Walking in the Ordinary

9.15.19

Jonah Series

Message 4

Jonah 3 (CSB)

**JONAH’S PREACHING**

**3**The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: **2**“Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach the message that I tell you.” **3**Jonah got up and went to Nineveh according to the Lord’s command.

Now Nineveh was an extremely great city,, a three-day walk. **4**Jonah set out on the first day of his walk in the city and proclaimed, “In forty days Nineveh will be demolished!” **5**Then the people of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast and dressed in sackcloth—from the greatest of them to the least.

**6**When word reached the king of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, took off his royal robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. **7**Then he issued a decree in Nineveh:

By order of the king and his nobles: No person or animal, herd or flock, is to taste anything at all. They must not eat or drink water. **8**Furthermore, both people and animals must be covered with sackcloth, and everyone must call out earnestly to God. Each must turn from his evil ways and from his wrongdoing. **9**Who knows? God may turn and relent; he may turn from his burning anger so that we will not perish.

**10**God saw their actions—that they had turned from their evil ways—so God relented from the disaster he had threatened them with. And he did not do it.

# Introduction:

A. I have always pictured the fish swallowing Jonah and then, 3 days later, vomiting him upon the shore.

1. But this isn’t possible because Nineveh is several hundred miles inland. (Show Picture)

2. What happened is the fish deposited Jonah up the coast a little way and then Jonah had to make a long walk of obedience to Nineveh.

3. *Jonah’s arrival to Nineveh was not instantaneous but a long journey of obedience.*

4. Jonah’s freedom from the fish and the sea were miraculous, but his journey was ordinary.

B. Today we see a prophet of God who is given a second chance.

1. Although his journey started in disobedience, he eventually repented and did what God called him to do.

2. Jonah’s deliverance and salvation were miraculous.

3. The repentance of the evil city of Nineveh was miraculous.

4. But what happened in-between was ordinary.

C. What if I was to tell you, that if you will be faithful with the ordinary then God will trust you with the miraculous!

1. So many of us want the supernatural and the miraculous.

2. We desire things that are bigger, better, and faster.

3. Yet, we often are not faithful with what God has placed in our hands.

a. When Moses met God for the first time, God asked Moses “what is that in your hand?”

b. It was an ordinary shepherds’ staff.

c. From that ordinary staff came legendary miracles.

4. Our God doesn’t require the spectacular from us, but He does require faithfulness.

5. Many of us are willing to follow God in the miraculous but not in the mundane.

a. We are willing to go to Slovakia or Africa to tell people about Jesus but can’t be bothered to walk across the street.

b. We keep waiting for God to use us in some huge way, but we fail to realize that God wants to use us in a small way first.

D. Today, we are going to look at what happens when we are willing to be obedient in our journey with God.

1. If we will be faithful in the ordinary, God will do the extraordinary.

2. The journey to a miracle often requires innumerable numbers of ordinary steps.

This morning, I want to show you what can happen when we are simply obedient to God.

# 1. First, we must do what we are called to do.

A. It says, “The Word of the Lord came to Jonah a second Time”.

1. The first time, Jonah fled.

2. This time, Jonah obeyed.

3. Jonah now chooses to walk in obedience.

4. The journey of obedience was a long journey.

a. He didn’t get there overnight.

b. He got there one step at a time.

5. Some of you are wanting to skip all the steps and get immediately to the results.

a. But the ways of God are discovered in the processes of God, not in the results.

b. We learn about God not from what we get from Him but what we experience as we walk with Him.

c. You can’t skip the season or process God has for you.

1. I love hall duty at school.

2. Because you will have this kid run to down the hall or up the steps.

3. And when they get to you, you get to tell them to turnaround and do it right.

4. You and I often love to run down the hall when God has told us to walk.

5. You can’t short-change the process God has ordained for you.

**B. We want to short-change the process because it seems like we aren’t doing enough**.

1. Jonah walking to Nineveh was good and admirable but not miraculous.

2. It was God who gave him the message, Jonah just preached it.

3. It was God who brought about the belief and the repentance while Jonah sat back and watched.

4. It was God who was the one who relented in his wrath and changed his mind.

5. Jonah was merely walking in obedience to the Word of the Lord.

C. We miss out on the miraculous when we don’t steward the ordinary.

1. Some of you want to learn a musical instrument, but didn’t put in the practice.

2. You want to lose the weight and still eat the package of oreos.

3. You want to run the marathon but never get off the couch.

4. You want to heal the sick and prophecy but don’t want to read the Word and pray.

5. If you will steward the ordinary, God will entrust you with the miraculous.

D. Figure out what it is the Lord has called YOU to do.

1. Not your parents, not your friend, you.

2. And then be obedient to what God has made clear.

3. If you will faithfully fulfill what God has told you to do, you will be a might man or woman of God,

Do what you are called to do.

