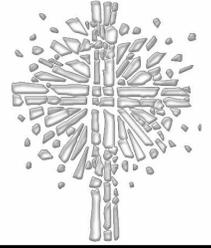




john 15:4  
**A B I D E in ME**



**Bible studies for disciples who make disciples**

**Loudonville Community Church**

**Volume 1 - Number 22**  
 The week of April 10, 2016

**The World's Worst Missionary**  
 Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-10

**THIS WEEK'S CORE STATEMENT**

**The Mission Statement of LCC:** We are committed to reaching and teaching people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ, connecting them to one another and sending them to serve their families, communities and world.

As disciples, mission should be important to us because mission is important to God. The following passage is an excerpt from a chapter written by John R. W. Stott entitled "The Living God is a Missionary God."

*First, He is the God of history. History is not a random flow of events. For God is working out in time a plan which he conceived in a past eternity and will consummate in a future eternity. In this historical process Jesus Christ, as the Seed of Abraham, is the key figure. Let's rejoice that if we are Christ's disciples we are Abraham's descendants. We belong to his spiritual lineage. If we have received the blessings of justification by faith, acceptance with God, and of the indwelling Spirit, then we are beneficiaries today of promises made to Abraham four thousand years ago.*

*Second, He is the God of the covenant. That is, God is gracious enough to make promises, and he always keeps the promise he makes. He is a God of steadfast love and faithfulness. Not that he always fulfills his promises immediately. Abraham and Sarah "died in faith not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar" (Heb. 11:13). That is, although Isaac was born to them in fulfillment of the promise, their seed was not yet numerous, nor was the land given to them, nor were the nations blessed. All God's promises come true, but they are inherited "through faith and patience" (Heb. 6:12). We have to be content to wait for God's time.*

*Third, He is the God of blessing. "I will bless you," he said to Abraham (Gen. 12:2). "God...sent him [Jesus] to you first, to bless you," echoed Peter (Acts 3:26). God's attitude to his people is positive, constructive, enriching. Judgment is his "strange work" (Isa. 28:21). His principal and characteristic work is to bless people with salvation.*

*Fourth, he is the God of mercy. I have always derived much comfort from the statement of Revelation 7:9 that the company of the redeemed in heaven will be "a great multitude which no man could number." I do not profess to know how this can be, since Christians have always seemed to be a rather small minority. But Scripture states it for our comfort. Although no biblical Christian can be a universalist (believing that all mankind will ultimately be saved), since Scripture teaches the awful reality and eternity of hell, yet a biblical Christian can—even must—assert that the redeemed will somehow be an international throng so immense as to be countless. For God's promise is going to be fulfilled, and Abraham's seed is going to be as innumerable as the dust of the earth, the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore.*

*Fifth, he is the God of mission. The nations are not gathered in automatically. If God has promised to bless "all the families of the earth," he has promised to do so "through Abraham's seed" (Gen. 12:3; 22:18). Now we are Abraham's seed by faith, and the earth's families will be blessed only if we go to them with the gospel. That is God's plain purpose.*

*I pray that these words, "all the families of the earth," may be written on our hearts. It is this expression more than any other which reveals the living God of the Bible to be a missionary God. It is this expression, too, which condemns all our petty parochialism and narrow nationalism, our racial pride (whether white or black), our condescending paternalism and arrogant imperialism. How dare we adopt a hostile or scornful or even indifferent attitude to any person of another color or culture if our God is the God of "all the families of the earth?" We need to become global Christians with a global vision, for we have a global God. So may God help us never to forget his four-thousand-year-old promise to Abraham: "By you and your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."*

## This Week's Complementary Passage

### Revelation 7:9-17 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" <sup>11</sup> And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." <sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" <sup>14</sup> I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. <sup>16</sup> They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. <sup>17</sup> For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Marking Guide for Acts  
(not all words occur in the passage)

appointed

baptized

Caesar

enemy/demons/Satan

eternal life

fathers & children [in one color  
different from Moses]

Gentiles

gospel

grace

Holy Spirit

in the name of Jesus Christ

Jesus

Jews

Law (of Moses)

men of the council

Moses [in different color from  
fathers & children]

prayer

repent (repentance)

resurrection (raised up)

salvation

suffering

the Way

the promise of the Father

witnesses

word of God

### STEP ONE . . .

**READING** what the passage says  
(Read it at least three times)

Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-10 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." <sup>3</sup> But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> Then 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 overthrown!" <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>6</sup> The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. <sup>7</sup> And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, <sup>8</sup> but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. <sup>9</sup> Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish."

