

Sermon Notes Prodigals – Jonah August 2 2009 Graham Fabian

SCCC Vision & Mission Statement: Loving God! Loving People! Loving Life!

Loving God! Seeking first the kingdom

Loving People! Neighbours; love and care for people; live in faith you serve community: Care Arm – desire to feed people. Trip to Tardun/WandalGu (Rehabilitation with a clear Godly influence – focus on God will be kept; we can't and won't miss the Gospel) – we are walking by faith in the possibility of a facility that will be used for God's work.. must constantly walk by faith and not by sight; an opportunity for the State, but could affect the nation.

Loving Life a product of the first two..

Word: Last week: the joy of the Lord is *my/our* strength.. a merry heart does good!

Today: Prodigals – many times preached from Luke 15 on the prodigals – a story where tried to impart the love of the Father; the love He has for people. Often people have a warped preset of 'father' – this parable must be understood in context also; the son treated the father harshly but the Father's love remains – always looking to show love and mercy. Upon repentance, the son was ushered back in – right alongside Father – see the older brother – close, and yet at great distance (both prodigals). Father's great love!

Jonah – story is not all about the 'great fish' but about our 'great God' first and last verses – God – a picture of a loving God; avoid focusing on the fish and disobedience (if we focus on the fish we may fail to see God).. this is a 'gospel' story.. reaching the uttermost parts of the world (shows the hesitation of a man to bring the message – See Matthew 12:40)

Jonah – born near Nazareth.. popular at the time; prophecies were received.. difficult time for the nation; time of savagery against them .. The Ninevites were cruel oppressors; Jonah *knew* of their oppression (may have known those personally afflicted).. Put this in local setting: perhaps asking a Jewish person in New York to confront people in Berlin in the 1940s. We cannot mock Jonah – he was asked to do a very difficult thing.

God speaks to Jonah. He speaks to us.

Psalm 32:8

Isaiah 30:21 Notice Psalm 119:105 a lamp to your feet, a light to your path.. not hiding the future from you but for you.. not screaming out in front.. He has gone before and speaks as we walk.

Jonah was racist at this time – with hatred in his heart towards these people. He may have had reasons but no just cause. Ezekiel 33:11; God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Jonah 4: 1-2 shows the reason Jonah did not want to go – almost rebuking God with scriptures.

He knew that God would show compassion... we see God's heart after Jonah's heart right alongside God's heart for 120,000 of people who did not know their right hand from the left. We cannot regard man from the outer.

Isaiah 6.. 'send me'.. Jonah said 'send anyone else' instead of going east he went west..God did not supply the ship for him to sail to Tarshish.. it was not the distance that kept him away from Nineveh.. (he was prepared to travel far!!).. His own life was not a concern .. we see him offer it many times..

Work out our lives on what God IS saying.. calling us to do. Matthew 6:33 – destiny is found in seeking first His kingdom (purposes) and doing life the way He does it.. our destiny is found in His purposes for us outworked in His Kingdom.

Story of Jonah only 40 verses.. as he starts out on the boat things go pear-shaped.. Jonah in the bottom of the boat fast asleep.. the non-believers are praying.. Psalm 32:4; Jonah's strength was sapped and he was dull of mind.. peaceful? Doubtful: just worn out doing the wrong things – it costs effort to run.

God also provided a great fish.. great calamity.. in the belly of this great fish he begins to pray.. in discomfort.. 3 days; wet, stinking, acidic, kelp wrapped discomfort..

Jonah had been asked to say 8 words. This turned a nation around. Jonah was so ticked that they repented and that God showed grace. He was angry enough to die; but God was also out to win Jonah. **There is no room for racism or hatred in anyone's heart.**

God can and does speak clearly – desires to reveal His plan for you.

Similarly, in Luke 15 there is no record of the older brother staying in the house; so we are uncertain of Jonah's end.. he was still ticked at last record.

When God calls – **know that He does and will** – often not what we want it to be. Parents often take children where they don't want to go.. brussell sprouts eaten before sweets!

God will follow us down to our last breath.. Must know that He is speaking **"walk this way"**

What has He asked you to do? He will keep asking.