

Introduction:

- What does God see in looking at Thanksgiving? My goal is to look at thanksgiving through some prophetic insights.
- In everything give thanks! God wants us to be a thankful people.
 - “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, ESV)
 - It is one thing to be thankful when everything is going well...But, how can we be thankful in everything? The answer lies in how we see God and our relationship with Him.
- Let's turn to the Book of Jonah.
 - We are going to look at how God brought Jonah into a prophetic moment that brought thankfulness into his life.

I. God Meets Us Where We Are

- A. I am grateful that God meets us where we are and calls/invites to be where He is.
 1. When I got save, God met me where I was and called/invited me to where He is.
 2. I don't have to change to come to God. I come to God and change happens.
- B. The name Jonah means 'Dove.' But Jonah was a rebellious, resistant believer. God sent 'the dove' to Nineveh an incredibly wicked and ruthless people. Think of it this way: God sent the Dove/peace to the violent that they might be redeemed. God was looking for a great change in both the heart of His prophet and heart of Nineveh. Therefore...
- C. Jonah was the Right man but with the wrong heart. I find it incredibly interesting how much God is interested in us having a right heart. It actually takes a right heart to have a thankful heart. The more ones heart is like God's the more thankful one will be.
 1. We are instructed in Proverbs to guard the heart for it is the well spring of life.
 2. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Therefore keep a watch over it. And...keep good things in it.
- D. (Jonah 1:1-2) Jonah was appointed/called by God to go to Nineveh. In other words God spoke to Jonah and gave Jonah a mission.
 1. Jonah did not have to go seminary to get the mission.
 2. Jonah did not have to be a perfect person to get the mission.
 3. All Jonah had to do was say, "Yes!" But the man that God chose had a heart issue that did not disqualify him but it detained him, distracted him, re-directed him away from the mission.
 - a) How many of us fit that description today?
 - b) You are not disqualified in God's eyes but maybe you are detained, distracted, or have re-directed yourself away from God's mission.
 4. Jonah was afraid that Nineveh would repent within that 40 day time table. And Nineveh was Israel and Judah's enemy.

- E. God meets us where we are in order that we may become more like Him. Ie. Reminds me of Peter: "Do you love me??? Then feed my sheep." So far we do not see any thankfulness in the heart of God's prophet.
- F. Revival begins where Thankfulness abounds! I am sure that in the upper room was the abundance of thankfulness. We know from Acts 16:25-ff that Paul and Silas were thankful and singing praise when the prison door opened!
 - 1. You want the Dove to move on you? You want your prison doors to open! Get your praise on! Start thanking Him.
 - 2. You don't thank Him for the bad stuff. In the midst of bad stuff, He never changes so we thank Him! He is our rock!

II. If Necessary God Fixes A Fix to Fix Us

- A. Jonah, the rebellious resistant prophet heads the other direction. Nineveh is east and Jonah is going west. He is on a ship headed to Tarshish!
 - 1. Note to self: Jonah was fleeing the Presence of the Lord! 1:3 Jonah did not have to have the 'in the belly of a fish' experience. He was running from the very one who could save him. He set this up according to his choices.
 - 2. 1:4 God hurled a great wind upon the sea. God has a way of getting to go in the right direction. God was opposing Jonah because Jonah was opposing God. Also note that Jonah's disobedience was also affecting other people.
 - 3. Even the sailors knew that Jonah was running from the Presence of God. (vs. 10) They know he is the guilty one but they don't want to throw him overboard either.
 - 4. Finally they pick Jonah up and hurl him into the sea and it stops raging. These sailors become believers this day. Ie. First fruits of the harvest.
- B. The Great Big Fix. *"And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."* (Jonah 1:17, ESV)
 - 1. Appointed: God appointed Jonah to go to Nineveh. God appointed a great fish 1:17, a plant, a worm, a scorching wind. 4:6-8 appointed - Heb - The intensive stems place heavier stress on the idea of appointing or assigning. To be assigned or receive an assignment. Carr, G. L. (1999). מנה 1213. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 513). Moody Press.
 - a) The Lord gave the fish an assignment. Later in 2:10 He spoke to the fish.
 - b) This was not a coincidence! God is so intentional! What is God after??? He is after Jonah's heart. God wants all of us to possess His heart. The world needs spiritual fathers and mothers that possess the heart of God in order to call them out and into the things of God.
- C. Good things happen in the belly of the fish if you cry out to God. When life swallows you up, do not quit pray!
 - 1. 2:1 Jonah prayed. Jonah prayed from the belly of a fish. Three day prayer

meeting.

2. Bad things have a tendency to make people pray, seek His presence, and remember how merciful God is. Ie. Again, Paul and Silas were pretty well swallowed up...beaten, in the bowels of a prison, in stocks. They sang their way out.
3. Pain has a way of causing us to remember God. And if you will remember God, your perspective of God will change. You will find Him in the midst of your pain, recognize something new about Him, and thanksgiving will abound.
 - a) From his pain Jonah cried out to God. 2:1-6
 - b) He remembered the Lord 2:7
 - c) He committed his way to a life of thanksgiving. And thanksgiving became the gateway to revival.

III. Thanksgiving Became The Gateway To Revival!

- A. Thanksgiving delivered the man of God. Jonah's change of heart brought about a change in his circumstance. 2:10 God spoke to the fish and it vomited Jonah out on dry land.
- B. Thanksgiving brought a recommissioning. *""Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.""* (Jonah 3:2, ESV)
- C. Thanksgiving brought a move of God!
 1. The people believed God, called a fast and repented.
 2. The King heard, removed his robe and put on sackcloth (repentance)
 3. The King issued decree throughout the land for everyone to turn from evil and violence. 3:8
- D. Thanksgiving changed the plan of God!
 1. God had mercy when he saw a nation turn from their evil ways!
 2. God declared I will not do to them what I said I would.
- E. A last look at Jonah
 1. 4:1 Jonah was exceedingly displeased and angry. He was like the older brother of Luke 15, critical and angry at the heart of the Father. He wanted Nineveh to get what they deserved. Not the mercy of God.
 2. The Hebrew word for angry means 'to be hot.' So God appointed once again for Jonah a fix to fix His heart. Appointed a plant, a worm, and a scorching wind to beat down on Jonah. From the belly of a fish in the sea to the scorching desert wind.
 3. Jonah made three errors that angry people often make. Each of these things put Jonah in a worse place, not a better place. Guzik, D. (2000). [Jonah](#) (Jon 4:5-8). David Guzik.
 - a) Jonah quit
 - b) Jonah separated himself from others

- c) Jonah became a spectator
- 4. His heart was bitter.
 - a) Jonah was grateful for the plant shade but not for the saving of Nineveh.
 - b) God does what he most often does when adjusting their heart. He asks a question: "Then God said to Jonah, *"Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?"*" "Yes," Jonah retorted, "even angry enough to die!" (Jonah 4:9, NLT)
 - c) *"And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much innocent cattle?"* (Jonah 4:11, ESV)
- 5. God gets the last word but we have to believe Jonah had a change of heart for he wrote this book.

Conclusion:

- What do we see in the book of Jonah? The character of God. His mercy to all people. His kindness in His dealings with man.
- Gods mercy reached Jonah in the depths of the sea and His mercy reached Nineveh in the depths of her wickedness.
- How can we be thankful in everything? The answer lies in how we see God and our relationship with Him.