

## “Rinse and Repeat” – Jonah 3:1-3

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*[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, [www.sobc.net](http://www.sobc.net).]*

Welcome. Let's turn again to Jonah. We are going to get into chapter 3 but not cover a whole lot of ground. Today we will cover the first two and a half verses and then, next time, we will deal with the rest of the chapter. I want us to dive right back into the story, so we will pick up where we left off last time. Chapter 2, you'll recall, communicates the prayer of Jonah from within the fish. That prayer ends with an acknowledgement that "*Salvation belongs to the LORD.*" With that in mind, let's continue in the text, starting in Jonah 2:10. This is God's Word...

*"And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land. Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD." (Jonah 2:10-3:3a)*

Now, if you have been with us since the beginning of this series through Jonah, then you're probably feeling a sense of déjà vu. These verses should sound familiar. This commissioning scene should call to mind the opening scene of the book. Consequently, what I said in the first sermon of the series, regarding God's calling, would be good to keep in mind here as well. You'll recall from that sermon that one of the major points that I stressed was the fact that God's calling is often unexpected and unwelcome and, therefore, often goes unheeded.

In this case, the calling given to Jonah is again unexpected, but for entirely different reasons. If I was Jonah, there are at least two things that would have come as a complete shock to me. The first is that God delivered me, in spite of how deep I sank in rebellion. You would be hard-pressed to find anyone in all of Scripture who was as blatantly disobedient and defiant as Jonah. Yet when his life was on the brink of death, God rescued him. He sent a big fish to swallow him up before he died at sea. And instead of that fish being the end of Jonah, verse 10 says, "*And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.*" This is very vivid imagery. The Hebrew here could be translated, "And the Lord spoke to the fish and *bllllaaaahhh...*" Okay, so that is probably not the best translation. But this is a disgusting scene. There is prophet puke all along the shore. But imagine what this must have signified for Jonah. Though he deserved far worse than death, God has delivered him. What grace!

But there is another aspect of these verses that would have shocked me if I was Jonah. This time around, the content of the calling would not have surprised Jonah. He knows full well what it is that God wants to happen. But the fact that God still wants *him* to be a part of that work is incredible. Not only did God deliver him; God reinstates him.<sup>1</sup> He re-commissions him in these verses. Both of these developments—God's deliverance of Jonah and God's reinstatement of Jonah—are powerful testimonies of the grace of God in action. We'll come back to that thought in short order. But, first, let us consider how this commissioning scene compares to the one found at the beginning of the book. There are several similarities and some key differences.

To help us compare and contrast, here are those two scenes side-by-side:

**Jonah 1:1-3****Jonah 3:1-3**

<b>1:1</b> —“Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying...”	<b>3:1</b> —“Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying...”
<b>1:2</b> —“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.”	<b>3:2</b> —“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.”
<b>1:3</b> —“But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.”	<b>3:3</b> —“So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD.”

Clearly, both passages have a similar layout. In each, the word of the Lord comes to Jonah, he is told to go to Nineveh, and then there is an account of how Jonah responds. But each verse also has some differences. In 3:1, instead of a line about Jonah’s father, we find inserted a reminder that this is the “second time” the word of the Lord has come to Jonah. This gives off the impression that Jonah has been given a new beginning. A mulligan. A redo.

The phrase “the word of the LORD came...*again/a second time*” occurs four other times in the Old Testament (Jer. 1:13; 13:3; 33:1; Hag. 2:20), but it’s connotations here are unique. As Kevin Youngblood explains in his recent commentary,

“In these other cases, however, YHWH’s second word is an addendum to a previous revelation, a clarification, reassurance, or extension of an immediately preceding oracle. Only in Jonah does this terminology signify a second opportunity to render obedience to the divine command.”<sup>iii</sup>

