him - and reach out to those around you!
- C. A prayer for God to move among us

A Rebel Sent to Rebels

Jonah 3
June 12, 2011
Prayer
2 Corinthians 13:14

Now **the word of the Lord came to Jonah** the son of Amittai, saying, Jonah 1:1

Then **the word of the Lord came to Jonah** the second time, saying, Jonah 3:1

“**Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it**, for their evil has come up before me.” Jonah 1:2

“**Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it** the message that I tell you.” Jonah 3:2

And he **overthrew** those cities (Sodom and Gomorrah), and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. Genesis 19:25

Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and **be turned** into another man. 1 Samuel 10:6

If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, 8 and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. Jer 18:7–8

If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, **turn** from their **evil**, I will **repent** of the **evil** that I thought to do unto them. Jeremiah 18:8

When God saw what they did, how they **turned** from their **evil** way, God **relented** of the **disaster** that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. Jonah 3:10

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost**. 1 Timothy 1:15

1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days’ journey in breadth. 4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” 5 And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

6 The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, 8 but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. 9 Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.”

10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Jonah 3:1–10