

Introduction

- Image
 - Jonah is a book of unexpected twists, but chapter 3 is maybe the biggest twist in the story
 - Nineveh was the most influential city in the world
 - Jonah goes to Nineveh, an army of one, and preaches a very lackluster sermon, and the people "repent"
- Need: You can look at a place like the greater Seattle area and say, "There's no way that will work," and we actually never get on the field. We stay on the sidelines, because the chance of success is so small.
- Subject: How does God change cities?
- Text: Jonah 3
- Preview: Who God Saves - How God Saves

Body

- Who God Saves
 - The wickedness of Nineveh
 - Known as one of the cruelest and most violent civilizations in history
 - We have historical accounts from Assyrian kings bragging about the many inventive ways they would torture and kill the enemies they conquered.
 - If you were lucky enough to survive, you would be departed and fated to endure violent forms of slavery for the rest of your life
 - They were a wicked and violent people.
 - God's efforts to save them
 - And yet, look at the lengths God's willing to go to to reach them in the first two chapters
 - He appoints a prophet
 - When Jonah runs away, he sends a storm to get him back on track
 - When the sailors cast lots to figure out who's responsible for the storm, God orchestrates the fall of the die to land on Jonah so that the sailors will eventually throw him off the ship he's running from God in (Proverbs 16:33)
 - He appoints a fish
 - Nineveh was a deeply flawed city, and yet, God moves heaven and earth to reach them
 - MTR: Why? Because God loves deeply flawed people.
 - God's heart for cities
 - Because cities are nothing more than a concentrated area of deeply flawed people, there is a sense in which God has a particular heart for reaching deeply flawed cities.

- God cites the size of Nineveh as a reason for Jonah to care.
 - MTR: Do you have God's heart for the greater Seattle area?
 - How God Saves
 - God uses goers
 - "Arise, and go!" (unusual in the NT / precursor to the NT model)
 - This is the word the church in the west needs to hear today
 - God uses people who are willing to go and move towards the uncomfortable
 - God uses deeply flawed people
 - God gives Jonah a second chance (the start of ch. 1 and ch. 2)
 - God uses Jonah's pain to become his platform
 - The ninevites worshipped Dagon
 - Jonah's deepest failure became his greatest platform
 - God uses words
 - At the center of Jonah's mission was a message
 - Our mission is to serve the world holistically, but the greatest human need is the need for reconciliation with God, and that requires speaking.
 - (My words feel inadequate)
 - So were Jonah's. He only goes one days journey. He preaches a five word sermon. Probably more, but the authors trying to make a point. Jonah's words weren't all that great, but God still moves.
 - Val's story

Conclusion

- College story / It was terrifying, but it was amazing (mention the gospel)
- God can use us to make a difference in this city / It starts not with asking people to come here, but going out. Will you be a part of it?