

## **FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD 1.24.2021**

Let's look at the Bible readings for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany, Jan. 24, to prepare for on-line, drive-in, and in-person worship (10 am) with Abounding Joy.

### **1ST READING: Jonah 3:1-5, 10    Jonah preaches; a whole city repents**

<sup>1</sup>The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” <sup>3</sup>So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. <sup>4</sup>Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, “Yet

**forty days, and Nineveh shall be over-thrown!”** <sup>5</sup>And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

<sup>10</sup>When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

### **SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO JONAH, CHAPTER 3**

1. The book of the prophet Jonah is only four short chapters long. Take out your Bible and read all of Jonah. It will only take you 10-15 minutes.
2. God's Word works in our hearts in two ways. As Law, by declaring God's expectations of us, it reveals how far we've fallen short. As Gospel, His Word announces the good news that we're forgiven for Jesus' sake. Which kind of Word of God is Jonah called to announce? What's the result?
3. Do you think the Ninevites sudden ability to believe God was their own doing or a gift from the Lord?
4. What do you think of the fact that God changed His mind/plans (vs. 10)?

### **2ND READING: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31    Time is running out**

<sup>29</sup>This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, <sup>30</sup>and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not

rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, <sup>31</sup>and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

## SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO I CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER 7:

1. Paul employs hyperbole (exaggeration) to make the point that our time is limited (before we die or before Jesus returns) so we ought to live with a certain mindset. What's his point regarding ultimate attachments and priorities in this life?
2. In the last sentence (vs. 31) Paul refers to the new heavens and the new earth that God will create when Jesus returns. When God restores earth to be like its original state in the garden of Eden, what will be different from the way life and the world are now?

## THE GOSPEL: Mark 1:14-20 Jesus' call to follow creates followers

<sup>14</sup>After John (the Baptist) was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel.**"

<sup>16</sup>Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

<sup>17</sup>And Jesus said to them, "FOLLOW

me, and I will make you become fishers of people." <sup>18</sup>And immediately they left their nets and FOLLOWED him. <sup>19</sup>And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.

<sup>20</sup>And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and FOLLOWED him.

## SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO MARK, CHAPTER 1:

1. Note the references to urgency in all three readings this week: 40 days in Jonah, "the appointed time has grown short" in I Cor., and "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" and "immediately" here in Mark. How can an awareness of limited time and urgency, spur us to godly action?
2. What causes the fishermen to drop everything and follow Jesus? Is it a matter of human choice or perhaps the powerful Word of God that gets ahold of us and doesn't let us go?
3. Repentance is not so much what we do, as what God does in us and to us. Repentance involves being made aware of our sinfulness and being given the ability to trust God's promises. The first of Martin Luther's 95 theses says, "Our Lord Jesus...wills that the entire life of the believer be one of repentance." What does that look like for you in your daily experience?
4. The word *follow* in Greek is *acolyte*. Through baptism God has saved us and made us all *acolytes*. Get out there and light some fires for the Lord!