Series: Running from God.

**When God Gets Your Attention**

Jonah 3:1-10 January 22, 2017

Intro: “Committing ourselves to a small change, even one that is unmistakably in our best interest, is often more frightening than ignoring a dangerous situation.” – Psychiatrist Dr. Stephen Grosz

1. When God gets your attention ….

Get off your throne and deal with your self-importance.

a. God sends second-rate prophets to first-rate cities.

* Get over the messenger.
  + v.2 *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city*
  + v.3 *Nineveh was an exceedingly great city*

b. God’s hope often comes wrapped in paper bags.

* Get over the delivery.
  + v.4 *And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”*
  + There was nothing attractive about the message. It would take humility to listen.

c. It takes humility to act like a servant when people treat you like a king.

* Get over yourself.
  + v.6 *The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.*

Q. How do you react to fire alarms? What are some inadequate responses you’ve made when you’ve recognized sin in your life?

Q. Why do we tend to criticize the messenger or the delivery when someone delivers a critical message to us?

Q. What are some things that have helped you to respond to God’s warnings or people’s criticism with humility?

2. When God gets your attention ….

Show God the genuineness of your repentance and faith.

a. Believe what God shows you when God gets your attention.

* v.5 *And the people of Nineveh believed God.*

b. Show God your remorse when God gets your attention.

* v.7-8a *Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God.*

c. Make changes in your life when God gets your attention.

* v.8b *Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.*
* Frederica Mathewes-Green: The first time Jesus appears, in the first Gospel, the first instruction he gives is "Repent." From then on, it's his most consistent message.

Q. Is remorse appropriate for a new covenant believer or was that just for the Old Testament? Why?

Q. What are some practical ways that a Christian can cover himself or herself with sackcloth and sit in ashes?

Q. What are some of the things you might say from this passage to someone who told you they were tired of committing the same sin over and over again?

Response: If God has gotten your attention about some area where you need to repent, schedule some time this week to give it the seriousness it deserves.

3. When God gets your attention ….

Seek God’s mercy not your rights and rewards.

a. Understand the just, “fierce anger” of God.

* v.9 *Who knows?*
* v.9 *…. his fierce anger*
* v.9 *… we may … perish.*

b. Turn to the God who turns from His anger.

* v.9 *God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger*
* v.10 *God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them*
* True Faced: When grace introduces us to repentance, the two of us become best friends. When anything else introduces us to repentance, it feels like the warden has come to lock us up. But when grace gets involved, the truths of repentance reveal a fabulous world of life-freeing beauty.

c. Jesus is the mercy of God for undeserving sinners.

* Matthew 12:41 *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.*

Q. How can recognizing the just, “fierce anger” of God be a crucial step in dealing with our sin? What can we do to express our recognition of it?

Q. After recognizing the ‘fairness’ of God’s fierce anger, it’s mercy that motivates the people’s repentance. If you agree with the quote from True Faced above, why do you think that grace is so important to healthy repentance? What does repentance look like when it’s devoid of mercy?

Q. What role should Jesus play in a healthy view of repentance?

**Notes:**