When you compare 1:2 and 3:2 you’ll notice some differences as well. The differences don’t suggest that Jonah is given a different task. He’s not.<sup>iii</sup> But there are some differences nonetheless. In chapter 3, the description of Nineveh’s wickedness is omitted, though it is probably still assumed. In the Hebrew text, there is also a subtle shift in the preposition that follows the command to “call out.” You can’t tell that in the ESV, because it translates both prepositions “against,” as in “call out *against* it.” So far the ESV has done really well with the Hebrew text, better than most English translations I have seen, but I would prefer most of the other modern English translation on this matter. The shift in the preposition—from “against” (1:2) to “to” (3:2)—should be reflected in the text because it the “alteration changes the nuance of the command from ‘condemn [them]’ (1:2c) to ‘proclaim to them’ (3:2c).” It softens the language a bit and introduces a level of ambiguity into the text that will be important in the second half of chapter 3, as we will see next time. He has some interesting word plays coming later in the chapter.

Even though the language does sound less confrontational here, we will see that the message Jonah preaches is very confrontational. Therefore, I don’t think the difference in the language is indicating a difference in the message that Jonah is called to proclaim. Instead, I think the different tone is related to the difference God has made in Jonah’s life. I will come back to that next week as well, for now just notice the contrast.

The last major difference, and the most obvious one, is seen in the way Jonah responds. In the first chapter, he does exactly the opposite of what God told him to do. He runs from the calling of God and he intended to run, literally, to the end of the known world in the opposite direction. In chapter 3, by contrast, we read,

“Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD” (3:3). We can all breathe a collective sigh of relief. *Finally!* At last, he is behaving “according to the word of the LORD.”<sup>iv</sup>

The huge debate here is whether or not Jonah has really repented at this point in the story. If all we had were these verses here, I think everyone would agree that he had. Unfortunately, we have in chapter 4 another depressing depiction of a defiant and angry Jonah. So some have been cynical of Jonah here in chapter 3.

Is what we just read merely compliance or is it true repentance? Is this just outward obedience, with a heart that is fundamentally unchanged? Or is this genuine repentance, with a relapse into sin in chapter 4? All good questions. Unfortunately, the narrator does not answer them for us here and we won't either. We will, however, re-raise the matter in a couple of weeks, when we get into chapter 4. For what it is worth, I tend to be less cynical with Jonah's motivation. If the confirmation of true repentance is perfection, never again sinning in the same way, then who among us has ever truly repented even once? I don't think repentance equals perfection and so I don't think the scene in chapter 4 necessarily rules out some measure of genuine repentance here in chapter 3. As the Puritans used to say, “Even the tears of repentance must be washed in the blood of the Lamb.”<sup>v</sup> In any case, we will come back to those discussions in a later sermon.

Today, I simply want us to pick up on three amazing things we can learn about God from the first three verses of chapter 3. I tell you often, the most important question you can ask of any text is “what does the text teach us about God?” Well, if we apply that question here, the answers are incredible. Here is what I mean. First up...

### **GOD IS FULLY COMMITTED TO HIS MISSION**

That may be the loudest theological lesson in the book and we have seen it before. A couple of weeks ago, the sermon in a sentence was: “The Lord is a missionary God regardless of how committed His servants are to that mission.” That same lesson is being reiterated in these verses.

Let me talk to the Christians here first. God is absolutely committed to accomplishing His mission in the world and, therefore, there is nothing that can thwart what He ultimately wills to accomplish in the end. Not even a stubborn prophet. God's commitment to His mission is what gets the ball rolling in the story in the first place. God wanted to be known in Nineveh and so He sends a prophet to make Him known. Likewise, God wants to be known in the nations, so He has commissioned His people to go to the nations. That's the mission. God is committed to it. That explains why God is a sending God.

On some level, if you are part of God's people, He will send you—across the world or across the cul-de-sac. *Where* He sends us is His prerogative. But He will put each Christian on a trajectory with people who need to know Him and need to hear about what He has accomplished through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. If you're a Christian, your world should be about proclaiming that to whomever God sends you to. That doesn't mean necessarily that you quit your job and apply at the IMB. It does mean that you start viewing your job, your home, your neighborhood, the places that you frequent, as mission fields that God has sent you to. Every one of us is either a mission field or a missionary.<sup>vi</sup> You either need to hear and believe the Gospel for the first time or you are one God has commissioned to proclaim the Gospel to other people. This happens in the real world, in ordinary life. Tim Chester defined evangelism as “doing life with Gospel intentionality.”<sup>vii</sup> That's a major part of what seeking first the kingdom looks like.

