

## **Unfathomable Love, Unfathomable Forgiveness**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

- Driving up I-5 a few weeks ago...moved to fast lane to pass
- I'm not a speeder so I passed gradually
- After getting around I slid back over into the middle lane.
- Two cars passed with drivers "shaking their fists" at me
- "Where's a cop when you need him" (hoping to see them pulled over)
  
- I remember as a child feeling joy when my brother got in trouble.
- Could have been joy from not getting caught myself.
- At the same time I remember feeling frustration when my brother committed a major offense (by my standards) and received little or no punishment.
- I wanted justice.
  
- This is what is happening in the book of Jonah.
- Continuing our Minor Prophets series today with a look at Jonah.
- Jonah contains many lessons we could look at this morning.
  - Service to others outside of your own culture/country
  - Obeying/Disobeying God's call on your life
  - God's love for all nations...even in the Old Testament
  - Dealing with our grudges towards our enemies
  - Prayer during uncertain times

### **BACKGROUND**

- Jonah was alive during the early 700's BC.
- At this time Assyria was the ruling empire and they were very cruel
- At the same time Assyria was facing a lot of turmoil
  - Revolts were happening from within
  - War with a neighboring nation
- Jonah an Israelite, but called to prophesy to Ninevah, Assyrian capital
- We know the main story here:
  - Jonah called to bring a message to Ninevah
  - He refused and ran away
  - Boarded a ship going away from Ninevah
  - Storm came because of Jonah's disobedience
  - Thrown overboard to save the rest of the ship
  - Swallowed by a "big fish".

- For three days Jonah was in prayer (see chapter 2)
- Vomited out on to dry land.
- God calls him again and this time he obeys without question

## **JONAH'S MESSAGE & NINEVAH'S RESPONSE**

- Destruction is coming in 40 days. Very simple and very direct.
- Remember this is not the Israelites; these are the cruel Assyrians.
- Look at 3:5
- From very top, (see v. 6) the people repented and humbled themselves
- What was God's response? 3:10

## **JONAH'S RESPONSE**

- How did Jonah feel about God's response?
- Read 4:1-3
- Jonah was truly a man of God, but he still had his issues.
- He knew of God's love and of God's forgiveness.
- Inside he knew if the people repented God would relent
- The Assyrians had been cruel captors and Jonah couldn't forgive that
- In rest of this chapter, God basically reminds Jonah that it is not up to him to decide who God loves and forgives.
- God's love was not reserved for one race or one nation

## **CONCLUSION**

- We cannot truly understand how great God's love is.
- It is not like our love. Ours is discriminating, based on emotion.
- God's love is unconditional.
- God calls us with His unconditional love and in turn calls us to love unconditionally.
- Hard lesson for me, when I'm wronged....