

The God Who Relents*Jonah 3:1-10*

Introduction: As we come to chapter three of Jonah, we see Jonah getting a second chance to obey the word of the Lord. Probably desiring to stay out of the stomach of another fish, this time Jonah obeys and goes and proclaims God's warning to the city of Nineveh. Nineveh is a major city in the nation of Assyria, which is a main enemy of Israel. To even this city, God extends the possibility of repentance. In this account we gain insight into the role of repentance and how important it is in our relationship with God.

Opening Question: Why do you think that at times we find it so hard to admit we are wrong?

Read Jonah 3

1. How do the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah's preaching?
2. What actions did the Ninevites pursue that revealed their repentance?
3. What does this passage teach us about God?
4. What does this passage teach us about repentance?

Steve said:

We don't merely repent once at the beginning of our walks with God. No, repentance and faith should become our lifestyle. I like the way Donald Whitney puts it: "Christians are lifelong repents and lifelong believers" (*Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health*, p. 105). As long as we live in this life we need to practice repentance. To do anything else is to be like the guy who is absolutely lost but who won't ask for directions. Life is too short to stay lost and continue going the wrong direction in any area of our lives.

5. Why do we "need to practice" repentance?
6. Do you agree that Christians are to be "lifelong repents"? Why or why not?

Steve said:

What do you do if you're not really sorry for your sin? That's a great question because repentance isn't telling God sorry even if you don't mean it. Repentance starts by actually being sorry for what you've done or for who you've become. If you know you've sinned, but you aren't really sorry, you simply need to put yourself in a position to allow the Spirit of God to give you this godly sorrow: thoughtfully read appropriate Scriptures, talk with a trusted friend about it, and simply ask God to convict you of your sin.

7. How would you describe a repentance that is truly genuine?
8. What part do feelings of sorrow/remorse have in genuine repentance?
9. What do you do when you find that you really are not sorry for your sin?
10. Are there any areas of your life right now where you need to pursue a heart of repentance?