**“God of Mercy: A Great Awakening”**

**Jonah 1:1-17**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 5/9/21

Some awakenings are great, some not so much…

Have you ever been awakened by a baby… night after night after night…

Have you ever tried to awaken a teenager… day after day after day…

How about us? Are we sometimes slow to awaken to God’s voice? God will employ creative and drastic measures to awaken His children. He did it with Jonah, and He’ll do it with us.

Israel was to serve as a light to all nations as God’s witness people. Israel was to be a kingdom of priests to the rest of the world (see Gen. 12:3). But Israel didn’t do that. Rather than reflect God’s holiness to her neighbors, she took up their bad habits. What’s more, she hated her neighbors and wanted nothing to do with them. By the time Jonah got his marching orders, this wrong attitude had been going on for generations. It had become normative and acceptable to the Jewish people, but wholly unacceptable to God. No one wanted to reach out to “those people”. (Q1)

Jonah booked passage to Tarshish. Many scholars think it was probably near Gibraltar! Didn’t he know that you can’t flee from the Lord? God is everywhere! (see Psalm 139:7-8) God is inescapable. His presence is unavoidable. Listen carefully to this message to Jonah and to us: Obedience brings you closer and closer to God relationally. If you disobey, you’re on your way down and down… to lost usefulness to God’s kingdom, or maybe even a lost eternity. Don’t excuse yourself by reflecting on God’s sovereignty or God’s patience. Jesus said this many times: “If you love Me, keep My commands.” (John 14:15)

The God who speaks in a still, small voice can also breathe a tempest. The God who brings calm to your storm can also bring a storm to your calm. It could be a financial storm, an emotional storm, a relational storm, an “in-the-church” storm, or many others. Do you believe in your heart that these storms can be an act of mercy from a loving Father? (Q2) Isn’t it interesting that the Gentile sailors saw God’s provision even before Jonah did!

How could Jonah possibly sleep through the pounding storm tearing the ship apart? It’s possible his sleep was the result of despair and depression. Now, depression can be caused by physiological reasons, attacks from Satan, or a variety of other reasons. But Jonah was probably physically and emotionally exhausted from trying to live a life outside of God’s Word. Disobedient disciples become deaf to God’s providences. Jonah stopped listening to the Word of God. His heart was far from God. (Q3)

Jonah’s private sin created a public disaster. When you and I sin it ALWAYS affects other people, too. How can your words and your actions tell someone you are God’s ambassador if you are living outside of His instructions for you? Disobedient disciples soil and silence their testimonies. And what’s more, disobedient disciples grow discontent with their calling. They may even get to the point of not being able to hear their calling. (Q4)

In verse 12, Jonah finally gets some wisdom: “I know this tempest is because of me.” Even then, God’s sea of mercy still had work to do! GULP! Now look at verse 15. There was a sacrifice of one for the benefit of many. Does that remind you of Anybody? Jesus spent 3 days of agony to redeem all who call on Him as their Savior and Lord.

Are you obeying God or running from God? Are you listening to His voice in the breeze AND in the tempest? There’s good news: Though God’s servants at times may flee from His will, God’s presence remains with His servants. Praise God He is a God of mercy and second chances! Praise God that He has done and will do whatever it takes to save you and perfect you. Amen.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Who are “those people” around you? How can you love them? How can you share the Gospel with them?
2. What other storms of life do we face? How can they possibly be a gift of God’s mercy toward us?
3. Look up the word “inure”. How does one become inured to the sin around you and deaf to the Word of God at the same time? What can be done about this?!?
4. What is your calling at this stage of your life? Pastor Steve gave examples of needs, such as mentoring and babysitting. What other needs might you (or others) be called to meet for the Kingdom of God?

“The Church’s One Foundation” (Stone)

The church's one Foundation

is Jesus Christ her Lord;

she is His new creation,

by water and the Word;

from heav'n He came and sought her

to be His holy bride;

with His own blood He bought her,

and for her life He died.

Yet she on earth hath union

with God the Three in One,

and mystic sweet communion

with those whose rest is won.

O happy ones and holy!

Lord, give us grace that we,

like them, the meek and lowly,

on high may dwell with Thee.