**Thinking about Jonah**

Jonah son of Amittai – see 2 Kings 14:25

Ninevah was ‘One of the cruelest and most violent empires of ancient times. Emperor Shalmaneser III is well known for depicting torture, dismembering and decapitations of his enemies in grisly detail on large stone relief panels… Assyrian history is as gory and bloodcurdling a history as we know – a terrorist state’.

The Prodigal Prophet, Timothy Keller (p10-11)

Why did Jonah run away?

* Fear?

* Hatred of Ninevah?

* Because he couldn’t see any good reason to obey?

**Thinking about Storms**

* Some storms come as a result of our own sin (e.g. Jonah).

* Some storms come as a result of following Jesus (e.g. Matthew 8).

* Sometimes you are caught up in a storm that Is not your fault (e.g. the sailors).

God will use them all to make us more like Jesus (Romans 8:28).

**Thinking about God**

* Jonah knows in his head that God is good (4:2).

* God sends or ‘provides’:

* The wind.

* The fish.

* The plant.

* The worm.

* A scorching wind.

**Jonah starts praying again from inside the fish**

Keller quotes Jim Packer, author of Knowing God, saying that lots of people talk about God’s grace, but there are three truths we need to grasp to understand grace fully:

1. Our moral ill-desert.

2. Our spiritual impotence.

3. The cost of our salvation.

Grace is not just for salvation, but for daily life and ministry as well.

* Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart (2 Corinthians 4:1).

* ‘…How often God allows his ministers to come to an end of themselves in order that they might begin to be more useful in his service.’ (Alastair Begg, in his foreword in Zeal Without Burnout: Seven Keys to a Lifelong Ministry of Sustainable Sacrifice, Chris Ash, The Good Book Company)

**These Inward Trials**

I asked the Lord, that I might grow

In faith, and love, and every grace;

Might more of His salvation know,

And seek more earnestly His face.

I hoped that in some favoured hour

At once He'd answer my request,

And by His love's constraining power

Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel

The hidden evils of my heart;

And let the angry powers of hell

Assault my soul in every part.

Yea more, with His own hand He seemed

Intent to aggravate my woe;

Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,

Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

‘Lord, why is this?’ l trembling cried,

‘Wilt thou pursue Thy worm to death?’

‘’Tis in this way,’ the Lord replied,

I answer prayer for grace and faith.

These inward trials I employ

From self and pride to set thee free;

And break thy schemes of earthly joy,

That thou may’st seek thy all in me.

John Newton

(John Newton’s poem is mentioned in Knowing God, Jim Packer, p 286.)

**God’s amazing grace**

God has work for all of us to do, but it is all grace (Ephesians 2:1-10).

**God’s call**

Eugene Peterson (Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness), on dealing with the inner storms of pastoral ministry:

* Geography (the reality of Ninevah not the dream of Tarshish).

* And Eschatology (Jonah 3:4 – Hebrews 9:27) – is there enough eternity in our preaching?

**God’s power**

Nothing is impossible for God.

Is your vision big enough? Ephesians 3:20-21.

Parallel with the Prodigal Son (The Prodigal Prophet, Tim Keller).

* Jonah 1-2 is like the younger brother.

* Jonah 3-4 is like the older brother.

Grace is shocking

* E.g. workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20).

* E.g. What’s So Amazing About Grace? Philip Yancey.

Jonah’s anger

* God asking gentle questions, e.g. vv4,9.

Emotionally Healthy Discipleship, Peter Scazzero:

* ‘Success is becoming the person that God has made you to be, and doing what he calls you to do, in his way and according to his timetable’ p73-74.

* Danger of going beyond the call of God and becoming angry and self-righteous and burning out.

* Pay attention to your emotions.

* Ignatius on consolation and desolation.

God’s grace is wider than we know.

* Jonah 4:2.

* Exodus 34:6.

‘They cannot tell their right hand from their left’, 4:11.

* I.e. ‘they do not know what they are doing’.

* Jesus’ amazing grace, ‘Father forgive them’.