The point I'm stressing here is that God is committed to His mission and He wants us to be too! That's the reason He sends us. Like I tell you all the time, if you are a Christian, the Gospel came to you because it was heading to someone else. God is sending you to that person, to those people. I once heard a preacher describe God as a “spiritual tornado.” He doesn't suck you in, without also hurling you out.<sup>viii</sup> God is a

sending God because He is a missionary God. And when God invites us to participate in that mission, the only appropriate response is joyful obedience. We have to ask ourselves, how committed are we to God's agenda? Of course, we fall short. All of us, starting with me. But we should be seeking and praying for a deeper commitment to missions, one that increasingly reflects the Lord's own commitment.

## **GOD IS KNOWN FOR GIVING SECOND CHANCES**

This has got to be one of the most famous examples in all of Scripture of God giving a second chance to someone. Generally speaking, the prophets of the Old Testament do a pretty good job at obeying the Lord's command and Jonah is unique in this regard in receiving a second chance.<sup>ix</sup> That said, throughout Scripture and in our own experiences, "God's people often receive second, third, and even seventy-seventh chances when they repent and call upon the Lord."<sup>x</sup> We could look at dozens of instances, but in the New Testament there is one example that I believe is meant to call to mind Jonah. That example is taken from the life of Peter.

In Matthew 16:17, Jesus refers to Peter as "Simon, son of Jonah." We know from the Gospel of John, that Peter's father was named "John" (John 1:42; 21:15-17), so some have speculated that when Jesus calls Peter the "son of Jonah" he was using an abbreviated form of the name "John." That's almost certainly wrong.<sup>xi</sup> The more likely view (and the one that has more scholarly support) is that Jesus has created a pun, which plays on the sound of Peter's father but calls to mind the rebel prophet we are concerned with. While many agree with this position, there are competing theories as to what connection Jesus was trying to make between Jonah and Peter.

One possible parallel is that Peter, in Acts 10, was the first apostle to cross the Jew/Gentile border with the Gospel. If you recall, in that passage Peter displays a Jonah-like reluctance and resistance to fulfill a calling that took him into the land of those ceremonially unclean Gentiles, where they participated in ceremonially unclean practices and eating habits. In fact, it took a miraculous intervention from God, in the form of a vision, to change Peter's mind and get him to comply. And do you remember where Peter is given that vision? He was on the roof of Simon the tanner's house in a city called...wait for it...Joppa (Acts 10:5-6). "At the very port where Jonah fled the commission to go to Nineveh, Peter receives the commission to open the door of the church to the Gentiles." And in this way, "Jonah and Peter both share the distinction of breaking new ground in God's saving work."<sup>xii</sup>

Peter sure did come a long way since his initial days of following Jesus. Those days were not so pretty. In fact, they remind me of another connection between Peter and Jonah. Peter would also flee from his calling initially, before turning back and fulfilling it. In the same chapter (!) where Jesus calls Peter the "son of Jonah," we read of Peter rebuking Jesus for predicting his death (Matt. 16:22). We know that Peter refuses later to follow Jesus to the cross and instead denies even knowing Jesus on three occasions. But we also know of Jesus' tender restoration of Peter (see John 21:15-19). Jesus restores him and reinstates him. So clearly, both Jonah and Peter, could testify that God is a God of second chances.

Having said all that, I am not saying that God owes us a second chance. He does not. He is not under any obligation to give us *any* chance, let alone a second or third or whatever number we are on these days. He doesn't owe you any chance. And He doesn't owe you as many chances as He gives to another. If God owes no one, then any chance He gives us is completely undeserved and He is not unjust for giving more chances to some than others.

