

May 21, 2017



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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God's Love for the Lost Jonah 3:1-10

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson examines the promise that **God's Love for the Lost** extends even to the most sinful of people. The **study's aim** is to develop a greater burden for lost people, considering their eternal destiny. The **study's application** is to start praying for and seeking to witness to those who are lost.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

Take a good look at Jonah 3:10. This verse comes directly after Jonah had given Nineveh the sobering message that God was going to utterly destroy it. So it seems as if God had changed His mind. Does He do that? Let us remember what transpired previously in Jonah. The prophet was sent to proclaim a message, in its basic thrust much like the prophecy given to a later generation by Nahum (Nah. 2:10-13). God threatened to destroy Nineveh, a wicked city of the bloodthirsty Assyrian Empire. Worse yet, Nineveh was a nation opposed to God. They scorned the Israelites and treated the Creator of the universe with contempt. Assyria had oppressed people and plotted against Him long enough. We read in Jonah 3, however, that God had seemingly changed His mind. After promising disaster upon the Ninevites, God decided not to bring it upon them. Instead, He said that He would turn away His anger. So what is going on here? The answer has everything to do with Nineveh's response to the warning. The Assyrians could have chosen to ignore it. Instead, they showed deep remorse for their sins. Even the king humbled himself. The repentance they expressed was sincere. That is why God relented. The Ninevites were a pagan people, lost in their idolatry. They did not know God as Lord of their lives. However, when the message was given, they received it with willing hearts, which was exactly what God was seeking. God did not wish to visit devastation upon these people. Had He wanted to do that, He would not have given them a warning. He could have just let the disaster go forward. God wanted to give Nineveh every opportunity possible to repent and turn to Him. That is why God chose to extend grace to them. God's heart is for sinners. It does not matter how hardened the sinner or how deep in sin he is, God still loves that person. His love for those who are lost is such that He takes no pleasure in the perishing of anyone (2 Pet. 3:9). God is always eager to forgive and embrace everyone who is genuinely penitent. Christ said that He had "come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Look now at Jonah's reaction. Being a prophet, you might think he would be rejoicing. After all, the message he had proclaimed had saved a pagan people. However, Jonah wanted disaster for Nineveh, not grace. There are times when we behave this way. We turn away from spreading the gospel and fail to recognize the depth of our Father's love for the lost. We treat the gospel too lightly, taking for granted our salvation and its attendant joy, we let our passion for sharing the good news grow cold and become overshadowed by our own prejudices. How is your flame? Have you been tending it? Does it still burn for those around you who need God's deliverance? Are you reaching out to those lost and hurting around you?

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Christians worth their salt make others thirsty for the water of life

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:
Today, as then, the Spirit will create the right questions in people's hearts and make them ready for the right answer —
Jesus Christ

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
(Acts 16:30 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", July 13, 2005)

Series: The Love of God
UNIT: The Extent of God's Love

NEXT WEEK

God's All Embracing Love

(Jonah 4:1-11)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Proclamation for Repentance (Jonah 3:1-4)

A second chance (1-2)

A second chance to do good to people (Gal 6:10)

A second chance to live wisely (Eph 5:15-16)

A second chance to make the most of (Col 4:5)

A second chance to act with wisdom (Ps 90:12)

A second chance to work (John 9:4)

Plea for urgency (3-4)

Urgent because the end of all things is near (1 Peter 4:7)

Urgent because Jesus' coming is nearer than we think (Rom 13:11-12)

Urgent because no one knows when Jesus will return (Matt 24:36)

People's Response (Jonah 3:5-9)

Repentant belief (5-8)

Belief overcomes condemnation (Mark 16:16)

Belief because it is the way of salvation (Rom 10:9-10)

Belief because it is commanded (1 John 3:23)

Belief without doubt (Mark 11:22-23)

Belief in the living God (1 Tim 4:10)

Seeking God's mercy (9)

God's mercy comes out of His love for us (Eph 2:4)

God promises His mercy when we pray and repent (2 Chron 7:14)

God's mercy keeps Him from putting an end to the wicked (Neh 9:29-31)

God's mercy sometimes causes Him to relent (Ps 106:45)

God's mercy empowers perseverance (James 5:11)

God's mercy makes Christians a people of God (1 Peter 2:10)

God's Relenting (Jonah 3:10)

God's sees and has compassion (10)

God is compassionate because men are helpless and need a shepherd (Matt 9:36)

God is compassionate because man needs healing (Matt 14:14)

God is compassionate because man is weak and hungry (Matt 15:32)

God is compassionate because He is always willing to help (Mark 1:41)

God is compassionate because man needs teaching (Mark 6:34)

God is compassionate because God longs to be man's refuge (Matt 23:37)

God's compassion moves Him to be forgiving (10)

God is forgiving because of man's repentance (Jer 18:7-8)

God is forgiving because He is gracious (Joel 2:13)

God is forgiving because He hears the prayers of His children (Isa 38:1-6)

God is forgiving because He forgives those who turn to Him (Isa 55:7)

God is forgiving because God grieves over punishing man (Jer 42:10)