

ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE 110.2

Lesson 33 (Study Notes): [Sharing the Gospel with the World](#)

Class Member Reading: Jonah 1; 2; 3; 4; Micah 2; 4; 5; 6; 7

Jonah

Jonah Tries to Run Away from God

1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, ²‘Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.’ ³ But Jonah set out to **flee** to Tarshish **from the presence of the LORD**. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid his fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, **away from the presence of the LORD**. *Note the repetition that emphasizes the power of Jonah’s call—he was in the presence of God.*

4 But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ Then the mariners were afraid, and **each cried to his god**. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. ⁶ The captain came and said to him, ‘What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.’

7 The sailors said to one another, ‘Come, let us cast lots, so that we may know on whose account this calamity has come upon us.’ So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ Then they said to him, ‘Tell us why this calamity has come upon us. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?’ ⁹ ‘I am a Hebrew,’ he replied. ‘I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.’ ¹⁰ Then the men were even more afraid, and said to him, ‘What is this that you have done!’ For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them so.

11 Then they said to him, ‘What shall we **do to you**, that the sea may quieten down

for us?’ For the sea was growing more and more tempestuous.¹² He said to them, ‘Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quieten down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great storm has come upon you.’¹³ Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more stormy against them.¹⁴ Then they cried out to the LORD, ‘Please, O LORD, we pray, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life. Do not make us guilty of innocent blood; for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.’¹⁵ So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging.¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. (Looks like he made some converts on accident!)

17 But the LORD provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

A Psalm of Thanksgiving

2 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish,² saying,

‘I called to the LORD out of my distress,
and he answered me;

out of the **belly of Sheol** I cried, (“Sheol” refers to the grave or death, creating an even more powerful symbol of Christ’s death and resurrection)
and you heard my voice.

³ You cast me into the deep,
into the heart of the seas,
and the flood surrounded me;
all your waves and your billows
passed over me.

⁴ Then I said, “I am driven away
from your sight;
how shall I look again
upon your holy temple?”

⁵ The waters closed in over me;
the deep surrounded me;
weeds were wrapped around my head

⁶ at the roots of the mountains.

I went down to the land

whose bars closed upon me for ever;
yet you brought up my life from the **Pit**,
O LORD my God.

⁷ As my life was ebbing away,
I remembered the LORD;
and my prayer came to you,
into your holy temple.

⁸ Those who worship vain idols
forsake their true loyalty.

⁹ But I with the voice of thanksgiving
will sacrifice to you;
what I have vowed I will pay.

Deliverance belongs to the LORD!' (Jonah's prayer is full of allusions and quotes from Psalms. His mastery of the scriptures makes his misunderstanding and even rebellion against God's will that much more intense and ironic)

¹⁰ Then the LORD spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land.

Conversion of Nineveh

3 The **word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time**, saying, ²'Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' ³So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. (Talk a bit about the Assyrians, the arch enemies of Israel, who delighted in killing in cruel and terrible ways. This is the Parable of the Good Samaritan taken to an even higher level)

⁶ When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: 'By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. ⁸Human beings **and animals** (the repenting animals should tip us off that this story is not meant to be taken literally) shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence

that is in their hands.⁹ Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish.'

10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, **God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them**; and he did not do it. *This clever book has been called "meta-prophetic" and wrestles with such issues as the role of the prophet, the role of scripture, and the fulfillment and non-fulfillment of prophecy*

Jonah's Anger

4 But this was **very displeasing to Jonah**, and he became angry.² He prayed to the LORD and said, 'O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing.³ And 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, 'Is it right for you to be angry?'⁵ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

6 The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush.⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered.⁸ When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.'

Jonah Is Reproved

9 But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?' And he said, 'Yes, angry enough to die.'¹⁰ Then the LORD said, 'You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labour and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night.¹¹ And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?' *Go through each detail of this amazing and surprising, but in the end incomparably profound*

conclusion

Micah 2, 4-7 (These are challenging chapters to understand, but key themes are 1) Do not use power to oppress; 2) God cares about justice, kindness, and humility, and 3) God promises peace, restoration, and judgment. A good question to ask about this reading would be: How does God expect us to treat each other? What are God's priorities?

Social Evils Denounced

2 Alas for those who devise wickedness

and evil deeds on their beds!

When the morning dawns, they perform it,

because it is in their power.

² They covet fields, and seize them;

houses, and take them away;

they **oppress** householder and house,

people and their inheritance.

