**“God of Mercy: Second Chance Obedience”**

**Jonah 2:1-3:3**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 6/6/21)

[Fran Roads gave a presentation about RUN Ministries (Reaching Unreached Nations). I was struck by two things: 1) These persecuted Christian brothers and sisters were like the people of Heb. 11:35-38: their hope lay in a better life after the resurrection. 2) Their belief that, “The cost of sharing Christ with those hostile to our faith is nothing compared with the cost of them spending eternity in Hell.” Wow. What examples they are to us.] [read excerpt] (Q1)

After Jonah’s failure, did he still have value for the Kingdom of God? Yes! Jonah could not outrun God’s grace. The foul stench of his disobedience did not disqualify him. God gave him a second chance. How about you? If you’ve ever disobeyed God, is He done with you? NO!

Jonah’s trouble didn’t begin with his failure to go to Nineveh; it began at his birth. Same with us. We’ve all inherited a bent toward rebellion against God. We may even think to ourselves, “I’m not as bad as I could be, even though I’m not as holy as a I ought to be.” Sorry. God hates all sin. We’re like the men on the boat who found no rescue in themselves or in their phony religions. Their only hope of rescue was in a substitute: Jonah! Our only hope of rescue from the just wrath of God must also come from outside of us: Jesus! Read Matt. 12:40. Jonah is meant to be a living demonstration for us. The King of Kings became our substitute. Have you cried out to Him? He is your only hope. By trusting in the Son, we will never be punished for our sin (John 3:36). We are saved by Christ’s work on the cross. The question is, “What’s next?” (Q2)

Jonah 3:1 says, “Now the Word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time…” Jonah was preserved by God; now he would be propelled by God. Read 3:2 again. It’s as if God is saying, “Jonah, you are still useful to me. You still have purpose in My kingdom.” (Q3) God doesn’t owe his wayward people a second chance, but He gives it anyway! This forgiveness of failure is all a work of grace. We see it all through Scripture: Moses killed a man, then was used by God to rescue the Israelites. David committed adultery and murder, then was called “a man after God’s own heart”. Peter denied Jesus 3 times, then was restored and recommissioned. God NEVER forsakes you! Read Lamen. 3:22-23. God delights to give His people a second chance at obedience. So arise and obey. Tell others of the hope you have in Christ. Use your giftedness to love, encourage, serve, and share the gospel.

Some of you have bought into the lie that you are no longer useful to God. THAT IS NOT SO! You can be a disciple-maker, a servant, a witness, an encourager, a prayer warrior, and so much more. Some use the excuse, “I’ve failed, so I am no longer qualified.” NO! (Q4) God used Jonah’s failure as preparation for his proclamation of the Gospel. God will even use your failure to craft your testimony of His great mercy (see Mark 5:19). Jonah’s qualification doesn’t have to do with perfection; it has to do with obedience.

Jonah was preserved and prepared. Now it was time to get going! How about you? Is God making His will known to you? (Q5) Are you arising to run from God or to God? Better yet, are you arising to run FOR God?

**QUESTIONS**:

1. This reading highlights the importance of prayer for specific individuals. Share the first name of someone who needs to repent and believe and follow Jesus. Stop and pray for those people right now.
2. The NASB uses the words “belief” and “obey” interchangeably in this verse. How are they the same? How are they different?
3. We all go through seasons of life. What is your purpose now, in this season? Why is it important to know your purpose?
4. What other excuses do people give for not sharing the gospel? Do any hold water?
5. If God is not making His will known to you, why not? If the answer has to do with sin or self, what can you do about it?

“Great is Thy Faithfulness” (Chisholm)

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my father

There is no shadow of turning with thee

Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not

As thou hast been thou forever wilt be

**Great is thy faithfulness**

**Great is thy faithfulness**

**Morning by morning new mercies I see**

**All I have needed thy hand hath provided**

**Great is thy faithfulness**

**Lord unto me**

Summer and winter, springtime and harvest

Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above

Join with all nature in manifold witness

To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love

Pardon for sin and peace that endureth

Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow

Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside