

Jonah 5

Jonah and the Great City Part 5
Scott Urbanek – November 27, 2016

One thing that I have always had a desire to do is to write a book. Specifically, I've always wanted to write a fiction book. Maybe a book about some teenagers that find a secret passage way in their parent's basement that leads to another world. Naturally, the main characters name is Scott and he's jacked and becomes hero of the story. The problem is that I am not cut out to write a novel. I don't have the patience or the imagination to pull that off.

People who write well have the same things in common. In their writings there is a surface level reading that is really entertaining, but there is also a deeper meaning to the book that can only be noticed if you are really looking for it or if someone points it out. Examples of this would be *Lord of the Rings* or *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Both of these book series are unbelievably written and extremely entertaining. But, what makes these books special is that there are themes that are underneath the surface that make the writings Classics. An example of this can be found in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Aslan who is a lion and the King of Narnia dies in the place of one of the characters in the book, only to come back to life later on. C.S. Lewis is clearly connecting this to Jesus. Or in another

line, one of the Characters is asking about Aslan and they said, "Is he a safe lion? Safe, no! But he's good." These examples are why I would want to write a book; so that I could pull deeper truths into simple stories. This is what I love about stories is that we can sit down with our children and tell them these incredible stories of adventure, yet as they get older and they are able to understand we can help point out these deeper truths that make the stories even more special. Tolkien and Lewis are simply doing their best attempt to do what God has done with the Bible. With Jonah there is this incredible story wrapped in one big truth. In Matthew Chapter 12, we get to curl up our fathers lap as he reveals to us the deeper meaning of Jonah. The book of Jonah is the adventure; Matthew 12 is the deeper truth.

Let's pray.

In Matthew 12: 38, we drop into a scene where some Pharisees approach Jesus with a request to see a sign from him. Here is what it says in Matthew 12:38: **38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."**

- We have already seen Jesus do a bunch of miracles (lepers, paralytic, two blind men).
- Why ask him for another sign? They wanted to see something greater...
- They didn't really want to surrender to Christ

Look at what Jesus says: **39 But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."**

- Some might ask, "Why not just answer them?"
- Who else do these Pharisees sound like? It sounds like us!
- If God would just give me a sign, then I would believe.
- Jesus is not our personal circus performer. He's not David Blaine.
- Here's the deal: getting a sign from God will not confirm belief in your heart (Israel).
- We know that we are most likely not going to see something like this so we don't have to surrender our lives to God.

We are more like the Pharisees than we might think.

And look at what Jesus says to the Pharisees: **an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign.**

- When he says adulterous he means it in a spiritual sense.
- When Jesus called them adulterous they would have remembered that God called Israel that all through the OT.
- Listen to how God responds to Israel in Jeremiah 3:20. **Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her**

husband, so have you been treacherous to me, O house of Israel, declares the LORD."

Jesus continues in verse 39 by saying: **"...but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."**

- So, what does this mean?
- Here is where he tells us how they should be reading and interpreting Jonah!!

40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- What was he saying? The whole point of Jonah is that it points to him!
- Look at the parallel: Jonah was alive after 3 days in a fish; Jesus will be alive after 3 days in a grave!
- This is the hinge verse, everything else in the passage is pointing to this verse. And Christianity!
- The purpose of Jonah is to point us to a savior.
- Look at what Jesus did with this passage! Jesus used Jonah to help point the hearers to his future glory!
- God, in his sovereignty used the OT to point to his resurrection!
- He's also saying the resurrection is the only sign we need. Even if we didn't have any other signs.

This is not the only place in scripture where Jesus alludes to the fact that the scriptures speak about him. Look at John 5:46, ^s **"Do not think that I will accuse**

you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me."

- Some of you might be saying, "I don't remember Moses saying anything about Jesus."
- Everything Moses wrote is supposed to point us to a savior. Ex the Law.
- In Matthew, chapter 12 Jesus is giving us a lesson on how to read the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, the whole book of Hebrews shows us this idea. **Hebrews 1:1-2 says: Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...**

Church this whole Idea was so transformative for me. It made the Bible so much easier to read.

- Sacrificial system makes more sense.
- Hosea points to Jesus

Everything points to Jesus!

In fact watch verse 41, the people in the story are now pointing back.

Now let's Look at verse 41, **"The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."**

- Jesus rips the Pharisees pretty hard here!

- Here is the breakdown: Nineveh was a nasty nation. They made other pagan nations look like the Brady Bunch. Yet, they repented at Jonah's preaching. And as you remember, Jonah wasn't preaching a hopeful message. He basically said repent or you will be destroyed in 40 days. Jonah didn't perform any miracles, he didn't love them, he didn't care for them at all. He only shared with them because God made him do it. Yet they turned to God anyways!
- In contrast, we see these Pharisees who are of the Nation of Israel. God's chosen people. Yet now when something greater than Jonah is here they refuse to repent and turn to him. Jesus performed miracles, he embodied love, he was meek and gentle, and offered them salvation through him yet they turned on him. Despite having the inside track to all of God's blessings, they rejected Jesus.

Brothers and sisters this is a frightening passage!

- For some of you, being religious might lead to your doom. By religious I mean that you have all the outward appearance of heart change yet inside you are a wasteland. You live a life of good deeds, service to God without any heart change.
- Because of these deeds you are blind to your need for Jesus.
- The Bible belt is full of people like this: They do all the works in Jesus' name while rejecting his lordship over their lives. My fear is that when they came to

know Jesus, rather than actually making him Lord just made a little room to fit him into their calendars.

- That is not salvation! Salvation means we surrender everything!
- If total surrender wasn't your experience, I would argue that it wasn't salvation it was sentiment. (I'm right there with you on this)
- Jonah's life says ill follow you until a point, then no more.

Ninevah is looking back at us right now screaming to us through this passage! Nineveh can see clearly now and they will condemn these religious leaders and religious people at the judgment.

Jesus didn't slow down on them though. In verse 41 he kept going. He said, **"The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the Wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here."**

- If you're like me, let's be honest we had no idea who the queen of the South was. No, it's not Faith Hill or Carrie Underwood.
- The queen of the South is Queen Sheba, from the country of the Sabaeans. Her country was in lower Arabia, 1200 miles south of Israel.
- Again, Jesus compares these Jewish leaders to another pagan nation. Here we have a Arab woman,

traveling 1,200 miles to receive wisdom from Solomon, who was a man of God.

- In 1 Kings we see that she brought Treasure upon treasure to see him and to show him honor for all of his wisdom.
- So when Jesus is saying "Something greater than Solomon is here, he is pointing to the fact that his wisdom is infinitely more than Solomons. And his wisdom leads to salvation from sin and the way to eternal life.
- Therefore, not only will Nineveh condemn you, but so will this pagan queen.

Jesus is the truer and greater Solomon. He started that! And I think that's the whole point of the book of Jonah, and the whole point of every book in the Bible is that it points to Jesus. Jesus is greater the greater everything! That doesn't stop at the Bible. He is the greater than everything you try to find satisfaction in!

So how should we be responding to this Jonah series? Spence and I have thrown a lot at you in the last 5 weeks. This has been an important series for our church! I'm going to give you a few practical steps that I believe we should take as a church.

1. **Get in the game.**
- For some of us, missions is a new concept and that's ok.

- Many have been on the sidelines for too long and it's time to obey one of the clearest commands in scripture.
- Missions is not for an elite task force of Christians.

Get involved with:

Locally - We have partners that reach those involved in sex trafficking, the homeless, the unborn, refugees, disaster relief, food kitchens, schools, and church planting.

If you want to start a ministry through our church, let me help you!

Internationally:

- One of the things we hear a lot from our international partners is that they need more laborers.
- Many of you need to go on a mission trip this year. We have 5 trips.
- Community group trips.

2. It's not "why should I go, it's why should I stay?"

- The need is too great not to change our prayers.
- I heard this prayer for the first time 4 years ago, it wrecked me. I was in the fetal position.
- Some are scared to pray this prayer because God might send you. We cannot do this!
- This might mean that God is tugging on your heart to go and you are stifling the voice of the Spirit of God in your life. It's no wonder so many of us have bored souls and our walks with Jesus are lifeless. If every day

we are here is another day of disobedience. Day by day our hearts get harder. This is exactly what Jonah did! Church, let's learn from Jonah. We have to change how we pray about going.

- It's better to be a church known for our sending capacity rather than our seating capacity.

3. Give your resources to help others go.

- God isn't calling all of us to go.
- Let's help those who do by giving them out resources to help them take the gospel to the nations
- Be a gospel patron!
- We will be having a Christmas offering in a few weeks.