

HOURLY OF POWER

Prayer Guide – May 6, 2018

I want us to begin today with the last words from Stephen's message - Our Response to the Word of God: *"God, I will trust in your provision. In this time of attack or in this time of anger, I will trust in the same God who provided and provides everything I need in Christ Jesus. I will share your priority. Whether in good times or bad, I will work to make your name famous by showing and sharing the Love of God found in Christ Jesus."*

After last week's message on the God of Second Chances as we looked at Jonah 3, I completely agree with Stephen. I would never have included Jonah 4. What a sad and confusing ending to such a great turn around that happens between Jonah 2:10 and 3:10.

So let's begin with Jonah 4:1-3. This is such an interesting story. Jonah is just mad that someone is being shown grace. Ughhh....do we ever feel that way? Let's put this a little more into the story of our own lives. **Read Luke 15:11-31.** We sang 'Reckless Love' in church on April 29, and Andy told of how some were offended that God's name would be attached to the word 'reckless' in any way. But all of Luke 15 is about His undying love that seeks to save that which is lost. (Luke 19:10). **He leaves the ninety-nine sheep to go after the one lost.** The chapter goes on to describe the woman who searched and searched until she found her lost coin. And the third story is the son who left and squandered his inheritance, while his older brother faithfully served his father.

Take a long hard look at Luke 15:25-30. This is the part of the story where many of us in the church pew can find ourselves if we are not careful. We need to do an attitude check and see if we believe that *"we have worked hard for our grace!"* We deserve nothing!

So let's go back to Jonah. He saw a cruel nation that deserved NOTHING of God's grace. And he admits as much in 4:2. It reminds of me of a sermon back in the 80's when a missionary came to our church in Manning, SC and said that she was sick of hearing, "Bomb Qaddafi!". She admonished us to pray for him and his nation. And guess what! People didn't like that one bit! I'm not sure that we are so very different when we see the cruel work of terrorists. Our human nature wants to retaliate with what we believe others deserve. It can be very hard to pray for the grace of God to be poured out on them. So I want to include a prayer here from *31 Days of Praise*, by Ruth Myers that I believe fits this story beautifully.

ADORATION

"I worship you, Lord of Heaven and earth, the God who made the world and all things in it. I extol You for the immensity of Your love in sending Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Messiah, the Savior who died for us and for all people everywhere. I exalt You because Your plan embraces the whole world and all of time...not just the Middle East, which cradled the gospel, but also Europe and North America, Asia and Africa, the entire southern hemisphere and every tiny island on the globe. Thank You that Jesus, with His blood, purchased sons and daughters for You from every tribe and language and people and nation...and that You yearn for all people everywhere to repent; You have no desire that any person should spend eternity without you. What a high privilege that You have destined me to have a share, not only in Your love but also in Your glorious purposes, both near and far....that You have gifted me for a unique part in Your global search for people who will repent and believe and learn to live for Your glory. I celebrate my high calling of knowing You and making You known!"

That is such a powerful prayer that is straight from the Word of God. It is our praise and worship today!

CONFESSION

I am going to use a passage from 1 John 2:1-6 for our time of confession today.

"My little children, I write you these things so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know Him if we OBEY his commands. The man who says, "I know him", but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys (and treasures) His Word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did."

So meditate on those words for a while. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to any area where He has called you and for whatever reason, you have balked. Ask Him to show you if in your heart, you believe God's love and grace should be limited and not extended to someone or 'some-ones'!

THANKSGIVING

- Let's thank Him once again for including the messy parts of Scripture. This book is left dangling. It ends with Jonah angry enough to die. Thank the Lord for showing us how we too could end up if we will not allow God to be God and do exactly what He has willed to do.
- **Read Romans 8:1-11.** Thank Him today for the sacrifice of His Son so that the righteous requirements of the law could be met in Him for our benefit.
- **Read Romans 12:9-21.** God has laid out the path for us to be able to live at peace with others. He is so clear on the fact that we do not have to worry about making anyone pay who has wronged us.
- So thank Him that we do not have to sit under our own vines (**Jonah 4:5-9**). We don't have to pout when life does not look fair!

SUPPLICATION

- **Read Jonah 4:10-11.** Pray for all of the multitudes who have never heard the Gospel. They act like unbelievers.....because they are! Pray for the peace of the Gospel to be proclaimed to them.
- Ask God to reveal any bitterness in your own spirit that keeps you from sharing the Gospel.
- Ask Him to show you your own Ninevah.
- **Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21.** Ask Him today to make you His ambassador!