

Remnant Life Church

February 17, 2019

Core-Life Change: Jonah's Partial Transformation

Jonah 4:1-11

Last Sunday: Saul's transformation to Paul

- **Acts 9:1-19** is the first of three accounts of the conversion of Saul to the Apostle Paul
 - Surrender your passions
 - Stop talking and continually being active to know God's presence
 - Be obedient to His Word

This morning the Bible's best example of a partial transformation – Jonah

- Nothing is written regarding his prophetic activity only what happened to him
- We view him in many different ways
 - He was a prophet in the approx. time of the mid to late 700's BC
 - It was the time of the Assyrians, and it was the great city of Nineveh that he was told to go and prophecy
 - Nineveh – **Gen 10** – The Table of Nations after the flood
 - The mighty hunter Nimrod – the grt-grandson of Noah
 - Founded many cities among them Nineveh (**Gen 10:11**)
 - The quick abridged version of Jonah's story
 - God told him to go
 - Jonah didn't want to
 - Bought passage on a ship going the opposite direction
 - Israel is (Lebanon) Kansas; Nineveh is (Rockport) California; Tarshish is (Sunrise Beach) NJ
 - The point most directly opposite
 - Big storm
 - Everybody scared – Jonah identified as the reason
 - Thrown overboard
 - Great fish swallows him
 - Inside for 3 days
 - Tossed back on to land
 - Goes to Nineveh
 - The city is converted
- So was Jonah a good man, a godly prophet, who learned his lesson?
- Or was he selfish, stubborn, and filled with bitterness?
- The answer to those questions is YES

Until the 19th century, no one questioned the historicity of the story of Jonah

- The fish
 - There have been documented cases of such an event occurring
- Oxygen and acid

- One of the great purposes of this book is to demonstrate God's dominion or power over His creation
- If He can arrange for the fist to swallow Jonah could He not also make the environment so that He would survive?
- Allegory or history?
 - Jesus taught the events as historical fact
 - Would Jesus have been confused as to what did or did not happen?

Often the problem, when this story is told, is at the time of the conversion of the city of Ninevah is usually when the flannelgraph pieces run out

- In other words, what happened to Jonah after he delivered the message of God?
 - Did he rejoice with the king and his people?
 - Did he offer a sacrifice to God in thanksgiving for His love and mercy to spare the wicked city realizing the impact their changes of heart would have on the surrounding people and nations?
- NO, he did not
 - Jonah's transformation was a temporary one because he did not fully surrender himself
 - Let's take a few minutes and see what that looks like

Jonah is only 4 short chapters long

- Chapter 1 – the call, disobedience, storm, fish
- Chapter 2 – Jonah's prayer, put back on land
- Chapter 3 – Jonah obeys God; the city repents, God relents and spares Ninevah

READ – **Jonah 4:1-11**

What is revealed in this chapter is the true nature and condition of Jonah's heart

1. *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry – (4:1)*
 - a. Contrast the first words of this last chapter with the first words of the first chapter
 - b. **Jonah 1:1a** - Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah
 - i. What a difference it makes when we put God first instead of ourselves
 - ii. For a brief time, Jonah got it right, but the beginning and the end of the book show the same thing – Jonah wanted it his way
 - c. Jonah has just experienced several miracles
 - i. He is identified as the reason the storm came
 - ii. A fish kept him from drowning
 - iii. He survived in the belly of the fish for 3 days
 - iv. He is spit back up onto the land
 1. He started at the port of Joppa
 2. The trip to Tarshish was 1500 miles
 - a. Why Tarshish?
 - b. It is 2694 miles from Nineveh – how much further away could he get?

3. Several maps I saw had Jonah coming ashore in southern Turkey near a town called Levant – a straight shot due east to Nineveh – a distance of about 200 miles
 4. I don't think so - I believe that God told that fish to spit Jonah out just off the coast of Joppa right at the point that Jonah disobeyed God (500 miles)
 - v. The people listened and repented from the King all the way down to the least – Jonah did not want that
2. *So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, One who relents from doing harm. (4:2)*
- a. Realize what Jonah is doing here
 - i. He is telling God the reason he disobeyed was because of His loving and compassionate nature
 - ii. In other words, it was God's fault Jonah did what he did
 - iii. This kind of ridiculous thinking is exactly what we hear on every news channel today
 - iv. Does it make sense for Jonah to blame God for his actions?
 - v. Does it make sense to murder infants?
 - vi. Does it make sense to make a mockery of God's Word and allow men and women to stand in the pulpit who are knowingly and willingly living and embracing a lifestyle that the Bible condemns?
 - b. Make no mistake – we still love and welcome every person with the love of Jesus Christ, but wrong is wrong!
 - c. Jonah is mad because a group of people he hates is going to be spared
3. *So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade; (4:5ab)*
- a. Why?
 - i. To stay and help encourage the new converts?
 - ii. To train up teachers and prophets?
 - iii. No, to hopefully watch God destroy the city
 - iv. This would be like Lot finding a good seat to watch the fireworks come down on S and G
 - v. And God continues to reveal Jonah's unchanged heart
 - b. God provides a shade plant to grow (4:6)
 - c. God causes the plant to die (4:7)
 - d. This seemingly minor activity fully reveals Jonah's heart that had not been transformed by his experience in the fish
 - i. Jonah gets mad because he is uncomfortable
 - ii. The sun was beating down on him (4:8)
 - iii. He says to God he would rather die (4:9)
 - e. God immediately calls him on his warped priorities
 - i. Concerned over the vine you had no control over (4:10)

- ii. No concern for 120,000 that are completely lost (4:11)

The story of Jonah is important for 3 reasons:

1. It confirms the power of God over all of creation
2. It is yet another account of the mercy and grace of God's great love so that no one is completely lost and out of God's reach
3. It is a sign (a foreshadowing) of the burial and resurrection of Jesus
 - Matt 16:4
 - Luke 11 29-30

Jonah's heart was not fully transformed at the core, only his immediate actions changed in response to his circumstances

- Paul's change lasted his entire life
- We don't even know how the story of Jonah ends
 - There is no conclusion
 - Did Jonah repent of his selfish heart?
 - Did he just sit in the hot sun and pout?
- The only way he was going to be totally transformed...
 - Surrender his will, his passions
 - Not run but be still and know God's presence
 - Be obedient to His Word in every situation and circumstance

This total transformation comes with God's help

- Ask Him to help you fully surrender
- Ask Him for strength to stand against the temptations and short-comings of our flesh
- Ask Him to guide your heart, your mind, and your emotions