The fact of the matter is that any second chance is an act of His grace. He doesn't owe you that. Yet He has given you one, even today. He has given you sufficient opportunities to respond appropriately to Jesus, to turn from your sin and trust in His work on the cross and in the resurrection as the only basis for your salvation from sin. He's given you that chance to respond to Jesus in faith. He has given you sufficient

opportunities, but we all get only a limited number of opportunities. When is the last opportunity you will have? Don't you dare presume that you know! Charles Bridges writes, "There is a knock which will be the last knock and then to have [God's] countenance not turned from us but turned against us. His eternal frown, instead of his smile."

The fact that He offers you a chance today to repent and receive forgiveness through Christ and salvation as a free gift because of what Christ has done is further evidence that He has been gracious to you. You cannot take for granted that there will be more chances tomorrow. Sooner or later one of those second chances will be your last chance. You are not guaranteed tomorrow the chance you have today. There are plenty of examples in Scripture of God not giving a second chance. Have you heard of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)? Or Lot's wife (Gen. 19)? Or King Saul (1 Sam. 15:22-23)? Do not presume upon additional chances from God to repent and turn to Christ. Today is the day to turn to God fully.

And yet, one of the most amazing things that we see in Scripture is this incredible reputation God has for giving second chances as an extension of his grace. And what we are seeing here in the book of Jonah is another voice in that beautiful chorus. Jonah's life sings to us "Amazing Grace" in a way no hymn ever could. The book of Jonah is about just how scandalous God's grace is and we are seeing it again in these verses.

One of the points I stressed last week is that biblical grace is a completely *undeserved* gift from a completely *unobligated* giver. It's getting something you don't deserve from someone who doesn't owe you. That's true. But it is even more beautiful than that.

You see, time after time in Scripture our salvation is summed up with words like grace. So if our salvation is in fact grace and grace is in fact unmerited favor, then what does that imply about our salvation? It's unmerited. It's something we didn't deserve. God owes us nothing but death and judgment, if we are saved then it must be all of grace. If you are a Christian, you understand this. God owes you nothing. Therefore everything you have, including your salvation, is by God's grace alone. It's unmerited favor.

But, friends, grace is more than unmerited favor from an unobligated giver. If we stop there then we miss something beautiful. We think of ourselves like homeless beggars who ask for money and God comes along and gives us a check. There may be some value to that analogy, but it doesn't go far enough. Biblical grace is not simply giving favor to someone you owe nothing; biblical grace is showing favor to someone you owe the opposite. You don't owe the homeless guy money and giving him it would truly be gracious, a kind and unmerited gesture. But biblical grace would be more akin to the homeless guy terrorizing your life in the worst possible ways and then you coming to him supplying all of his needs. Do you see the difference? Both scenarios involve unmerited favor and an unobligated giver. But the second one is truly shocking. It's counterintuitive. And biblical grace is *always* shocking and counterintuitive. That's what John Newton was saying when he wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace." God's grace "saved a wretch like me."<sup>xiii</sup>

There are some illustrations that every pastor uses at some point. When it comes to the topic of grace, every preacher, at some point, talks about *Les Misérables* (or for the really learned among us, "Less Miserables" and for you hipsters, "Les Mis"). It's like a rite of passage for preachers to use a certain illustration from that story. Have you seen the movie or the Broadway show? Do you remember the beginning? There is this scene where the main character, an ex-convict named Jean Valjean, enters into a bishop Myriel's home. Remember that scene? A little context may help.

Jean Valjean had just finished serving 19 years in prison (5 years for stealing bread for his starving sister and her family and 14 additional years for numerous escape attempts). Those years have made him a very jaded man as you can imagine. When he is released from prison, he seeks shelter, but no innkeeper will

have him because his passport indicates he is a former convict. The only one who gives him refuge is bishop Myriel.

