

HEROES: OUR PERFECT PEACE THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction: Jonah's (a.k.a. "dove") story is an anomaly on many levels. He should be a prophet speaking and spreading the good news of God to Israel and her neighbors. But, he would rather not speak for God. Jonah is called to point others to God's faithfulness, compassion, and mercy. But, he would rather be unfaithful, indifferent, and merciless.

1. The Incongruity in Jonah's Being and Ours

- C.S. Lewis rings the bell when he says that "A person can't always be defending the truth; there must be time to feed on it" (*Reflections on the Psalms*, p. 7)

Jonah 2:9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!"

Jonah 4:1-2a But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. ² And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; ...

James 3:9 With it we **bless** our Lord and Father, and with it we **curse** people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come **blessing** and **curse**. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. See also *Psalms 62:4*.

Matt 18:26, 28 ... *Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.* ²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'

- No person has a right to lead such a life of contemplation as to forget in his own ease the service due to his neighbor; nor has any person a right to be so immersed in active life as to neglect the contemplation of God. (St. Augustine, "Of the Dress and Habits of the Christian" in *The City of God*)

2. The Remedy for Incongruity in Us: Christ's Peace/Shalom

Jonah 4:2b-4 ... for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. ³ Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

1 Peter 2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." See also *Matt 6:12*.

- Mistakenly many of us presume that forgiven should erase our bitter pasts. "Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future." (Lewis Smedes, *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve*)
- "To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." (Lewis Smedes)
- Come then from above, its hardness remove,
And vanquish my heart with the sense of Thy love;
Thy love on the tree display unto me.
And the servant of sin in a moment is free.
("O Jesus, My Hope." C. Wesley)

To integrate this message with your daily reflection and action:

- Pray explicitly, boldly, and faithfully each day about a particular impediment—resentment, unforgiveness, or other moral defect—to following Jesus. Admit you are helpless and need the Lord's powerful help. Express exactly how you feel about it to God, knowing that because of the Spirit of Christ, He fully understands and will act accordingly. Look to see how your prayers were answered.

- If you struggle with continuing resentment and unforgiveness, I would recommend reading either of Lewis Smedes' books: *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve* or *The Art of Forgiveness: When You Need to Forgive and You Don't Know How*. Forgiving is a journey; the deeper the wound, the longer the journey.

To become more open and responsive toward Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Practice these modified 12 steps to recovery:

- 1- admit powerlessness over resentment, unforgiving attitude, other moral defects, or repeated harmful behaviors;
- 2- come to believe that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit can restore you to sanity;
- 3- make a decision to turn your will and your life over to the care of a loving God;
- 4- make a searching and fearless moral inventory of yourself;
- 5- admit to God, yourself, and to another human being the exact nature of your wrongs;
- 6- become entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character;
- 7- humbly ask God to remove your shortcomings;
- 8- made a list of persons that you had harmed, and become willing to make amends to them all;
- 9- made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others;
- 10- continue to take personal inventory and when you are wrong promptly admit it;
- 11- seek through prayer and meditation to improve your conscious contact with the God, praying only for knowledge of His will for you and the power to carry that out;
- 12- having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, seek to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all your affairs

HEROES: OUR PERFECT PEACE THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction: Jonah's (a.k.a. "dove") story is an anomaly on many levels. He should be a prophet speaking and spreading the good news of God to Israel and her neighbors. But, he would rather not speak for God. Jonah is called to point others to God's faithfulness, compassion, and mercy. But, he would rather be unfaithful, indifferent, and merciless.

1. The Incongruity in Jonah's Being and Ours

- C.S. Lewis rings the bell when he says that "A person can't always be defending the truth; there must be time to feed on it" (*Reflections on the Psalms*, p. 7)

Jonah 2:9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!"

Jonah 4:1-2a But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. ² And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; ...

James 3:9 With it we **ble**ss our Lord and Father, and with it we **cur**se people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come **bl**essing and **cur**sing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. See also *Psalms 62:4*.

Matt 18:26, 28 ... *Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.* ²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'

- No person has a right to lead such a life of contemplation as to forget in his own ease the service due to his neighbor; nor has any person a right to be so immersed in active life as to neglect the contemplation of God. (St. Augustine, "Of the Dress and Habits of the Christian" in *The City of God*)

2. The Remedy for Incongruity in Us: Christ's Peace/Shalom

Jonah 4:2b-4 ... for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. ³ Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

1 Peter 2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." See also *Matt 6:12*.

- Mistakenly many of us presume that forgiven should erase our bitter pasts. "Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future." (Lewis Smedes, *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve*)
- "To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." (Lewis Smedes)
- Come then from above, its hardness remove,
And vanquish my heart with the sense of Thy love;
Thy love on the tree display unto me.
And the servant of sin in a moment is free.
("O Jesus, My Hope." C. Wesley)

To integrate this message with your daily reflection and action:

- Pray explicitly, boldly, and faithfully each day about a particular impediment—resentment, unforgiveness, or other moral defect—to following Jesus. Admit you are helpless and need the Lord's powerful help. Express exactly how you feel about it to God, knowing that because of the Spirit of Christ, He fully understands and will act accordingly. Look to see how your prayers were answered.

- If you struggle with continuing resentment and unforgiveness, I would recommend reading either of Lewis Smedes' books: *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve* or *The Art of Forgiveness: When You Need to Forgive and You Don't Know How*. Forgiving is a journey; the deeper the wound, the longer the journey.

To become more open and responsive toward Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Practice these modified 12 steps to recovery:

- 1- admit powerlessness over resentment, unforgiving attitude, other moral defects, or repeated harmful behaviors;
- 2- come to believe that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit can restore you to sanity;
- 3- make a decision to turn your will and your life over to the care of a loving God;
- 4- make a searching and fearless moral inventory of yourself;
- 5- admit to God, yourself, and to another human being the exact nature of your wrongs;
- 6- become entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character;
- 7- humbly ask God to remove your shortcomings;
- 8- made a list of persons that you had harmed, and become willing to make amends to them all;
- 9- made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others;
- 10- continue to take personal inventory and when you are wrong promptly admit it;
- 11- seek through prayer and meditation to improve your conscious contact with the God, praying only for knowledge of His will for you and the power to carry that out;
- 12- having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, seek to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all your affairs