

# Be What Jonah Was Not

May 19, 2019



**Open:** Where might you wish for a second chance in life?

**Read:** Jonah 3:1-10

**Discuss:**

1. How have you seen God be “rich in mercy” so far in the book of Jonah? Up to this point in the book of Jonah, to what aspects of Jonah’s life can you relate?
2. From verses 1-4, what do we know about the message Jonah proclaimed? What, if anything, surprises you about this message? How is Jonah’s message similar to and different from the Gospel message we are told to carry to all nations (Matthew 28:19-20)?
3. What factors often keep us from proclaiming the Gospel message to others? How does Jonah’s story help us overcome those fears and encourage us to speak the message God has given us?
4. What clues do we have in verses 5-8 that the Ninevites took this message seriously? How does the response of these Ninevites contrast with the behavior of Jonah thus far in the narrative?
5. **Read Esther 4:1, Jeremiah 6:26, and Daniel 9:3.** What is the significance of the “sackcloth” and “ashes” in Jonah (vv. 5-8)? What would be a modern-day equivalent to this practice?
6. The book of Acts also helps us to understand true repentance. **Read Acts 26:19-20.** What other actions are called for alongside repentance? Why must repentance be paired with external behaviors? How is repentance more than just being sorry for our sin?
7. Consider how seriously the Ninevites took their sin. They stopped everything to focus on repenting and crying out for mercy (vv. 5, 7-8). How do we know if we are taking our sin and repentance seriously? How have you found the Gospel to make a difference in how you respond to sin? (And, how should it make a difference?)

**Apply:** As God brings to mind your sin this week, how will you respond?

**Pray:** Ask God to make clear sin in your life where you are blind to or ignoring God’s conviction. Ask God to give you a heart that responds to this realization with genuine repentance.

## Jonah 3:1-10

<sup>1</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,<sup>2</sup> "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.<sup>7</sup> 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, <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish."

<sup>10</sup> 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. (ESV)