At night Valjean steals some of the bishop's valuables and takes flight. The police catch him with the goods and they bring him back to the bishop's house and throw him down at the bishop's feet. They then explain that they found Valjean with the stolen goods (this is a really tense scene). But to everyone's surprise Myriel conveys to the police that they are mistaken about Valjean's theft. Then he looks at Valjean and says, "I am glad to see you. Well, but how is this? I gave you the candlesticks too, which are of silver like the rest, and for which you can certainly get two hundred francs. Why did you not carry them away with your forks and spoons?"

That's my favorite scene in the story. But for a long time it troubled me because, even though the act of the bishop was touching and generous, he still lied, right? But then I heard one preacher use the scene as an illustration in a way that made me reconsider this point and demonstrated that the scene is an even better example of biblical grace than I (and every other preacher I had previously heard) realized. He said, it wasn't a lie...

"Because the bishop, when he took this ex-convict in, he knew what this man was capable of. He knew what was in the man's heart, and when he took the guy in he put everything at risk, so in a sense he gave it all away. Real grace is shocking. The bishop, by bringing the man in, opened himself, made himself vulnerable, made himself weak, and allowed himself to be plundered. The fact is it wasn't a lie. By even the act of taking in the ex-convict, the bishop had actually been saying, 'I know what you're capable of, and it's all right. I'm going to serve you even if you do that.' He had given it all away."<sup>xiv</sup>

In fact, Victor Hugo (the author) puts a line in the bishop's mouth that has stuck with me since I read it. "Do not ask the name of the person who seeks a bed for the night. He who is reluctant to give his name is the one who most needs shelter."<sup>xv</sup> You see, the Bishop knew what Valjean might do and he welcomed Him in just the same. So when Valjean is brought before him, and he gives him even more valuable goods, he is showing an *amazing* grace. It's counterintuitive. It's shocking. Myriel didn't just give Valjean favor that he didn't merit; he gave him favor when Valjean was owed the opposite (e.g., judgment, litigation, punishment, retaliation). In that way, the scene reminds me of biblical grace. The kind of grace God has shown a wretch like me (and that is no hyperbole).

But biblical grace is not just shocking. It's also threatening. Victor Hugo writes this wonderful line about Valjean after this encounter, which you have only encountered if you have read the book because I don't think it's in any of the movies or live performances. The author says of Valjean, "He could not have told whether he was touched or humiliated."<sup>xvi</sup> If you are a Christian, meaning you have consciously experienced the grace of God, you can relate to that sentiment. When you realize your guilt and the goodness God has lavished on you in Christ, you have these moments where you don't know if you should be crying in joy or sorrow. You feel both. You feel touched and humiliated, just like Valjean did when he experienced grace from bishop Myriel.

Later in the same chapter Valjean's thoughts are further narrated:

"In opposition to this celestial tenderness, he summoned up pride, the fortress of evil in man. *He dimly felt that this priest's pardon was the hardest assault, the most formidable attack he had ever sustained*; that his hardness of heart would be complete, if it resisted this kindness; that if he yielded he would have to renounce the hatred with which the acts of other men had for so many years filled his soul, and in which he found satisfaction; that, this time, he must conquer or be conquered, and that the struggle, a gigantic and decisive struggle, had begun between his own wrongs and the

goodness of this man.”<sup>xvii</sup>

I know this struggle. You know this struggle if you are a Christian. In the face of God’s incredible grace to you, you are not merely shocked by it, you are threatened. Why? Because you know you deserved the opposite of His favor. You know you could never repay His favor. By accepting it, you lose your sovereignty. You lose control and that is scary. You are not your own anymore because you could never repay the grace that He has shown you and so you owe your life now to this gracious God. In fact, that is what Myriel says to Valjean, “You have promised me to become an honest man. I buy your soul. I take it away from the spirit of perversity; I give it to the good God.”<sup>xviii</sup> Here’s how the pastor I mentioned earlier put it: “The grace of God when it comes in will either turn you into a harder person than ever or break your heart into eternal softness.”<sup>xix</sup> Which direction is your heart trending in this moment?

When you begin to understand biblical grace, salvation from God, it is the most practical thing in the world. Listen to Titus 2:11-14.

