

## **Life Group Study Guide- April 29<sup>th</sup> – Jonah Chapter 3**

### ***“A Sackcloth and a Changed Life”***

***“Now the Word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time saying...”***

The second time. How many times has God had to come to you the second, third, and fourth time, before you said YES to Him? At one point or another we have all been Jonah. Why do you and I often require the God of the Universe to ask more than once? This is a question that I have wrestled with this past week.

Can you remember a time in your life when God had to ask you something more than once?

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### **Read Jonah Chapter 3**

We serve an amazing God. We serve a God who allows failure, continues to forgive, and still allows us opportunities to serve Him. This second chance for Jonah led to revival in Nineveh.

This is the question I want you to think about this week is-----What does it look like to have true revival in your life, your marriage, your family, and at Locust Hill Baptist Church? We are going to investigate three things: one **moment**, forward **movement**, and an authentic **message**.

### **One MOMENT**

It says in verse 3, ***“Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh.”*** Jonah accepted his assignment without hesitation this time around. There has to be one moment when you say YES to God's calling. One moment when you trade in your running shoes and agree to follow God's command. I have always loved shoes. I will gravitate toward the shoe aisle at just about any place I shop. I shared with the youth Wednesday night that the bottom of my closet is just in disarray from shoes of all color and type. Cowboy boots, tennis shoes, flip-flops, sandals, heels, and many more are scattered around. The type of shoe you wear dictates a lot about what you are going to do that day. You would not wear a pair of boots to run around the track, nor would you wear a pair of flip-flops to play in the snow. The shoes that you choose to wear each morning prepare you for the activities you are going to participate in. In that same regard, we have to “suit up” and prepare for the assignment God is calling us

too. There has to be **one moment** when you agree to follow through with the task God has for you to complete. A part of saying yes may mean that you need to prepare in a certain way for the assignment at hand.

### **Two Questions:**

- What is God calling you to do in April of 2018?
- Has there been a **moment** when you have said YES?

### **Forward MOVEMENT**

***Jonah 3: 3-4, "So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to The Word of The Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk..."***

I wonder what was going through Jonah's mind as he made his trek to Nineveh. He had survived living in the belly of that fish for three days and three nights. He was now going to preach God's Word to a group of folks that he was unsure of. On his day's walk he had to continue to move forward. Jonah had to place one foot in front of the other until he reached his final destination. This required laying aside any selfish desires or motives. He had to trust in the fact that God's message would bring the desired result. Jonah was at the end of self. I want you to think about that for a moment as it applies to your life. How many times do you use the word I in your sentences? I want, I think, I feel.....and the list could go on and on. I told the teenagers Wednesday night if their sentences have 4 or 5 "I's" in them then they need to evaluate their motives. The same applies to you.

You need to allow God to order your steps and propel you forward. Saying YES to God will always mean putting His Will first.

### **Authentic MESSAGE**

Jonah's message is one of the shortest I have ever heard. Verse 4 states, ***"...Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" Immediately following in verse 5 we see that, "The people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them."***

Jonah arrived in Nineveh, proclaimed what God told him to say, and revival occurred among the hearts of the people. I think there is a definite word here regarding an authentic message. I believe that this generation of teenagers and young adults are craving authenticity. So much of what we see now is fabricated. This ranges from social media sites to television to the internet. We have become a society accustomed to a lot of hype. God's Word does not need a lot of hype. It stands all on its own. God instructs Jonah to go and to

preach the message that "I tell you." (verse 2) That is all He says- no further instructions given. When Jonah steps foot in Nineveh he speaks eight words and the people believed God and began to repent by putting on sack cloths. Sackcloth and ashes were signs of mourning as well as of genuine, heart felt repentance.

- Where in your life do you need to apply the sackcloth?
- Is there something that is keeping you from drawing closer to The Lord?
- Is there an area where you need to repent and return to Him?

In the margin of my Experiencing God Study Bible states, *"It is one thing to say you're sorry; it is another thing to live out a life of repentance. The truest sign of genuine repentance is a changed life."*

**A changed life.** When others see you do they see a changed life?

When your co-workers, family members, and neighbors see you what do they see? If you never spoke a word to them and only ministered to them through what they witnessed you doing, would they be drawn to The Lord? Would they see you in His Word, would they hear you praying over those that are lost in your family and community, and would they witness you walk across the street to invite someone to come and worship with you this week?

Every week should be Easter. We should live as though we serve a Risen King on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday of each week.

Spend some time in closing today evaluating your attitude and your actions in regards to your current assignment. If you feel as though you do not have an assignment right now, then pray fervently, asking God to show you where He wants to use you.

It only takes one moment, forward movement, and the courage to proclaim an authentic message to see those around YOU come to know Him!