

Sermon Notes: Sept 24, 2023

Focus: Jonah

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The Book of Jonah is a mirror...for you to see yourself nursing a favorite grudge. *Those* people are too stupid, too fill-in-the-blank to deserve God's mercy. The whole book of Jonah is a satire of pettiness. Personally, I would like to think I am a Michelle Obama when-they-go-low-we-go-high kind of person. But I / we can become a little when-they-go-low-we-get-Jonahish kind of people.

Jonah is the worst prophet. He is petulant and hard hearted. The sailors in the story who threw him overboard were in stark contrast prayerful and humble. Jonah runs, sailors pray. Jonah spitefully preaches, kings and cows repent. God uses Jonah to save thousands. And yet, when God spared the great city, Jonah was mad, mad enough to die.

Do you have a person you despise so much it would rock your world to see them kind and thriving? That is getting "Jonahed." Jonah was so petty that he ran in the opposite direction of where God was pointing. Sailors had to throw Jonah off a boat, where he churned in a fish belly. Only after he was vomited out in the direction of his enemies did he follow God's lead.

Today I watch most SVRUSD school board meetings. There are red and blue Jonah's who consider their enemies subhuman. I will tell you a secret of which I am not proud. When I see a Gadsden Flag on a car or shirt, I get irrationally irritated. Paradoxically, this feeling helps me sympathize with someone who gets irrationally angry about a pride flag. "Othering" people feels righteous, especially when we feel hot about it.

Let us help each other humanize our own favorite, hated Ninevites. We do not have to create false equivalencies. Both sides are not the same nor do they necessarily share the same goals. However, we are much more effective without pettiness. With a clear mind, we can respond with clarity even if we patently disagree with someone.

Less mushy is better In the Episcopal Church we have long held - often inarticulate values. It is impossible to get an Episcopalian to describe what being an Episcopalian means. We will mumble something about Catholic-lite, King Henry's divorce, or we are a big tent; I often tell people we look Catholic but think Episcopalian. It is hard to express your life to others, but worth the effort. Let us be unapologetic for what we believe and why. One reason I continue being Episcopalian is because we are deeply uncomfortable with easy stereotypes. TEC is hardly perfect, but it has done an above average job not hating our Ninevites.

Be a little more comfortable with satire. At core Jonah is poking fun at those who think they are the chosen. It is a wonderful, satirical inversion where foul mouthed sailors, receptive kings, and fasting cows make Jonah look like a fool. Love God, love people, and polish your contempt-stained glasses clean.

Todd

Bible Project This link here is to the Jonah overview video <https://youtu.be/dLIabZcoO4c>

UNIQUE AMONG THE PROPHETS:

WORDS OF A PROPHET
 "Thus says the Lord"

STORY ABOUT A PROPHET

JONAH'S ONE OTHER APPEARANCE in the OLD TESTAMENT:

GOD'S FAVOR IS WITH YOU!

NO! GOD'S JUSTICE IS AGAINST YOU!

JONAH (2 KINGS 14:23-25)
JEROBOAM II (REALLY BAD KING)
AMOS (6:13-14)

PROPHET WHO REBELS

PAGAN SAILORS WHO REPENT

JONAH

THE SUBVERSIVE STORY OF A REBELLIOUS PROPHET WHO HATES GOD FOR LOVING HIS ENEMIES

DISTINCT NARRATIVE STYLE:

Satire

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES | HUMOR AND IRONY

POWERFUL KING WHO HUMBLING HIMSELF

EVEN COWS REPENT!

THIS BOOK IS TRYING TO MESS WITH YOU: ARE YOU OKAY WITH GOD LOVING YOUR ENEMIES?

AREN'T YOU GLAD GOD LOVES HIS ENEMIES?

1 JONAH AND THE SAILORS

GO TO NINEVEH AND PREACH AGAINST ITS EVIL... (1:2)

TARSHISH | NINEVEH

WHY DOES HE RUN...??

I WORSHIP THE BEASTS WHO MADE THE SEA AND THE LAND...

CALL YOUR GOD!

OH GAWD! DON'T LET ME BLEED ON OUR HANDS!

THIS SHOULD WORK.

2 JONAH'S 1ST PRAYER OF REPENTANCE (...SORT OF)

THIS MEANS CERTAIN DEATH!

NEVER TECHNICALLY REPENTS, BUT... THANKS GOD FOR NOT ABANDONING HIM AND... PROMISES TO OBEY FROM THIS POINT ON.

GOD'S DIVINE RESPONSE: BLECH!

3 JONAH AND THE NINEVITES

GO TO NINEVEH AND PREACH WHAT I TELL YOU. (3:2)

NINEVEH MORE NINEVEH

A SHORT, ODD SERMON
 no mention of:
 * NINEVEH'S SIN
 * HOW TO RESPOND
 * GOD!

NEVERTHELESS...

FORGIVE US, OH GOD!!!

FORTY MORE DAYS AND NINEVEH SHALL BE OVERTURNED!

IS THIS PROPHETIC SABOTAGE???

JONAH'S MEANING: "OVERTHROWN" "DESTROYED" (SEE GENESIS 19:21)

"OVERTURNED"

WHAT HAPPENED: "TRANSFORMED" "CHANGED" (SEE 1 SAMUEL 10:6)

4 JONAH'S 2ND PRAYER A CRITICISM OF GOD'S MERCY

HERE'S WHY HE RAN:

I KNEW YOU ARE COMPASSIONATE AND LOVE TO FORGIVE! (EXODUS 34:6)

JUST KILL ME NOW...

JONAH, IS YOUR ANGER JUSTIFIED? (4:4,9)

YES, JUST LET ME DIE...

AREN'T HUMANS MORE VALUABLE THAN VINCS?

SHOULDN'T I BE CONCERNED ABOUT NINEVEH, THAT GREAT CITY?

THE END.