

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Jonah 3:1-6.**
- B. I want to talk about Jonah today and draw some similarities between his life and the church today.
- C. Ninevah was the capitol city of Assyria, a Gentile nation. God told Jonah to go preach against the city (1:1-2). Yet, Jonah was unwilling to do so.  
*The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.”*

## I. JONAH, A BAD EXAMPLE.

- A. There are several good examples of people following the call of God:
  - 1. **Abraham**, responded to God’s call and left his home in Haran (see Gen. 12:1-3).
  - 2. **Isaiah**, said, “Here am I, send me,” when God needed a mouthpiece (see Isa. 6:1-8).
  - 3. **Peter** and **John** said they could “not stop speaking about what they had seen and heard” (see Ac. 4:19-20).
  - 4. Early **Xians**, went everywhere, from house to house teaching and proclaiming (Ac. 5:42; 8:4).
- B. But **Jonah**, is a bad example. His desertion is more than a lesson in geography. Jonah’s was a problem of:
  - 1. Disobedience.
  - 2. Willful rebellion.
  - 3. A conflict of wills and purpose.
  - 4. Apathy concerning the people of Ninevah.
- C. But I’m afraid that the church today is much like Jonah; we are unwilling missionaries.
  - 1. Someone has observed that the average member of the church of Christ has:
    - a. Heard 4,000 sermons.
    - b. Sung 20,000 songs.
    - c. Participated in 8,000 worship services.
    - d. And **saved ZERO sinners**.
  - 2. **“We are no longer fishers of men, but only keepers of the aquarium.”**  
And what we call growth is just our swiping fish from each other’s fish bowls.

## II. WHAT’S THE PROBLEM(S)?

- A. **First, we have become aquarium keepers and not fishers of men.** Jonah was more concerned over a gourd plant than he was 120,000 people who didn’t know their right hand from their left. Too many times today, we are more concerned with our building, bulletins, budgets, than with souls.
- B. **Second, we pursue jobs, sports, and entertainment instead of souls.** We know every excuse in the book to get of our number one responsibility, saving souls.
- C. **Third, Satan has changed his tactics and strategies.** Instead of heavily persecuting the church as he did in the first century, today, he is lulling us to sleep. He is doing it with our wall-to-wall carpeting, A/C, bulletins, fancy building (fortresses), and gold-plated communion ware. Our affluence is putting our evangelism to sleep **“We have conducted our services, talked and preached to each other within our four walls--and even given our money--but then mistakenly gone home thinking we have been evangelistic.”**
- D. **Fourth, we don’t really believe that people are lost and will go to hell.** We have the Oklahoma, “good old boy” attitude. We are so used to seeing violence and pain in the movies and on TV that is not real, we don’t think that a loving God will eternally punish anyone.
- E. **Fifth, the U.S. is in a post-Xian era.** I honestly believe that people are not as interested as they used to be.

### III. WE CAN BE EVANGELISTIC!

- A. Jonah became one of the Bible's most successful preachers, and it happened for of two reasons:
1. Jonah made a real, wholesale conversion on his part; he changed his life. If we make such a change, we can get the message out:
    - a. I see the people of the world having no trouble at all getting their message to everyone.
    - b. I see Nike, HP, Microsoft, and every car company doing it.
    - c. Everyone of us gets credit card applications from some big bank at least once a week.
    - d. Salespeople of all sorts are calling/ mailing us continually about siding, replacement windows, family portraits, and burial plots.
    - e. Politicians regularly organize to reach by phone or mail every voter in the country.
    - f. "Everything is being brought to the attention of modern man --except the Gospel."  
**And the only thing that stands in the way of our growing is you and me.**
  2. Jonah became successful because in Ninevah, the Assyrians saw a man who took God seriously. God needs to be more than just a word in the Bible on the living room coffee table, more than just "the unseen guest at every meal, and the silent listener to every conversation."
    - a. Have we heard the story of the crucifixion so many times that it has lost all its power to show that the world is lost in sin, bound for a devil's hell.
    - b. **We don't take God seriously anymore.** If we did, we would do something to help those not in Christ, because there is a heaven to be gained and a hell to be avoided.
- B. Evangelism is important:
1. **It helps you focus on what you really do believe.**
  2. **It will help you grow in that you are taking time and showing concern for others.**
  3. **It shows you aren't overly concerned about what other people think.** We are too much people-centered and not enough God-centered in our thinking.
  4. **It keeps the church fresh, alive and growing.** If we do not evangelize, then some Sunday night in the future, one of the members of this congregation will turn off the lights, and lock the door, for the last time....

### CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. The devil doesn't get particularly worried just about special projects because they are usually temporary in duration. But I do believe that Satan will get plenty worried if you begin sharing your faith and setting up personal Bible studies with non-Xians.
- B. Ask yourself, "what part of your life is devoted to the number one work of the church?"
- C. If there are any Jonahs in the audience today, the invitation is for you. If you need to become a Xian then we plead that you respond in obedience now.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.