*For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. <sup>12</sup> It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Did you hear that? What teaches us to live godly lives? Or to be self-controlled? Or to resist temptation? Do we say to ourselves, “well, if I do this I might get caught” or “I’ll feel guilty about it later” or “this will damage my self-esteem or reputation”? Those things may be true, but they don’t make you self-controlled and godly. Trust me, they don’t. What does? According to Paul, the grace of God. It’s the kindness of God that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). Think about the cross of Christ and what he has done to save you and what that salvation entail and let that argue with you in your temptations. Let the grace of God argue you into those godly characteristics described in Titus. Because it is the grace of God that “teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live” the lives God wants us to live. You see how practical this stuff is?

And this is why, friends, our salvation can be summed up with words like “gospel.” Not just “grace,” but “gospel.” As I tell you all the time, the word “gospel” means “good news.” What is the good news? We need to be saved. God loved us enough to send Christ Jesus to die for our sins (meaning He took the penalty for our sins) in our place. God raised Him from the dead to make us right with God. And to anyone who would believe, turning from his or her sins and turning to Christ to save them, salvation has been bestowed. That salvation is entirely grace. And by now you should see it is good news. It’s good news that someone proclaimed to you about what God has done that made your salvation possible. It’s more than that. But that is at the heart of why it is good news for us.

Therefore, the offer of salvation God gives to us is the most amazing act of His grace. It’s unmerited. It’s from a God who is unobligated. It’s precisely the opposite of what we deserved because what we deserved was laid on Christ. The price we deserved to pay for our sin and rebellion was paid in full by Christ when he died on the cross. It’s shocking. It’s threatening. It’s the best thing you could ever experience. It is all of these things at once. And there is nothing that you have ever done that is more powerful than the grace of God in Christ. Nothing. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

God has put before you another opportunity—a second chance perhaps—to turn to Christ and find forgiveness and restoration and eternal life with God. You have the opportunity to receive that by turning from your sin and self, and trusting in Christ alone to save you. God never turns away one who turns to Him in faith. You won’t be the first. So turn to Him. Trust Him. You have a chance today. It could be the

last one, I don't know. But if you feel like God is drawing you to Christ, don't resist it. You can leave this place fully forgiven and made into a new person today. In a moment, I'll invite you to come sit on one of these front pews if you believe God is calling you to this salvation today.

For the rest of us, if you have experienced that salvation, that second chance, that restoration, that grace, God didn't show you such favor so you could live life without regard to him. You were saved for a reason. Paul has said, "*It is by grace that you have been saved through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works so that no one can boast. But you are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for you to do*" (Ephesians 2:8-10). So God didn't save you as an end in itself. Jonah's deliverance must have signified to him that God was not done with Him yet. God is not done with you yet either. You have been brought into the family of God and called to be about what He is about. If He is committed to His mission, you should be too.

In what ways can you be a missionary this week, I wonder? Keep it simple. Who do you know that needs to know Jesus? Why not tell them this week about what Christ has done and what He can do for them. That's how you don't waste your life and the new life that God has given you. Refuse to keep your mouth shut about the amazing grace that God has shown you.

Next week, we are going to show you at least a few other truths I see in this chapter. Here is a sample to whet the appetite.

## **GOD HOLDS NO GRUDGE AGAINST THOSE WHO TURN TO HIM**

## **GOD CARES ABOUT THE CALLED AS MUCH AS THE CALLING**

## **GOD RESPONDS TO EVEN SMALL STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION**

Let's pray....

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<sup>i</sup> Hugh Martin writes: "It would have been a very conspicuous instance of gracious condescension and forgiving love, had the Lord simply forgiven the penitent prophet his great sin in disobeying the heavenly command and fleeing from the presence of the Lord... In bringing His erring servant to repentance, and reinstating him in favour, He reinstates him in office also; sealing to him the assurance of his own personal forgiveness by the restoration of his holy calling." Hugh Martin, *A Commentary on Jonah* (1870; repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958), 226–27; Similarly, Richard Phillips writes: "It is to the glory of God's grace that our salvation progresses beyond forgiveness to full restoration." Richard Phillips, *Jonah and Micah* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), 94-95.

