**“God of Mercy: The Cry of the Lost”**

**Jonah 1:1-17** (Q1)

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 5/16/21

The Book of Jonah reminds us of God’s compassion for all kinds of people. Jonah thought the people of Nineveh were outside of God’s mercy, so he ran. He was thinking of himself, as opposed to serving God with his whole heart. Indifference blinds us to the needs of the people around us. Indifference blinds us to the cries of the perishing.

Who are the Ninevites in your life? Who are “those people”? They can be anyone whose sin has made a mess of their lives. God’s compassion reaches all those whose troubles stem from their alienation from Him. Do we share that compassion? Or does your spiritual smugness keep you from reflecting the heart of God? (Q2)

On first read, Jonah’s mission field was in Nineveh. But he had another mission field: the sailors! He closed his eyes to the mission field right in front of him! Even now, indifference and isolation prevent God’s people from hearing the cry of the lost. Notice the word “afraid” in verse 5. Even those seasoned sailors were afraid. This was not just any old storm. God sent this storm for both Jonah and the sailors. God purposefully places His people in the same storms as those that they are meant to reach. (Have you heard of Covid?!?) The storm was sent to awaken them all to God’s mercy. (Q3)

Read Jonah 1:6 again. Does Jonah’s God hear the sailors? Can He help in this storm of life? Do we hear the cries of our neighbors, or are we detached, indifferent to their plight? Do you know Jonah’s real problem? His theology was all in his head, not in his heart! He wasn’t just unconcerned around lost people… he was uncomfortable around lost people. Could it be that we are so focused on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that we miss the people right in front of us? (Q4)

We all are born with a sin nature. We are born alienated from God. And then, miraculously, Jesus took upon Himself the wrath of God that you and I deserve (Read Rom. 5:18-19). Some people try to appease God, try to make themselves right with God, even try to do enough good deeds to “even up the scale”, but listen: **It’s God’s way of rescue, or there will be no rescue. Doctrine doesn’t save; Christ alone saves.** The perishing need you, Christian. You may be imperfect, sinful, wandering, and messed-up. But the perishing need you to tell them the Good News. (Q5)

Now read Jonah 1:15-16 again. The sailors’ fear gives way to peace and calm. Do you have the peace and assurance that you will be safe when you die? Out of sheer gratitude, the sailors want to bless God and serve God. Do you? If so, do you hear the cries of the lost around you, or are you indifferent to them or isolated from them? Are you an example to the lost? Do you respond differently to life’s storms than the lost people around you? Do you love your neighbor enough to tell him about God’s mercy? For those of us who have been saved by grace, this is our wonderful calling. Amen. (Q6)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Where do you see God’s sovereignty at work in the lives of the sailors?
2. Where are your mission fields?
3. Read 2 Cor. 1:3-4. Why does God place us in some of the same storms as our unsaved neighbors? (Hint: There is more than one answer!)
4. What demands our attention, thus diverting us from our mission?
5. How can we stop being isolated from our neighbors? How can we stop being indifferent to our neighbors? Here’s one idea: pray for 2-3 neighbors by name. What else?
6. Most everyone around us is religious. The problem is, they are worshipping false gods: materialism, entertainment, salvation through good works… What other false gods mislead people today? What are we to do about it?

“Jesus Saves” (Owens)

We have heard the joyful sound:

Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Spread the tidings all around:

Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Bear the news to every land,

Climb the steeps and cross the waves;

Onward!—’tis our Lord’s command;

Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

2

Waft it on the rolling tide,

Jesus saves, Jesus saves;

Tell to sinners far and wide,

Jesus saves, Jesus saves;

Sing, ye islands of the sea,

Echo back, ye ocean caves;

Earth shall keep her jubilee,

Jesus saves, Jesus saves.

4

Give the winds a mighty voice,

Jesus saves, Jesus saves;

Let the nations now rejoice.

Jesus saves, Jesus saves;

Shout salvation full and free,

Highest hills and deepest caves,

This our song of victory,

Jesus saves, Jesus saves.