

TITLE AND NUMBER: 169. Hope for everyone

REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Jonah 3:3-5

Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, 'Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.' The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.



LOOKING FURTHER: Jonah 3:1-10; Acts 2:17-21

What does this Bible passage tell us?

The events that took place earlier in the book of Jonah are a story that is often told to children in Sunday School. God told Jonah to go and warn the people of Nineveh of the consequences of the bad things they were doing. Jonah refused, took a boat in the opposite direction, and was thrown into the sea by the sailors in a storm. His life was saved when he was swallowed by a large fish.

Now Jonah has a second chance. He goes to Nineveh and declares God's message. The people respond, turn from their ways, and call on God to save them. In response, God shows them compassion and does not carry out His threat to destroy them.

We are not given any details here of exactly what the people of Nineveh were doing that made God angry, but the word 'wickedness' is quite strong. The prophet Nahum suggests their actions included what we would now call war crimes and exploiting people for financial profit. It certainly does not sound as though God was giving Jonah an easy task!

It does not matter exactly what they were doing; what is important is how God responded when they showed remorse and changed their ways. Sometimes, we may feel that particular individuals are beyond the scope of God's forgiveness. Perhaps we may even feel that we do not deserve forgiveness ourselves.

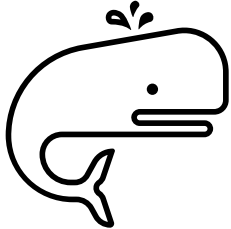
In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted the prophet Joel who said that, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' (Acts 2:21). That statement is not qualified or limited in any way except by the need for us to call. Jesus Himself said, 'Whoever comes to me I will never drive away' (John 6:37).

There is hope for everyone!

Reflections:

- What does it mean to you that Jesus said, 'Whoever comes to me I will never drive away'? Thank Him that He hears when you call out to Him.
- Is there anyone you have felt was beyond being forgiven and saved? Pray for them that they will call on the name of the Lord and be saved.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