<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.

**STEP TWO . . .**

**OBSERVING** how the passage moves

Return to the passage and **mark key words, phrases and movements:**

- Circle all of the words in this passage that speak of the Triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, etc.).
- Underline the significant verbs/action words in this passage.
- In Jonah 1:1, underline the phrase “Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah.”
- In Jonah 1:2, underline the phrase “go to Nineveh.”
- In Jonah 1:3, underline the sentence “But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.”
- In Jonah 3:1, underline the phrase “Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time.”
- In Jonah 3:2, underline the phrase “go to Nineveh.”
- In Jonah 3:3, underline the sentence “So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.”
- Highlight Jonah 3:5.
- In Jonah 3:8, underline the phrase “Let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.”
- Highlight Jonah 3:9-10.

**STEP THREE . . .**

**Ask the five “W” questions and the one “H” question:**

1. **WHO** is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters? And, to **whom** is it speaking?
2. **WHAT** is the subject of the passage? What does the passage say about the subject?
3. **WHEN** do or will the events occur? When did something happen to a particular person, people, or nation?
4. **WHERE** did or will this happen?
5. **WHY** is something said or mentioned? Why would or will this happen? Why at this time? Why this person?
6. **HOW** will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

## STEP FOUR . . .

### UNDERSTANDING what the passage means

*This commentary is intended to enhance your own study of the text.*

#### Commentary on Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-10 (ESV)

**1:1 - “The word of the Lord.”** The formula is somewhat common in the Old Testament as a divine directive for a prophetic mission.

**“Jonah the son of Amittai.”** Jonah literally means “dove.” A dove is also a home-loving bird, and in that respect Jonah was well suited to his name. More than anything he loved his own nation and people. The trouble was that it excluded everyone else. This fierce and narrow nationalism is the key to his stubborn disobedience. It is also the character trait that God addresses throughout the book. Jonah was in the midst of his prophetic career. He was the most popular prophet of his day due to his consistently optimistic forecasts regarding the military successes of Jeroboam II.

**1:2 - “Nineveh.”** Concerning Nineveh, we must observe that it was a foreign city. Normally the prophets of Israel did not leave their native land to pronounce the judgment of the Lord on Gentile nations. This is the first of many surprises in this book of surprises, namely that God would dispatch a prophet to preach his word in a Gentile city. Nineveh was a “great city” politically, demographically and geographically. It was one of the main centers of the Assyrian empire. Nineveh was a wicked city. In fact God declared that “their wickedness has come up before me.” Their wickedness was so great that God himself had taken judicial note of it. Escalating wickedness in society demands heavenly censure. The wickedness of the Assyrians included idolatry and pride, cruel oppression, and especially inhumane warfare. Nineveh was a city under divine condemnation. Jonah was to “cry against” the place, i.e., announce God’s judgment there (1:2). The name Nineveh struck terror into the hearts of all those living in western Asia in this period.

**1:3 - “To flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.”** Jonah sought to do the impossible; he tried to run away from God. This was a gross act of disobedience and was in fact an outright rejection of his prophetic calling.

**“Tarshish.”** Instead of heading east to Nineveh, Jonah headed due west to the city of Tarshish, which was an ancient Phoenician colony on the southwest coast of Spain. It was about the farthest city to the west known at that time.

**“Joppa.”** Jonah traveled some sixty miles from his home in Gath-hepher to Joppa, the only quality seaport on the coast of ancient Israel. Since the Israelites were not noted seamen, Jonah’s willingness to embark on such a long and dangerous voyage is evidence of his stubborn determination to abandon his ministry.

**3:1 - “The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time.”** Thank God for second chances! The marvelous grace of God seeks to find effective service even for those who once were rebellious to the divine calling. How gracious is this second call! There is no remonstrance and no mention of the first call and Jonah’s reckless abandonment of responsibility. There was no need to make Jonah feel guiltier than he already felt.

**3:3 - “So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.”** The last time Jonah had heard the word of the Lord; he got up and made a run for it—in the opposite direction. This time he obeys. He has made his vows and intends to keep them.

**“Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days’ journey in breadth.”** In Jonah’s day the circumference of the city was about three miles, hardly a distance that would take three days to travel. Either Jonah is including the suburbs of greater Nineveh, or he is indicating that it would have taken three days to deliver his message in all sections of the city.

