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Jonah learned that ministry as a prophet of the Lord goes so much better when you work with the Lord instead of against Him. Singing, "I did it my way" is no song for God's servant. The turning point of Nineveh's repentance was Jonah's. The Lord was faithful to forgive and restore His prophet. In the text today, the Lord calls Jonah to Nineveh the second time. Jonah was not in the same place that he was in Jonah 1:1. He has grown in His relationship with the Lord. Where was he and how did he respond?

1. **Putting First Things First**

What did Jonah look like after three days in the belly of the great fish? Where did the fish vomit Jonah on dry land? These two questions are not answered. The text of Jonah draws our attention back to what the Holy Spirit of the Lord wants the reader to understand. Jonah now stands on dry ground and the Lord spoke.

Would you stand with me for a moment on that beach?

Jonah 3:1 (NASB95)

¹ Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah *the second time*, saying,

The two words 'Now and came' are one word in the Hebrew text. This word, (way-hi) speaks of sequence. (Repentance of Jonah, the vomiting of Jonah on dry land by the fish, *now came*) It's not as easy as A-B-C but you get my sequence point. Now here is the point. Repentance meant Jonah was at peace with the Lord. The big fish vomiting up Jonah meant he was now safe. This 'beach' is a 'peaceful safe zone'. Jonah may be physically dazed a bit but he was now in a rare place, at peace with no anxiety and selflessly focused on the Lord alone. This selfless focus makes 'this beach' different than the 'beach' advertised by certain adult beverage companies. This is not just getting away to yourself, this is 'the Lord has my full attention'. This beach is where all the cares of Jonah's world were gone and his focus was deep and his ears were wide open and he was still. The Psalmist writes "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10) King David awakened before dawn to be in this place. Psalm 63:1 "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you." This still quiet zone is where the Lord speaks!

Don't miss this in the text of Jonah, but more importantly, do not miss this in your life! Take time to be alone and quiet and still with the Lord. This is the secret of King David being a man after God's own heart!

If you have been following our studies in Jonah, you, by now, realize that the Lord has orchestrated, by His grace, Jonah's life situation to get him to this beach! Do you think the Lord will do anything less for you? (Psalm 139:11, 12; Romans 8:28) The Lord desires your full, still attention.

The hymn writer wrote:

*There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God.
A place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God.*

A more contemporary song 'The Hiding Place' written by Jared Anderson in 2005 describes the experience of a

believer in Christ who can each day enter this 'quiet still beach' meeting with the Lord.. Here are the lyrics, but I encourage you to listen to the song. [Type in "New Life Worship-Hiding Place" is the search line on YouTube] *Hiding Place*

(Verse 1)

I have found myself a hiding place

I have found myself a secret space

In the shelter of Almighty's love

In the safety of the Savior's arms

(Chorus)

I will run to the hiding place

I will run to the hiding place

Draw me ever closer to look upon Your face

I will run to the hiding place

(Verse 2)

I have found myself a hiding place

I have found myself a secret space

In the refuge of the Father's care

In the cleansing blood of Jesus there

(Bridge)

Though my fears may overwhelm me

And troubles they surround

Though the wind rise up to take me

My hiding place is already found¹

On this beach Jonah was in that place.
'Now came' the word of the Lord!

Application:

A precept is presented in Jonah 3:1 that is extremely important to the fruitful Christian life. It is presented in the New Testament when Jesus called his disciples by saying: "Follow me, and I will make you a fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19) Notice, the disciple exerts his energy on "following Christ" first. The precept, "Being is first before doing". Being in step following the Lord is first before fishers of men. This being first is where Jonah was, finally! His heart was humbled, his will was aligned with the Lord's and he stood quiet before God on that beach. Jonah was ready to listen and respond. It is of first importance for the believer to exert energy to be in 'this place'. It precedes "doing for the Lord". How are you at "being before doing"?

Key: Regularly find your place and be still with the Lord!

¹ "Hiding Place" is a song by New Life Worship. It is track #7 from the album My Savior Lives that was released in 2006. The duration of this song is 05:06.

2. Grace is the Teacher of Obedience

A three word phrase stands out in verse 1, ‘the second time’. The three word phrase is “senit”, the Hebrew word ‘again’. Now this word for ‘again’ is used in other Old Testament books but has a unique usage in Jonah. It does not add to what has been said, it does not clarify. In the book of Jonah it is uniquely used as a second chance!

The Lord is the God of second chances! Amen! It is the grace of God that is our teacher.

Titus 2:11,12 “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, it teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age”.

The grace of the Lord has been seen throughout the first two chapters of Jonah. Grace has brought Jonah, the hypocrite prophet, safely here to this beach.

Now came the Word of the Lord, the second time.

Jonah 3:2-3 “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and *proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you.*”

³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord.

Compare the first command in chapter one to this command in chapter three. Do you see any difference?

Jonah 1:1–2 (NASB95)

¹ The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, ² “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.”

There is a slight difference in the last phrase, but it is the same command. “Arise, Go, Call out”

The first lines in the Hebrew are identical: (see for yourself, by the way you read it right to left)

Jonah 1:2 (LHB)

קוֹם לְךָ אֶל־גִּיּוֹנָה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרָא
עָלֶיהָ כִּי־עָלְתָה רָעָתָם לְפָנָי:

Jonah 3:2 (LHB)

קוֹם לְךָ אֶל־גִּיּוֹנָה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרָא
אֵלֶיהָ אֶת־הַקְּרִיאָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי דֹבֵר
אֲלֶיהָ:

3. The Lord’s Plan Did Not Change

Despite the rebellion of Jonah, God was not frustrated and He did not change His plan. God’s message would go to Nineveh, the great city!

Jonah 3:3b–5 (NASB95)

Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days’ walk.

Nineveh – Montclair State University sketch



Nineveh was great but very wicked. It did not deserve mercy but the Lord had a plan. A plan of grace! His plan did not change!

Think about it:

Man’s response to God does not change His plan.

“For God so loved the world” was not based upon mankind welcoming the Savior. As a matter of fact, “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” (John 3:16a, John 1:11) Isaiah the prophet declared:

For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back? How comforting is this in our troubled world? Or in your soul? The Lord loves you despite who you are or what you have done. God’s plan is not dependent upon man.

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Hallelujah! Thank the Lord for His unchanging love and plan for you!

STAFF BIBLE STUDY MEETS

MONDAY NOON IN THE CHAPEL

YOU ARE WELCOME !