

OVERBOARD

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Jonah 3 | February 9, 2020

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I. Introduction to this Study

We continue in our study of Jonah, a series we're calling Overboard.

We pick up the story this week with Jonah finally obeying God in Nineveh, but doing the bare minimum while the people of Nineveh go above and beyond!

II. Connecting with One Another

What has your experience been like so far in this study of Jonah? What have you learned? How have you been challenged? What has resonated with you? Share briefly with your group.

Have you ever faced a job or obligation of some kind that you felt half-hearted about? How did you respond to it? What was the outcome?

III. Study the Text

- i. Read Jonah 3.1-5.
 - a. How would you describe Jonah's response to God's command?
 - b. How about the people of Nineveh's response?
- ii. Compare Jonah 1.1-3 to Jonah 3.1-3.
 - a. What is not found in chapter 3.1-3 that is in 1.1-3?
 - b. How is Jonah's response different in 3.3 compared to 1.3?
- iii. Look at Jonah 3.4.
 - a. Jonah enters Nineveh proclaiming a simple message, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." Often in the Bible forty days is a season of time for repentance and/or transformation. The term "overthrown" is from the Hebrew "hapek" which can mean "destroyed" or it can mean "transformed".
 - b. Which do you think Jonah has in mind?
 - c. What result do you think God has in mind?
 - d. How would you explain the difference?
- iv. Read Jonah 3.6-10.
 - a. In verse 6, we are told that Jonah's warning had "reached" the King. The Hebrew word for "reached" is not merely that news that has traveled, rather that the king was touched/moved/affected by Jonah's prophesy.



- b. How does this affect how you see the king's subsequent actions?
- v. It is interesting that the "movement" of repentance in Nineveh started with the people and makes its way "up" to the king and not vice versa. What does this say, if anything, about how true change/transformation does/should take place within an institution/body?
- vi. Read verse 9. Read also Joel 2:12-14, Jeremiah 18:7-8, and Isaiah 55:6-7.
 - a. The king, ignorant of the God of Israel, seems to have a pretty good understanding of how God operates. What characteristics of God do verse 9 and these other passages highlight?
 - b. When you picture God, do you tend to focus on His justice ("fierce anger") or mercy ("compassion")?
- vii. The king of Nineveh, even though he was in a position of power and influence, was able to step aside and humble himself before God. Have you ever dramatically humbled yourself before God? What was that like? What was the result? What are ways you can keep yourself humble before the Lord?
- viii. The king and his people are called to repentance before a just God. Even though Christians have been forgiven through Jesus, sometimes repentance is still needed. As you look at the Church in North America and the Church around the world, in what ways might It need to repent?

IV. Pray

- a. Reflect on a time you finally gave in to what God was calling you to do.
- b. Thank God for His mercy and His judgment, especially when His mercy covers His judgment!
- c. Lift up those you know who are in a difficult season, praying that God's grace and peace would meet them in a powerful way.
- d. Pray for those that do not yet know God, but are desperately seeking some way to live with Him.