**3:4 - “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”** Many people think Jonah must have said a lot more which is not recorded. Doubtless he did, but it may have been that he simply answered the natural questions fired at him from people whose consciences had been stirred. They would have been anxious to find out about this God who was threatening them. And what had they done specifically which had angered him so? What could they do to assuage his wrath? The situation demanded answers. Clearly the message that Nineveh would be overthrown was a devastating one. It was a solemn message of impending judgment and suggested that something cataclysmic would shortly befall them. This was the issue at the heart of Jonah’s grievance. He had prophesied destruction and would only be happy if it came to pass. However, the word translated ‘overthrown’ can also mean ‘turn upside down.’ In other words, if Nineveh experienced a complete and radical change of heart she could legitimately be described as having been ‘overthrown.’ This is of course precisely what happened.

**3:5 - “And the people of Nineveh believed God.”** The people of Nineveh took Jonah to be a faithful prophet and embraced the message he was bringing them from the Lord. It was God’s message they heard and God’s message they believed. However ‘believing God’ goes deeper than just believing what they had been told. It also means that they believed *in* God. They were not merely heeding his warning but were casting themselves upon him. The declaration of a fast and the wearing of sackcloth was an outward expression reflecting a genuine and heartfelt turning away from sin. But the fact that they believed in God indicates that the ‘turning away’ was matched by a ‘turning to’ at the same time. In a single movement they turned their backs upon their old way of life and turned their faces in hope to the God of mercy.

**3:6 - “The word reached the king of Nineveh.”** The king of Nineveh was moved to repentance by Jonah’s message of doom. He arose from his throne, put aside his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on a heap of ashes. From that lowly spot he issued a proclamation in his own name and that of his nobles. The king called for an absolute fast. Neither man nor beast should eat anything or drink any water.

**3:8 - “Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.”** The king was not satisfied with mere ritual manifestation of repentance. He ordered a change of conduct on the part of his people. Every person was to turn from “his evil way.” In this demand the pagan king of Nineveh sounds very much like an Israelite prophet. The Lord is never satisfied with religious ritual devoid of ethical conduct. The God of the Bible always demands personal reformation as the price of restoring fellowship with sinful persons. The particular wickedness of which Nineveh was guilty was violence. Violence is social injustice, it is trampling the rights of other people, and it is man’s inhumanity to his fellowman. In their foreign policy the Assyrians were more ruthless than any people in the ancient world. The king, however, is referring to individual behavior within the city.

**3:9 - “Who knows? God may turn and relent from his fierce anger.”** The king was not sure that even these drastic measures would avert the calamity. Perhaps God would withdraw his burning anger and spare Nineveh. The king, though he was a pagan, recognized the sovereignty of God. Man’s action does not dictate divine action. It only makes possible a change of disposition which might lead to the revoking of a threat.

**3:10 -** God saw the deeds of the people of Nineveh. They had experienced a genuine change of heart. They had turned from their wicked ways. Repentance opens up the possibility of reprieve if not pardon. The Lord did not do as he had said he would do. Because his grace never changes, the Lord can change his threatened judgments. The point is that a prophecy of doom is not absolute. Prophetic warnings of judgment are actually designed to elicit repentance. God is not so insecure that he must execute his every threat in order to establish his immutability. In his abundant compassion the Lord looks for the slightest reason to delay judgment. His threats are actually a tool in his program to reach the hearts of people and lead them to his salvation.

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## STEP FIVE . . .

### SUMMARIZING the message

God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrian empire, and deliver a message that He entrusts to him. God’s message is a warning that He is going to judge the people of Nineveh for their evil ways. Jonah, who considers the people of Nineveh to be undeserving and beyond the reach of God’s mercy, fears that God will spare the people of Nineveh if they hear His words and repent. As a result, rather than obeying God and going to Nineveh, Jonah flees in another direction instead. He boards a ship in Joppa that is bound for Tarshish.

God, showing great patience calls Jonah a second time. This time Jonah reluctantly obeys. When he gets to Nineveh, however, the only message he proclaims is one of destruction.

When the people of Nineveh hear what Jonah has to say, they believe God and repent of their sins. They express their remorse by fasting, sitting in sackcloth and ashes, praying, and turning away from their evil and violent ways. By doing this they hope that God will relent and turn from his anger so that they might not perish.

When God sees what the people of Nineveh have done and how they have turned from their evil ways, He does turn from His anger and spare them. Jonah’s response is to become exceedingly angry.

