

September 15, 2013 Sermon Application Handout
“A Radical Conversion”
Joel, Chapter 3:1-21

I. Introduction

1. Before you begin, take time to pray and ask God to help you understand what genuine repentance is and for the strength to live a life of on-going repentance.
2. Review your lesson for Jonah 1-2. What was one specific teaching that you understood from this section and applied to your life?
3. Now read Jonah 3. How is everything interconnected? What is the theme to this long chapter?

II. Trust in God

4. According to verses 1-2, after Jonah turned from his willful disobedience, what did the Lord bring to him and then command him to do?
5. How does knowing that God came to Jonah a “second” time encourage your heart? What attribute of God is on display?
6. How is Nineveh described (cf. 1:2, 4:11)? How did Jonah get there? How long did it take him to arrive (v. 3)?

7. Once Jonah arrived according to verse 4, what did he do? What was his message to these people? How much time did he spend proclaiming this message to the Ninevites?

8. How is the number “40” used in Scripture? What is the significance of it?
 - a. Genesis 7:12

 - b. Exodus 16:35

 - c. Exodus 24:18

 - d. Matthew 4:2

III. Sorrow for Sin

9. How did the people of Ninevah respond to Jonah’s message? What was the first characteristic that something changed in these people (cf. 1 Sam. 7:6; 2 Sam 1:12; Neh 1:4; Zech 7:5)?

10. What was the second characteristic that repentance had taken place that is also reminiscent of many Old Testament Saints (Gen. 37:34; 1 Kings 21:27; Neh 9:1; Es 4:1-4; Lam 210; Dan. 9:3; Joel 1:8)?

11. Does it seem incredible to you that this entire city of wicked people repented and believed in God? The Hebrew term for “believed in God” literally means to “regard or make firm by saying yea and amen.”¹ What did Jesus say about them? Was this repentance genuine? How would God use these people at the judgment (cf. Matthew 12:38-41)?

¹ Smith, James, *Old Testament Series: The Minor Prophets*, chapter 8.

12. What is your reaction to what Jesus said above? Why did Jesus use Jonah's experience as an illustration to the Scribes and Pharisees? What was the message he was conveying?

13. Does it seem hard to believe that God would even want to take a sinner who falls far short of His glory and allow them to share in his splendor (Rom. 3:23; 2 Cor 3:18)? How is this possible? Do we bring something to the table (Acts 2:38, 3:19, 8:22)? Is this just a mere acceptance of facts (James 2:19)?

14. Look at the following verses and summarize how repentance is used in some parts of Scripture. When is repentance necessary? Is it a one-time act or an ongoing need? What are the consequences for not repenting?
 - a. Matthew 3:2

 - b. Mark 1:15; 6:12

 - c. Luke 5:31-32

 - d. Acts 3:19

 - e. 2 Corinthians 12:21

 - f. Revelation 2:5, 16

15. Read 1 Samuel 15 and Psalm 51. Compare Saul and David's acts of repentance. What are some of the distinct differences and heart attitudes associated with each of them?

16. Is your repentance characteristic of the Ninevites or David's? Or are you beginning to see heart attitudes that were exposed in Saul?

17. Is there something that is hindering you from turning from your sin and turning to Jesus in complete contrition and humiliation? What are you holding onto so fiercely thereby not recognizing that something greater than Jonah is here? Be honest.

IV. Humility

18. According to Jonah 3:6-8, when the King of Ninevah heard that the people of Ninevah had called for a fast and put on sackcloth, how did he react? What did this symbolize? What heart attitude is being displayed?

19. According to verse 9, did the Ninevites' repentance come with a certainty of deliverance?

20. What did God do according to verse 10? What are some attributes of God that you can glean from this act? (See Titus 3:4-7). How does this give you hope when you consider the wicked world in which we live and the salvation you've been praying for on behalf of the people you've been witnessing to?

V. Turning From Sin

21. You know that repentance is genuine if you go from following self to following Christ. You will notice a change in every area of life. There should be fruit in keeping with repentance. Do you see this type of change in your...

- a. Relationships?
 - b. Attitudes?
 - c. Actions?
22. Consider this quote from Thomas Watson, “The two great graces essential to a saint in this life are faith and repentance...Repentance is never out of season; it is of as frequent use as the artificer’s tool or the soldier’s weapon.”² Take some time to pray right now. Consider all that you have learned and taken in from the study of Jonah so far. What are some steps you need to take today that reflect a life of repentance?

RESOURCES

Doctrine of Repentance by Thomas Watson

Distinguishing Traits of Christian Character by Gardiner Spring

Specific Resources for Jonah

Jonah by Hugh Martin

Jonah by R. Reed Lessing

Obadiah, Jonah, Micah from Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries

General Resources for the Minor Prophets

The Minor Prophets by James Montgomery Boice

The Minor Prophets by Charles Feinberg

The Prophets of Israel by Leon Wood

Major Points from the Minor Prophets by John Blanchard

A Survey of Old Testament Introduction by Gleason Archer

Interpreting the Minor Prophets by Robert Chisholm Jr

² Watson, Thomas *The Doctrine of Repentance*, pg. 7