

# JONAH

**OPENING UP**

Receiving bad news can sometimes be the very best thing for us. Describe a time when you received bad news, but where receiving it was the best possible thing for you.

**TEXT****REAL FAITH REPENTS | Jonah 3:1–10 (ESV)**

**1** Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, **2** “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” **3** So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days’ journey in breadth. **4** Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” **5** And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

**6** The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. **7** And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, **8** but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. **9** Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.” **10** When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

**MESSAGE OUTLINE**

**Big Idea: God responds to repentance.**

**Key Question: What does repentance look like?**

1. Repentance begins with hearing the Word. (vv. 1-4)
2. Repentance involves believing the Word. (v. 5)
3. Repentance requires responding to the Word. (vv. 6-10)

## DISCUSSION



- Recap the story of Jonah to this point. God had called Jonah to bring a message of condemnation against Nineveh (1:1–3), but instead of delivering the message, he bails on his assignment. Finally, when there, he receives the command again (3:1–2), how does Nineveh respond to this terrible news?
- Jonah puts himself right in the heart of the city (3:3–4) and proclaims the Lord’s judgment, which is the job of a prophet. How does vs. 5 specifically express the Nineveh’s heart-level response to God?
- Nineveh “believed God” (vs. 5). This is the same word (*amn*) used of Abraham in Genesis 15:6, when God made extraordinary promises to him—and he *believed God*, which was “counted to [Abraham] as righteousness.” What is the Bible telling us about the salvation of the Ninevites at this point?
- The People of Nineveh didn’t stop there: they got everyone involved! Read through vv. 6–9 and think through their response. How did their actions *prove* their hearts were repentant? How can you know if you have truly repented?
- Vs. 10 shows God’s *incredible response*. Until this point, all we know is that God is going to take out an exceedingly wicked nation. Now, God *relents*. When has God shown you mercy?

## LIFE CHALLENGE



To encounter the Holy God is to encounter our need to repent. But God is merciful to draw us to himself—and to shine a light on the parts within us that need transformation. But it’s easy to just repent of wrong actions—what’s all the more difficult is to repent of heart-level evils that consistently draw us into sin. The Ninevites show us how sinful people can receive holy forgiveness, if they’d only repent. Take time today and this week to consider where God is calling you to repent. And in the same way, ask God to help your restored life be an example to your neighbors and community.

## CLOSING PRAYER



Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner! Christ, have mercy upon me, a sinner! Shine your light into every dark place in my heart, and cover me with the love and forgiveness of Jesus—so that I might be set free by your mercy and walk holy in this life! Amen!