

Morning sermon series – Ultimate Value

"Wake-Up call" (Jonah 3v1-10)

The book of Jonah is a wake-up call spiritually, both to Jonah and to the Ninevites. As we've seen, before Jonah can be lifted up by God (2v10), he goes down into the depths (chapters 1 and 2). By chapter 3v1, Jonah does "Arise," as God's word calls him to do, and goes to Nineveh. Dying and rising is the shape of the life of the follower of Jesus, not just being crucified and raised with Christ, but also in the experience of everyday life. The whole of the Christian life is lived in an attitude of repentance, and that means a dying to self. This is both painful and challenging, but also essential for flourishing and fruitfulness.

Matthew 12v39-41: *are we awake to the voice of Jesus?* Three things that happen when individuals or a local church (or a city!) wakes up spiritually. There is a:

1) Wake-up call of judgement (3v1-4)

Jonah tells them, in no uncertain terms, Who is really in charge and what the living God thinks about their lives of hatred and violence (1v1, 3v8). He tells them that the deep, passionate hostility and anger of the God who is love against their evil is a reality (3v4). And the entire city takes God at his word.

If we're not turning from our idols and to Jesus himself as our life, then Jesus says that it will be revealed on the last day that the Ninevites took more notice of Jonah (Matthew 12v41) than we are taking notice of the Lord of everything!

2) Turning to the Lord's presence (3v5-9)

God is powerfully at work by his Spirit in Nineveh and these hardened, Assyrian warriors are brought to their senses. In v8, they're cut to the heart, grieving and fasting, and they call on the Lord with fervour and urgency, turning from their own ways. They make war on their own sin and idols, instead of on other people!

3) Experiencing his pardon and power (3v10)

The Assyrians had to go down into the dust of repentance before they could be lifted up by God's compassion (v10). God also calls us to wake up, to die to our idols (putting them to death by the Spirit, Romans 8v13), to turn to his presence and to experience Christ's resurrection life as his Spirit fills us. This is the only way to flourish and be fruitful (John 12v24-26).