



## Nineveh's Prayer: Repentance

Date: August 18, 2024

Text: Jonah 3

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### BIG IDEA

The people of Nineveh's response to Jonah's warning reveals the classic components of turning to Jesus: belief, fasting (dependence), turning from sin, Godly sorrow and fear of the Lord. What would it look like for our world to experience this type of Biblical repentance? The message of Jonah is not one of destruction and condemnation; rather, it is one of unending mercy and compassion for the lost. What would it look like for us to mirror this heart of God? For us to reach our Nineveh?

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### *Conversation Starter*

- Have you ever experienced Biblical repentance?
  - Is there a difference between how the Ninevites repented and how we often see repentance today?
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### COMMENTARY #1

**(Verses 1-4)** Jonah has repented for running from the calling of God on his life, and God calls him again. The Lord wasn't

obligated to do this, but He carried for Jonah the same mercy He held for the Ninevites and He gave Jonah a second chance. This time though, He does not tell Jonah what he is to say, rather He tells Jonah to go to Nineveh and wait for what the Lord would speak. Initially, Jonah heard the call and it was too much; this time, God would lead him one step at a time reminding him of his dependence. And Jonah obeyed! He had learned his lesson and was ready to listen, to proclaim the message of God to the people of Nineveh.

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### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Have you ever run from the call of God on your life? Tried to avoid doing something you knew God was calling you to? Explain.
  2. How does it make you view the situation differently that Jonah needed the same mercy the people of Nineveh did?
  3. How does it change your heart towards the lost when you realize that you also need God's grace and mercy?
  4. Why does God often only give us one step at a time?
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### **COMMENTARY #2**

**(Verses 5-10)** The people of Nineveh heard the message and believed God; this believing led them to change their actions, to repent, to fast, and to weep over their sin. True repentance begins with believing God and changes how we live/act - you cannot believe God apart from His Word and therefore repenting means reconciling your life to His commands. Then God saw their works, and again, *only* because of His mercy, He forgave them. Our

repentance does not obligate God to forgive us; rather, true repentance appeals to His mercy.

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### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Why is believing an essential part of true repentance?
  2. What does it mean to “reconcile our lives to God’s Word?” How can we do that? How can we hold each other accountable?
  3. How does forgiveness appeal to God’s mercy?
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### **GOING DEEPER**

[What is the significance of the city of Nineveh in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Read this article on the city of Nineveh and study what their culture was like.

1. How does it make you feel that God’s heart was turned towards such a people?
2. Do we see any modern day examples of this kind of culture?

The generation Jonah ministered to repented, but the next generations would return to evil practices and be destroyed.

1. How could one generation so radically encounter the mercy of God while the next turns from Him?
2. How does this stress the importance for us to share our faith?
3. In what ways are you currently passing down your faith? Modeling repentance? Leading others to God?

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Jonah: Go to Nineveh](#) - Sermon from Rock Church

[God Wants You in Nineveh! | Keep Believing Ministries](#)- Article on reaching our Nineveh

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### Group Activity

Pair off into groups of two or three people. Then, discuss with your partner where your “Nineveh” might be. Keep in mind, Nineveh was not just a place Jonah was called to, but also a place and people he hated.

Are there places, people, relationships, or wounds that need to be surrendered to the Lord? God is righteous and just; how can we begin to trust His judgment and let go of our anger or unforgiveness?

Sometimes we are called to go back to these broken places like Jonah was called to Nineveh; but sometimes, we only need to settle the matter between us and God.

Take time to discuss, discern, and pray about these places with your partner.