# 2. Second, Be willing.

A. God used Jonah as the conduit of repentance and mercy.

1. In chapter 4, we see Jonah was a reluctant prophet.

2. He did what he was called to do, but he wasn’t happy about it.

3. **You and I have a responsibility to God and that is to be willing to do whatever He calls us to do.**

4. We are called to be conduits, to distribute what God wants to the people He wants and to do so without taking any for ourselves.

B. I heard pastor John Piper make the statement that we are all called to be conduits of God’s blessings.

1. The he said that Conduits can be coated with copper, they don’t have to be gold.

2. Some of you here today don’t believe God can really use you because your copper:

a. Your plain, you’re not as polished, you’re not as desireable, or any other number of excuses.

b. If this is the way you feel, it is because you have bought into the lies of the enemy and the lies of the culture.

c. You don’t have to be the best or the most talented, you have to be available and willing.

3. Why do we use copper in our electrical wiring in our houses?

a. Don’t say it’s because it is cheap, say because it is available.

b. God doesn’t want to use you because you are cheap, he wants to use you because you are available.!

c. God can and does use whatever He wants to bring about His purpose.

d. Wouldn’t it be cool if He used you?

e. Well He can, and He will.

f. Be obedient, be willing.

# 3. Lastly, Be Amazed.

**Jonah 3:4–10 (CSB)**

**4**Jonah set out on the first day of his walk in the city and proclaimed, “In forty days Nineveh will be demolished!” **5**Then the people of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast and dressed in sackcloth—from the greatest of them to the least.

**6**When word reached the king of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, took off his royal robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. **7**Then he issued a decree in Nineveh:

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A. We will look at Jonah’s negative reaction in another message.

1. But for today, notice what happened.

2. The most evil and cruel city hears God’s message and then repents.

a. This is the real deal.

b. Sackcloth is a rough and abrasive form of clothing and ashes are uncomfortable and dirty.

c. Together with the fasting it shows the seriousness of the people.

d. They are absolutely broken by their sin and repent in a huge way.

3. This is exactly what God wanted to happen through his Prophet Jonah.

B. **The revival of repentance started with the people, not the leaders.**

1.It was the people who heard first the message and responded.

a. The king then heard and followed the example of his people.

b. With the support of the people, the king issued a decree to fast and pray.

2. I believe that if we are going to see a move or repentance and revival in our country that it must begin with the people and not the government.

a. 2 Chronicles said if my “people” will humble themselves and pray.

b. Jonah’s revival started with the people and our revival must as well.

C. As we obediently and willingly follow God, we must be prepared to be amazed.

1. I know for my life and ministry, that I am constantly amazed at how God takes my simple obedience and does the miraculous.

2. I can’t take credit for what is happening.

a. Sure, I work.

b. I show up, I study and I pray.

c. But it is God who gives the increase.

3. So my job is to be obedient, willing, and amazed.

4. We must never lose our amazement.

5. When we lose our amazement, we take the credit and demand the glory for what God has done.

# Closing:

A. So often we take this time in the service to ask for prayer for specific needs.

1. If you have a need you want to pray for, you are always welcome to come and be prayed for.

2. But today I want to focus our prayers primarily around 2 areas.

B. First, for those who have been holding back, today is your day to give your all to Jesus.

1 Don’t wait, don’t hesitate, don’t hold back.

2. I encourage you to forget the advice given to us by the old rock band, Meatloaf who sang, “I would do anything for love, but I won’t do that”.

a. I imagine that most of us here have that area that we have said, “I would do anything for Jesus but I won’t do that”.

b. Jonah’s “thing” was Nineveh, and it almost cost Jonah everything.

c. Your disobedience in one area of life will ultimately lead to disobedience in other areas of your life.

d. So today, confess that area of your world that you have been holding on to and give it to Jesus.

C. For others here, I want to encourage you to be amazed today.

1. I know we have all been overwhelmed the last few weeks.

2. I’ll admit, this season has been a time of relentless spiritual attacks upon this church.

3. Yet, we cannot lose our amazement at what God has done and what He is going to do.

4. The old-hymn said, “I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene…”

5. For some of us here today, that is what we need to do is to be amazed by Jesus again.

6. Even in the storm, even in the belly of the fish, even in the long walk of obedience, to be amazed by Jesus.

This morning, I want to ask everyone who will to join me upfront to pray, to worship, and to be amazed.