



Not THAT! | Not THERE: The Call to Unpleasant Places | Week 3 | November 18, 2018

Jonah 3; Nahum 3:1, 19; Matt 5: 13-14; Matt 28:19

Opening: Pastor Dan Meyer speaks this week on God's use of Jonah's response to his call to Nineveh. Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. (vs. 3)

Context: Last week we travelled with Jonah fleeing the Lord through a frightening storm, into the darkness of the belly of a fish and finally being vomited out of the fish onto dry land. Fear for his life, dark despair of separation from God and miraculous redemption provided a graphic image of God's call to Jonah.

Jonah's Obedience: The nature of Nineveh has not changed (Nahum 3:1,19). Yet Jonah now sees the futility of "fleeing the Lord". He "obeyed the word of the Lord" (vs. 3).

Imagine Jonah's state-of-mind as he begins to _____ly obey. What emotions do you think he is experiencing? What adverb would you use?

Jonah Begins: Pastor Meyer used the metaphor of a domino. How did Jonah start his "mission"? Was there a five-step plan with measurable outcomes to judge progress? Imagine confronting a hostile city with a message of destruction. What is the "spin" that's going to make it work? What are the "optics" of a Jewish prophet landing in town with such a message? *Read vs. 4. What did Jonah do? What do you imagine was the definition of success for Jonah as he begins his mission?*

God's Preparation: Pastor Meyer described the historical accounts of events that had prepared the Ninevites for a "new way". There was a discomfort in their soul. They were ready to "hear". *Imagine giving a message to a discomforted soul that unexpectedly brought change to their being. Does Jonah even see change as a possibility? What is Jonah proclaiming and believing as he begins in Nineveh?*

Jonah Endures: Nineveh was a large city and the size alone would require a three day effort just to get through the city. One man, a "three day" city and a message of destruction—how would he endure through this?

Imagine Jonah's mindset as he sets out to declare the Lord's destruction of this barbarous people. What was his hope? What could possibly give him joy in this work he was asked to do?

Our "What If's": Jonah was a prophet. God's call was graphic, miraculous and undeniable. But, like Jonah, we are also called. Read Matt 5:13-14. We can rationalize our responsibility of "salt" and "light" to the actions and attitudes that others see in us as we live our lives in faithfulness to Him. And these things are all true.



But **“What If”** God calls you to speak? To *THAT* group you know of but do not know? Have you felt a *CALL* to do that? What did you do? What happened?

“What if” God has been working, unknown to you, and “discomforted” the soul of someone in your sphere? God may be *CALLing* you to speak an answer to their discomfort. What can you look for or “listen” for? Can you imagine how God might let you know that He was calling you?

“What if” that unusual conversation you had six weeks ago is still germinating in your classmate’s or your co-worker’s soul? What if God is doing a work in them and you are the means by which He wants to bring it out? You are called to endurance, to bring it up again, to test the waters. Is there a conversation you need to revisit? Describe it to the group? How will you follow-up?

Beginning, God Preparing, Enduring to the End: Pastor Meyer expanded “CALL” beyond speaking a word to begin. He spoke of marriage, parenting, giving, ministry and quoted Nietzsche “a long obedience in the same direction”. Our calling can take many forms. How do you react to pursuing faithfulness rather than success? How is that different from the world you live in? Faithfulness over success would be a radical re-write of the “message” we live by in our culture. How would you do that?

Practice of the Week: Heeding (or avoiding) God’s Call

Day 20 of “Draw the Circle: the 40 day Prayer Challenge” Mark Batterson entitles “Go, Set, Ready”. He says “God doesn’t call the qualified, He qualifies the called”. Our culture filters everything through competence and success. We can self-disqualify ourselves out of God’s call by using these filters. Reflect on whether you have a call: noticing recurrent attention to a need or an effort for others that keeps coming up. How long have you noticed it? Have you imagined ways you could help? Or have you listened to the message “I can’t do that”?? Have you done anything to begin? God calls us only to begin and be faithful, he’ll do the rest.

Family Formation: Salt and Light

Revisit prayers..... Read Matt 5:13-14 (and more if you’d like). Salt keeps things from going bad and Light lets you see in dark places. Talk about behavior in terms of salt and light. Ask the kids for examples from their day. [extra credit] Now try to move behind behavior to emotions, attitudes and motivations—“Why did Johnny do that?” Can you link that to Salt and Light?

Additional Resources: “A Fish Out of Water” By Ravi Zacharias—a CD or DVD on Jonah

“Draw the Circle: the 40 day Prayer Challenge” By Mark Batterson

We’d love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

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