



Rebel Without a Clue: “You Get Another Chance”
The Sermon Study Guide
Jonah 3:1-10
January 31, 2010

Opening Scripture

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21

Opening Prayer

Leader **The Lord be with you.**
People **And also with you.**
Leader **Let us pray.**

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (Collect from The Book of Common Prayer, p. 230)

Remembering the Message (Read Jonah 3:1-10)

1. Review Jonah 1-2. Compare God’s words to Jonah in 1:1-2 and 3:1-2 – what is the essence of God’s command to Jonah? Write the words of Jonah’s response in 1:3a and 3:3a. What prompted Jonah’s response of obedience?
2. What was the message Jonah preached to the city of Nineveh? What was the response of the people of Nineveh? What do we learn of God’s character from Jonah 3?

Reflection #1: “A Second Time”

Fr. David pointed us to this truth of God’s character: God is a God of second chances. God comes to us, a second time, and a third....We have the opportunity to begin...and to begin again. In Christ the past is in the past and we can have hope for a new future. The story of God and humanity throughout scripture points to this hope. The one thing you don’t see in God’s relationship with humanity is a heavy guilt trip that can never be shaken. Consider the stories of these men and women of scripture. King David who had committed adultery and had Bathsheba’s husband murdered. Paul who put followers of Jesus in prison and approved the death of Stephen by stoning. Peter who denied Christ three times. The woman at the well.

The woman caught in adultery. What you won't find in them is guilt. Every one of them experienced freedom!

Fr. David spoke of guilt as one of the best indicators of one's spiritual life with Christ. Yes, there will be sorrow, regret, and sadness over sin. But I John 1:9 reminds us of another truth of God: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." If there are places where you are plagued by guilt; worried about it; feeling guilty – that is where the Gospel of God needs to go.

- Guilt focuses on you; Gospel focuses on God.
- Guilt puts you at the center; Gospel puts God at the center.
- Guilt tells you what you must do; Gospel tells you what God has done.
- Guilt is bondage; Gospel is freedom.

Martin Luther said, "When the devil reminds me of my guilt, I remind him of his future." Satan is the Adversary, the Accuser. Whose voice are you listening to? To whom do you belong?

Going Deeper

1. Check your spiritual "dashboard." Are there any areas of unconfessed sin in your life? If so, take a few minutes to bring those things before the Lord.
2. Take another look at the Guilt vs. Gospel chart above. What are the ways in which we add to the heavy chains of guilt in our lives? In the lives of others? What can set us free from the bondage of guilt?
3. How have you experienced the joy of God as the God of Second Chances?
4. Do you know someone who lives in bondage to guilt? Drawing on scripture and your story with the God of Second Chances, write out some words you can share to bring them hope and a future free from guilt.

Scripture Meditation

Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways' according to your love remember me, for you are good, O Lord. Psalm 25:7

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Galatians 5:1

Reflection #2: Our second chance comes in the person of Jesus.

When we get the Gospel we will live differently. The chains are gone, we have been set free. The righteousness of God has been infused in us. We can look forward to what is coming; knowing the grace of God is at work in our lives. Fr. David illustrated this with a story about receiving an upgrade to business class on a trip to Europe. The upgrade changed the trip

entirely, even changed the way he thought about the trip before he went. God has upgraded you – your life is forever changed. As blood-bought children of the living God, we are free to live for Christ in this world.

Going Deeper

1. How has your life been forever changed because of Jesus? What are the signs of an “upgrade” in your life right now?
2. What are ways in which you see others in your family, friends, and/or your small group living free of guilt and for Christ? How does this freedom from guilt change the way we live?

Scripture Meditation

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2

Reflection #3: Eight words of judgment become eight words for deliverance.

Last week, Fr. David described the Assyrians in 8th Century BC as the Nazis of the ancient world. Nineveh was full of every imaginable evil. Into the city comes Jonah proclaiming a message of just eight words. “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.” And the Ninevites believe God and repent. The king hears the message of God and he repents and believes. They are changed. Everything they do and say is going to be done with this in mind: God is real.

Going Deeper

1. What are the circumstances of the moment when you first realized God was real? When has God come to you again to bring reminders of this truth into your life?
2. What are some words of scripture that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, have radically changed your life?

Scripture Meditation

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

Reflection #4: God’s Initiative of Love and a Call to Repentance

Fr. David told us that Jonah was the first prophet we hear from chronologically in scripture. Jonah goes to Nineveh in the year 770 BC; he is the first of the prophets to start preaching the

message of God. God sends Jonah to the people of Nineveh. He sends a prophet to a foreign people....and the people of Nineveh repent. The book of Jonah tells the story of turning around in response to God. The sailors turn around. The captain turns around. The fish turns around. The city of Nineveh turns around. The king turns around. This story of God's mercy and compassion on a people who turn to Him takes place 135 years after King Solomon; 150 years after the glory days of King David. God then sends a number of prophets to his people – the people of Israel and Judah. See the chart to the right. Will his people turn around; will they repent and return to Him?

Timeline of the Prophets		
Jonah	770 B.C.	to Ninevah
Amos	760	to Israel
Hosea	760 - 730	to Israel
Isaiah	740 - 700	to Judah
Micah	737 - 690	to Judah
Habakkuk	630	to Judah
Zephaniah	627	to Judah
Jeremiah	627 - 580	to Judah
Daniel	605 - 530	to Judah
Ezekiel	593 - 570	to Judah
Nahum	593 - 570	to Ninevah
Haggai	520	to Judah
Zechariah	520 - 518	to Judah
Joel	500	to Judah
Obadiah	500	to Edom
Malachi	433 B.C.	to Judah

Going Deeper

1. What was the principal message of the prophets? What are some ways in which the people responded?
2. Read again Matthew 12:38-41. What is the underlying message of Jonah? Of Jesus?
3. Tell a story of "turning around" in response to God.
4. What is the Gospel? What will it mean for you to take hold of the gospel today?

Scripture Meditation

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. I John 4:9-10

Closing Prayer

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*