

## Kids

- Memory verse:
  - Love others as much as you love yourself
  - Mark 12:31

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## A correcting love

- Jonah, who has already experienced the correcting love of God, now goes to proclaim it to the people of Nineveh (3:3)
- These are harsh, but deserved, words (3:4)
  - and you can appreciate why Jonah did not want to go to such a powerful and evil city
- We are greeted with scorn and vitriol, for instance, for upholding biblical sexual morality...
  - we shy away from speaking out God's evaluation on our world, do we not?
- God's purpose is change - otherwise why bother with the proclaiming!?

## A forgiving love

- When the people and the king repent, God shows them forgiveness and mercy
  - he does not destroy them
  - the king shows real remorse for his country's ways, even though he worships other gods and might well believe that the God of Israel has no power in his country
  - the people believe almost instantly - which contrasts with the stubborn nature of Jonah
- This is the God we worship - a God of forgiveness, of mercy, of grace
  - a God who does not treat us as we deserve...
  - who rather lavish promises upon us - such as Romans 8:
- (33) *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (36) As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." (37) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (38) For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, (39) neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- Or, from 1 John 1:9
- *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
  - and so on...
- God forgives - we are not the good, we are the forgiven

## A lack of love

- Jonah displays a common trait for characters in the Old Testament:
  - throughout books like Deuteronomy, God's people are reminded of what God has done for them, but they all too often forget the past and act on present circumstances
  - Jonah here forgets that God corrected and forgave him for directly disobeying

- him and is bitter that God has not punished the evil people of Nineveh (4:1-3)
- how often do we feel a sense of injustice when people's shortcomings are forgiven and they are given a new start?
- Jonah thought it was so unfair that he wanted to die!

- Guard ourselves against that judgementalism, that lack of love

## A correcting love again

- Its is almost as if God has to teach Jonah his lesson for a second time
  - God uses the illustration of the vine tree to make it clear to a once again stubborn Jonah that HE is a just judge and that Jonah should be as concerned about the Ninevites, as much as he is about himself
  - in doing so, God is patient and extends the same chance of forgiveness to Jonah that he offered to the people of Nineveh (although it is not clear if Jonah was repentant a second time!)
  - it is very easy to point the finger at Jonah for being stubborn and selfish, but we too often dislike the results of God's plan because they don't suit us and our sense of justice
  - we, like Jonah, need to remember that God commands us to love others as we love ourselves
- So, what does that mean?
  - do we condemn others? Judge them?
  - or do we forgive, and give the second start God gives?
- And do we receive God's forgiveness?
  - or do cling on to our sin, wallowing in how big a failure we are rather than receiving the forgiveness and freedom offered in Christ?