³ Therefore, thus says the LORD:

Now, I am devising against this family an evil

from which you cannot remove your necks;

and you shall not walk haughtily,

for it will be an evil time.

⁴ On that day they shall take up a taunt-song against you,

and wail with bitter lamentation,

and say, 'We are utterly ruined;

the LORD alters the inheritance of my people;

how he removes it from me!

Among our captors he parcels out our fields.'

⁵ Therefore you will have no one to cast the line by lot

in the assembly of the LORD.

⁶ 'Do not preach'—thus they preach—

'one should not preach of such things;

disgrace will not overtake us.'

⁷ Should this be said, O house of Jacob?

Is the LORD's patience exhausted?
Are these his doings?
Do not my words do good
to one who walks uprightly?
⁸ But you rise up against my people as an enemy;
**you strip the robe from the peaceful,
from those who pass by trustingly
with no thought of war.**

⁹ The women of my people you drive out
from their pleasant houses;
from their young children you take away
my glory for ever.

¹⁰ Arise and go;
for this is no place to rest,
because of uncleanness that destroys
with a grievous destruction.

¹¹ If someone were to go about uttering empty falsehoods,
saying, 'I will preach to you of wine and strong drink',
such a one would be the preacher for this people!

A Promise for the Remnant of Israel

¹² I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob,
I will gather the survivors of Israel;
I will set them together
like sheep in a fold,
like a flock in its pasture;
it will resound with people.

¹³ The one who breaks out will go up before them;
they will break through and pass the gate,
going out by it.
Their king will pass on before them,
the LORD at their head.

Peace and Security through Obedience

4In days to come

the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the hills.

Peoples shall stream to it,

² and many nations shall come and say:

'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;

that he may teach us his ways

and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,

and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Almost word for word the same as
[Isaiah 2:2-4](#))

³ He shall judge between many peoples,

and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away;

they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,

and their spears into pruning-hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war any more;

⁴ but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,

and no one shall make them afraid;

for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. [Beautiful ideals and promises.](#)

⁵ For all the peoples walk,

each in the name of its god,

but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God

for ever and ever.

Restoration Promised after Exile

⁶ On that day, says the LORD,

I will assemble the lame

and gather those who have been driven away,

and those whom I have afflicted.

⁷ The lame I will make the remnant,
and those who were cast off, a strong nation;
and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion
now and for evermore.

⁸ And you, O tower of the flock,
hill of daughter Zion,
to you it shall come,
the former dominion shall come,
the sovereignty of daughter Jerusalem.

⁹ Now why do you cry aloud?
Is there no king in you?
Has your counsellor perished,
that pangs have seized you like a woman in labour?

¹⁰ Writhe and groan, O daughter Zion,
like a woman in labour;
for now you shall go forth from the city
and camp in the open country;
you shall go to Babylon.
There you shall be rescued,
there the LORD will redeem you
from the hands of your enemies.

¹¹ Now many nations
are assembled against you,
saying, 'Let her be profaned,
and let our eyes gaze upon Zion.'

¹² But they do not know
the thoughts of the LORD;
they do not understand his plan,
that he has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing-floor.

¹³ Arise and thresh,
O daughter Zion,
for I will make your horn iron

and your hoofs bronze;
you shall beat in pieces many peoples,
and shall devote their gain to the LORD,
their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth.

5 Now you are walled around with a wall;
siege is laid against us;
with a rod they strike the ruler of Israel
upon the cheek.

The Ruler from Bethlehem

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

⁵ and he shall be the one of peace.

If the Assyrians come into our land
and tread upon our soil,
we will raise against them seven shepherds
and eight installed as rulers.

⁶ They shall rule the land of Assyria with the sword,
and the land of Nimrod with the drawn sword;
they shall rescue us from the Assyrians

if they come into our land
or tread within our border.

The Future Role of the Remnant

⁷ Then the remnant of Jacob,
surrounded by many peoples,
shall be like dew from the LORD,
like showers on the grass,
which do not depend upon people
or wait for any mortal.

⁸ And among the nations the remnant of Jacob,
surrounded by many peoples,
shall be like a lion among the animals of the forest,
like a young lion among the flocks of sheep,
which, when it goes through, treads down
and tears in pieces, with no one to deliver.

⁹ Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries,
and all your enemies shall be cut off.

