



J O N A H

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Week 3
Jonah 3:1-10



Interruptions & Invitations

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TEXT SUMMARY

Jonah prophesies against the city of Nineveh. The people respond by initiating a fast and the king of Nineveh commands everyone, including the animals of the city, to repent. Every living creature fasts and covers themselves with sackcloth as a sign of your repentance and God relents of his plan to bring destruction and instead shows mercy.

MESSAGE SYNOPSIS

The interruption of our lives doesn't have to interfere with our practice of repentance and our call to worship and love others; the interruption of our lives can actually serve as an invitation into deeper and more faithful repentance, worship, and life.

FOR FURTHER STUDY/DISCUSSION

What do you think of Jonah's prophecy? Is he doing his best work here? Why, or why not? What is motivating Jonah? Have you ever acted this way? Why?

What elements of comedy do you find in this story? Is it funny to you? Why do you think this story has endured for so long? Why do you think Jonah 3-4 is often times overlooked in the retelling of Jonah, which often effectively ends after chapter 2?

On "Jonaic Interruptions"

"We call this strange, time stopping act the Jonaic Interruption. It is the interruption of business as usual by presenting oneself - one's actual physical presence - in vulnerability, to the other. This occurrence can be seen in that look in the eyes of the other which says: *what is she doing here? or what is he doing here? or what are they doing here?* It may be a look of shocked hostility, or perhaps curious surprise, or perhaps even unexpected delight. But it is more than just a marvelous happening in an ancient tale; it is a practice, and in later times, it would become a movement." - David Benjamin Blower

- Can you recognize aspects of Jesus' life and ministry that follow this pattern of "Jonaic Interruption"?
- What ways might we be called to "show up" and be present for others, even at great personal sacrifice?

On God's "Repentance"

"There is only one situation in which he (YHWH) can be depended on not to keep his word: if he has announced destruction because of sin and is given almost any good reason to change his mind, he will gladly do so. The best of such reasons is repentance on the part of the sinner, but another is intercession." - JN Oswalt

See: Joel 2:13-14; Jeremiah 18:7-8; Ezekiel 33:11, 14-15

- What does the concept of God's repentance mean to you? Is that an audacious claim? What might that mean for us today?
- How does God's unchanging nature of love and compassion inform our relationships? How might it translate into our families, culture, politics, schools, and businesses? How might it make a difference in how we experience the current interruption to our lives?