

COMMISSIONED Prt 4

Jonah 3:3 And Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the Word of Jehovah. And Nineveh was a very great city of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried and said, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown! 5 And the people of Nineveh believed God. And they called a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 For word came to the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne. And he laid his robe from him, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he cried out and said in Nineveh by the decree of the king and his great ones, saying, Do not let man or beast, herd or flock taste anything; do not let them feed, nor drink water. 8 But let man and animal be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God. And let them each one turn from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who knows? He may repent, and God may have pity and turn away from the glow of His anger, so that we do not perish. 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way. And God was compassionate over the evil that He had said to do to them, and He did not do it.

If you are joining us for the first time, you find us in the middle of a series titled **COMMISSIONED** and today we are doing part 4 of the series. In the last 3 weeks, the Lord has been challenging the church to go back to the beginning.

- There is only one thing that distinguishes the church from any other organization and that is the church is the only institution that has the ability to introduce a person to eternal life.
- When a church fails to introduce people to eternal life, then that church is no different from a soccer club.
- Allow me to introduce our subject matter this morning – I want to talk to you on the matter **WHEN MESS COLLIDES WITH MERCY**.
- Let me put it in this way; one thing happens when a 22-wheeler truck hits a Toyota Yaris – the Yaris is no match to such a massive vehicle.
- It would not be far from the truth to say, the same thing happens when your mess collides with the mercy of God. There is no amount of mess that God's mercy cannot deal with.
- The truth of the matter is that our mess deserves punishment, our mess deserves retribution. This brings us in the realm of three powerful spiritual principles; justice, mercy and grace.
- Justice is getting what you deserve (punishment). Mercy is not getting what you deserve (no punishment). Grace is getting what you don't deserve (salvation).
- The devil has been telling some of you that your mess will take you to pay a price in order for it go away and for you the price is just too much.

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- This was the story of the great city of Nineveh, it was a great city in a great mess. Has anyone come to you and told you “My friend, I am in a great mess”? Usually, it’s a guy coming to tell you that his girlfriend has just told him that she was pregnant, or a married man telling you that his wife has just found out about his infidelity, or a guy who has just been caught for fraud.
- I don’t know what type of a mess you are in today, but what I know is that there is a place that is stronger than the mess and it is called the mercy seat of God.
- No one has ever approached the mercy seat and came out in a deeper mess – each one comes out full of mercy and having received a new lease of life.
- In today’s reading, we catch up with a repentant laborer – after a lot of persuasions, Jonah was eventually doing what God had asked him to do.

Jonah 3:3 And Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the Word of Jehovah. And Nineveh was a very great city of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried and said, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!

- Jonah went right through the city, preaching a word of warning –
 - he went into their streets, into their shopping malls,
 - he went to their schools, he went to their rugby matches.
 - I can see Jonah buying a bus ticket going no where in order to get an opportunity to share the word with someone different.
 - I can see Jonah attending a high school soccer match in order to have access to parents, teachers and students.
 - I can see Jonah buying a ticket for an orchestra at the Opera House in order to have an opportunity to share the warning. In other words, Jonah pulled all the stops in order to reach as many people as possible.
- When Jonah went through the great city, with the word of the Lord, he gave the city an opportunity to present its mess before the mercy of God.
- The continuation of the mess around us is an indication of a lack of exposure to God’s mercy and not the lack of God’s mercy.
- The proclamation of the gospel gives every man an opportunity to encounter God’s mercy.
- No one can withstand the power of God’s word – every time you face an impossible situation, all you need to do is to present the word to it.
- The word of God is God’s power encapsulated – it is creative and alive.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

- The power of the word is astounding – when you truly get into the word, the word will truly get into you.
- When the word gets into you, it starts reading and exposing all the hidden mess that needs mercy to deal with.
- God is alive and active, so is his Word. Our hearts are laid bare before his Word, his Truth, and his understanding.
- When Nineveh was exposed to the active word of God, something profound happened.

Jonah 3: 5 And the people of Nineveh believed God. And they called a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

- No human being has the capacity to change another human being, but God’s word has the ability to change a person.
- The respond of Nineveh can only be attributed to the powerful word of God – a city that was known by heaven for its stubbornness, its debauchery and wickedness could not rebel against the word of Jehovah.
- The word of God is the only hope for the transformation of a wicked generation.
- The city went into mourning as it sought the mercies of God.
- The Ninevehites responded in line with the word – your mess can only be delt with when you choose to incorporate with the word of God.
- The great city of Nineveh had a choice to either respond appropriately or to collide with the wrath of the God heaven. Praise the Lord, the king and his people chose wisely.

Their response was in way a great appeal for God’s mercies to be shown to them - *9 Who knows? He may repent, and God may have pity and turn away from the glow of His anger, so that we do not perish.*

- The Bible says, He will not reject whoever comes to Him
- When God saw their brokenness, their remorse and Godly sorrow, the Lord responded in kind.

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Jonah 3: 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way. And God was compassionate over the evil that He had said to do to them, and He did not do it.

- What a beautiful outcome – saints, we serve a God of mercy and grace.
- God’s mercy will offend the self-righteous because it qualifies the messy to see God’s goodness.
- The messy Nineveh received God’s mercy and they received God’s goodness.
- The mercy of God is outrageous, it will touch the unlovable, the liars, the sexual immoral, the drunkards and the corrupt.
- The best you can do is to facilitate the mercy of God, for as many as possible to be beneficiaries of it.
- Don’t be that party pooper who stands in the way of mercy.

Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Jeremiah 3:12

Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “Return, faithless Israel,” declares the Lord. “I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the Lord;” “I will not be angry forever.”

Joel 2:13

And rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.