¹⁰ On that day, says the LORD,
I will cut off your horses from among you
and will destroy your chariots;

¹¹ and I will cut off the cities of your land
and throw down all your strongholds;

¹² and I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
and you shall have no more soothsayers;

¹³ and I will cut off your images
and your pillars from among you,
and you shall bow down no more
to the work of your hands;

¹⁴ and I will uproot your sacred poles from among you
and destroy your towns.

¹⁵ And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance
on the nations that did not obey.

God Challenges Israel

6 Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

² Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for the LORD has a controversy with his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³ 'O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵ O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.'

What God Requires

⁶ 'With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with tens of thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?'

⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and **what does the LORD require of you**
but to do justice, and to love kindness,

and to walk humbly with your God? I consider these the most important verses of the reading. Powerful challenge to live the core principles of the gospel rather than getting caught up in surface expressions (it is possible to do both, but God is giving a particular warning here)

Cheating and Violence to Be Punished

⁹ The voice of the LORD cries to the city
(it is sound wisdom to fear your name):

Hear, O tribe and assembly of the city!

¹⁰ Can I forget the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked,
and the scant measure that is accursed?

¹¹ Can I tolerate wicked scales
and a bag of dishonest weights?

¹² Your wealthy are full of violence;
your inhabitants speak lies,
with tongues of deceit in their mouths.

¹³ Therefore I have begun to strike you down,
making you desolate because of your sins.

¹⁴ You shall eat, but not be satisfied,
and there shall be a gnawing hunger within you;
you shall put away, but not save,
and what you save, I will hand over to the sword.

¹⁵ You shall sow, but not reap;
you shall tread olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil;
you shall tread grapes, but not drink wine.

¹⁶ For you have kept the statutes of Omri
and all the works of the house of Ahab,
and you have followed their counsels.

Therefore I will make you a desolation, and your inhabitants an object of hissing;
so you shall bear the scorn of my people.

7 Woe is me! For I have become like one who,
after the summer fruit has been gathered,
after the vintage has been gleaned,
finds no cluster to eat;
there is no first-ripe fig for which I hunger.

² The faithful have disappeared from the land,
and there is no one left who is upright;
they all lie in wait for blood,
and they hunt each other with nets.
³ Their hands are skilled to do evil;
the official and the judge ask for a bribe,
and the powerful dictate what they desire;
thus they pervert justice.
⁴ The best of them is like a brier,
the most upright of them a thorn hedge.
The day of their sentinels, of their punishment, has come;
now their confusion is at hand.
⁵ Put no trust in a friend,
have no confidence in a loved one;
guard the doors of your mouth
from her who lies in your embrace;
⁶ for the son treats the father with contempt,
the daughter rises up against her mother,
the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
your enemies are members of your own household.
⁷ But as for me, I will look to the LORD,
I will wait for the God of my salvation;
my God will hear me.

Penitence and Trust in God

⁸ Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy;
when I fall, I shall rise;
when I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be a light to me.
⁹ I must bear the indignation of the LORD,
because I have sinned against him,
until he takes my side
and executes judgement for me.
He will bring me out to the light;
I shall see his vindication.

¹⁰ Then my enemy will see,
and shame will cover her who said to me,
'Where is the LORD your God?'
My eyes will see her downfall;
now she will be trodden down
like the mire of the streets.

A Prophecy of Restoration

¹¹ A day for the building of your walls!
In that day the boundary shall be far extended.

¹² In that day they will come to you
from Assyria to Egypt,
and from Egypt to the River,
from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain.

¹³ But the earth will be desolate
because of its inhabitants,
for the fruit of their doings.

¹⁴ Shepherd your people with your staff,
the flock that belongs to you,
which lives alone in a forest
in the midst of a garden land;
let them feed in Bashan and Gilead
as in the days of old.

¹⁵ As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,
show us marvellous things.

¹⁶ The nations shall see and be ashamed
of all their might;
they shall lay their hands on their mouths;
their ears shall be deaf;

¹⁷ they shall lick dust like a snake,
like the crawling things of the earth;
they shall come trembling out of their fortresses;
they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God,

and they shall stand in fear of you.

God's Compassion and Steadfast Love

¹⁸ Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession?

He does not retain his anger for ever, because he **delights in showing clemency.**

¹⁹ **He will again have compassion upon us;** he will tread our iniquities under foot.

You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

²⁰ You will **show faithfulness** to Jacob and **unswerving loyalty** to Abraham, as you have sworn to our ancestors from the days of old.

Additional Reading:

Other Reading: