



Word Notes: Sunday 18/03/18

Helen Parker: Spot the difference: Jonah – 3, “It’s not fair”

Topic Text: Jonah chapters 3 and 4

Jonah did go to Nineveh (eventually) and the people repented, God spared them. Jonah was angry about that, Jonah really wanted to see Nineveh destroyed and could justify to himself why that was the right attitude:

- First, Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria, a ruthless and warlike people who were enemies of Israel. Nineveh’s destruction would have been seen as a victory for Israel. When God sent Jonah to deliver his warning of coming judgment to Nineveh, Jonah was perhaps convinced that the time for the destruction these enemies of Israel had come. At the time of Jonah, scholars believe that the Ninevites were the arch-enemies of Israel. They were famed for extreme cruelty including the torture and skinning of their enemies alive
- Second, Jonah probably wanted to see Nineveh’s downfall to satisfy his own sense of justice. After all, Nineveh deserved God’s judgment.
- Third, God’s withholding of judgment from Nineveh could have made Jonah’s words appear illegitimate, since he had predicted the city’s destruction.

But God showed compassion and the story of Jonah is a demonstration of this and the fact that we should praise God for his goodness.

- God is a merciful God
- God cares for people of every nation
- God is concerned for the children

Discussion

Discuss the different lessons that God was teaching Jonah throughout the story, does he learn any of the lessons?

Can you draw any parallels between the lessons that Jonah needed to learn and those that we need to learn?

What personal challenges can you take from the story of Jonah? Share these with the group and commit to be accountable to one another as you step out in confidence into new things

- Are we a Ninevite? Not thinking that God is interested in us or able to forgive us
- Is God calling us to our Nineveh and we want to run away and hide
- Do we have a bad attitude about Gods forgiveness of others
- Do we need to step out of our comfort zone?