<sup>ii</sup> Kevin J. Youngblood, *Jonah: Hearing the Message of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 125.

<sup>iii</sup> I agree with James Limburg (*Jonah: A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993], 75) and Youngblood (125) that the modifier translated "again" or "a second time" suggests a repetition of the original commission, especially given the nearly identical wording. For an alternative explanation, though less likely in my estimation, see Jack M. Sasson, *Jonah: A New Translation and Commentary* (AB 24B; New York: Doubleday, 1990), 225-226; Phyllis Tribble, "The Book of Jonah" (in NIB; Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 7:511.

<sup>iv</sup> Richard Phillips has said well: "One feature of Jonah's obedience to the Lord should be especially noted by everyone called to teach and preach God's Word. Jonah 3:3 tells us that 'Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.' In other words, his obedience was defined by his faithfulness to the command of God's Word. The message Jonah spoke in Nineveh was the very message God had given him to speak. So it must be with



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all who proclaim God’s message. The preacher is not invited to invent his own sermon, much less to tailor his preaching to tickling the fancies of his hearers. Peter Williams writes: ‘It is the preacher’s task and privilege to declare, as clearly and as powerfully as God will enable him, the truth revealed in the Bible.’ The faithful servant of God, writes J. I. Packer, must ‘take care to make clear that what he offers is not his own ideas, but God’s message from God’s book ... to let the text talk through him.’ As the apostle John noted: ‘He whom God has sent utters the words of God’ (John 3:34)” Phillips, 98-99. The sources he cites can be located in Peter Williams, *Jonah—Running from God: An Expositional Commentary Exploring the Bible* (Epsom, Surrey, UK: Day One, 2003), 74; J. I. Packer, in Samuel T. Logan Jr., ed., *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986), 8.

<sup>v</sup> J. D. Greear, *Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart: How to Know for Sure You Are Saved* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 72-73. His discussion in chapter 5 on “What Is Repentance?” is very helpful.

<sup>vi</sup> J. D. Greear, *Jesus Continued: Why the Spirit Inside You Is Better than Jesus Beside You* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 54.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>viii</sup> I first heard this in a Timothy Keller sermon, titled, “The Secret Siege of Nineveh,” which he preached on August 26, 1990 to Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City.

<sup>ix</sup> See Youngblood, 125; Philip Peter Jenson, *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: A Theological Commentary* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 70; Rosemary Nixon, *The Message of Jonah* (BST; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 156.

<sup>x</sup> Phillips, 94.

<sup>xi</sup> For a convincing explanation of why this is wrong, I’d refer you to Robert H. Gundy, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution* (2 ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 332-333. For the contrasting position, see R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 620. These positions are also cited in Youngblood, 127.

<sup>xii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xiii</sup> This point is also made by Timothy Keller in a sermon called “Basics,” which was preached to Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City on October 3, 1993.

<sup>xiv</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xv</sup> Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, Volume 1, Book 1, Chapter 6 (1862).

<sup>xvi</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume 1, Book 2, Chapter 13. The whole paragraph is relatable for Christians. “Jean Valjean left the town as though he were fleeing from it. He set out at a very hasty pace through the fields, taking whatever roads and paths presented themselves to him, without perceiving that he was incessantly retracing his steps. He wandered thus the whole morning, without having eaten anything and without feeling hungry. He was the prey of a throng of novel sensations. He was conscious of a sort of rage; he did not know against whom it was directed. He could not have told whether he was touched or humiliated. There came over him at moments a strange emotion which he resisted and to which he opposed the hardness acquired during the last twenty years of his life. This state of mind fatigued him. He perceived with dismay that the sort of frightful calm which the injustice of his misfortune had conferred upon him was giving way within him. He asked himself what would replace this. At times he would have actually preferred to be in prison with the gendarmes, and that things should not have happened in this way; it would have agitated him less.”

<sup>xvii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xviii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xix</sup> Keller, “Basics.”