In the end we see that the story of Jonah is really not about Jonah. It is mostly about God who is the ultimate hero of the story. It is God who saves Nineveh, not Jonah. Actually, God saved Nineveh in spite of Jonah.

This unfolds a profound truth about the character of God. His loving-kindness is not limited by the prejudices and preconceptions of people. Jonah may have considered the people of Nineveh to be undeserving and beyond the reach of God’s mercy. Yet, in spite of what Jonah thought, God showed that His saving grace extends to all who repent and believe.

**STEP SIX . . .**

**EXPLORING** the passage through discussion

1. What exactly did God tell Jonah to do in 1:2?
2. By the time of Jonah, Nineveh was an ancient city. Do you know who built it (see Genesis 10:6-11)?
3. Do you, like Jonah, think there are people in the world who don't deserve to hear the Gospel message?
4. Jonah tried to get away from God's presence (1:3). Is this possible (see Psalm 139:7-12)?
5. If you were Jonah, how would you feel when the word of the Lord came to you a second time (3:1-2)?
6. Why did the people of Nineveh repent (see 3:5)?





## THE MISSION OF LOUDONVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are committed to reaching and teaching people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ, connecting them to one another and sending them to serve their families, communities and world.

### 10 CORE BELIEFS OF A DISCIPLE

#### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

#### **The Godhead** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

#### **The Deity and Sinlessness of Christ** *Colossians 2:9*

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life.

#### **The Sufficient Atonement of Christ** *2 Corinthians 5:19-21*

We believe in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood.

#### **The Resurrection and Return of Christ** *Acts 1:3, 9-11*

We believe in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

#### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential and that a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

#### **The Ministry of the Holy Spirit** *John 14:16*

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

#### **Unity in Christ** *Ephesians 2:14-17*

We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **Eternity** *Revelation 21:22-27*

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

#### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

We believe that everything we have or own belongs to God.

### 10 CORE PRACTICES OF A DISCIPLE

#### **Undiluted Worship** *Matthew 22:37-40*

Loving the Lord God with all of our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual vigor and, my neighbor as myself.

#### **Constant Abiding** *John 15:1-11*

Abiding in Christ in order to be faithful and bear fruit.

#### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

Reading the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for daily life.

#### **Desperate Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

Praying to God to know Him, laying requests before Him and, finding direction for daily life.

#### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

Fellowshipping with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, other people's lives and, in the world.

#### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

Using my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

#### **Total Forgiveness** *Ephesians 4:30*

Practicing forgiving others as God has forgiven me in Christ.

#### **Tangible Compassion** *Matthew 25:31-46*

Showing compassion to those in need and so minister to Jesus Himself.

#### **Generous Giving** *2 Corinthians 8:7*

Giving away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

#### **God Space** *Ephesians 6:19-20*

Increasing the quantity and quality of our gospel conversations.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES OF A DISCIPLE

### **Love - a sincere affection for others** *1 John 4:10-12*

Love is acting in someone else's interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

### **Joy - a delight unaffected by circumstances** *John 15:11*

An inner delight in God that is sustained in spite of the changing seasons of life.

### **Peace - an abiding sense of harmony** *Philippians 4:6-7*

Relationships are free from friction. Positively, it describes harmonious relations with others in the church.

### **Patience - a willingness to stick with things** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

Being willing to live with a difficult situation for a long time—even if things are slow to change or never change.

### **Kindness - a sense of compassion in the heart** *Job 6:14*

An inner disposition that puts others at ease and out of which kind actions flow.

### **Goodness - a goodness that flows outwardly** *1 Thess. 5:15*

Choosing to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Faithfulness - an unwavering loyalty** *Psalm 26:3*

Being the kind of people who keep our word to one another.

### **Gentleness/Humility - an attitude of humility without any entitlement; a lack of self-awareness** *Philippians 4:5; 2:3-4*

Gentleness is power and strength under God's control.

Humility is considering others above myself, if I consider myself at all.

### **Self-Control - an ability to direct your energy wisely**

*Titus 2:11-13*

The strength to restrain our desires, emotions, and actions has to come from within rather than from some outside source.

### **Hope - a certainty of what is to come** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

Coping with the hardships of life and with death because of hope in Christ.

Each week this Bible Study will feature either a core belief, practice or virtue vital for growing disciples.



**# OT in 52**  
(52 weeks through the Old Testament)

**OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE READING IN A YEAR**

Monday, April 10 thru Saturday, April 16  
Joshua 23-Judges 1, 2-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-13

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