

3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time -yr B

The scripture readings today speak of such spiritual values as repentance, forgiveness, and trust in the Lord. We see each of these values brought out in the story of Jonah receiving a message from God to go to this big city of Nineveh and take on this immense task to get the people to repent of their sins and change their ways, or in forty days, God would destroy the city. In the story, Jonah didn't think much of this assignment by the Lord so he tried to hide from him by sailing away on a boat. But then the boat gets tossed around in a storm and Jonah ends up in the water and gets swallowed by a big fish. So much for refusing the Lord's request! I can just imagine Jonah was saying, Lord, this request of yours is way over my head. I can't take this job on. You better ask someone more powerful than me. Well, God doesn't always pick out the most important or powerful person to do something in this world. We saw that when he selected ordinary fisher men as his apostles and other common folks mentioned in the bible. So, Jonah could see how large the city of Nineveh was, and what a large task the Lord

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asks him to take on. But on the second try to accomplish the Lord's offer, Jonah accepts the Lord's order, and we see Jonah complete the task of convincing the people of Nineveh to repent of their sinful ways. Today that city is known as Mosul, the capital of the northern province of Iraq. The moral of the story, Jonah repented and God was patient with him, so he was given a second opportunity to make good. God also gives us a new opportunity to receive forgiveness when we listen to him, and repent of our wrong doings. We know when the Lord speaks to our heart, as he did in Jonah's case, we must respond out of love as faithful and true disciples. --- Here is a short tale about a little boy asking for forgiveness and trying to amend his life. He also needs a second opportunity to do good. The tale goes like this; --- little Johnny was basically a good boy, but he had this problem with his temper. His bouts of anger would flare up from time to time. His mother would tell him, Johnny, you are making it very difficult for people to love you. So, on New Year's day, he made a resolution; I am going to repent and control my temper. Johnny went to the back yard, piled a heap

important Repentance is the message Today

show Repentance

JUST AS JONAH NEEDED

He said,

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of dirt together, put a cross on top of it. He wrote on the cross, Rest In Pease, old bad temper! Then he went into the house and told his mother, In the back yard I buried that old bad Johnny, today I am the new Johnny” I have repented and I am controlling my temper from now on. But a couple a days later, he got into a nasty fight with his sister. His sister was mad at Johnny. So she went to the back yard where Johnny had placed the grave that said “old bad Johnny buried here.” She put a new sign in its place that said ----Johnny is not here---old bad Johnny has arisen! ^{so you see,} -★ Sometimes good intentions don’t always hold up in our lives.---Turning to the gospel, Jesus made the announcement, “this is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.” We should take note of this message by Jesus since no one knows what the future holds for each one of us here and now, or how much longer we have on this earth. We should accept these words of Jesus as He has conquered death and was raised from the grave, to show us, if we accept his divine gospel message and live according to His word, our reward will be eternal life with

him forever in Heaven. So, this should be a wake-up call, to tell each of us, our time on earth should be used according to live according to our Christian up-bringing. To be more in line with Jesus, we need to be less involved in our own self and in worldly things, and more devoted to our Savior who looks after all our physical needs. We saw in the gospel today how the apostles were more devoted in what Jesus had in-store for them. They immediately left their families and their lively hood and followed Jesus. In the story of Jonah and the lives of the apostles, there was something very compelling about Jesus to cause these men and others to follow Him into an uncertain future. The Lord opened their hearts to cause them to listen and obey the call. As Christians, as true disciples of Jesus, we have to listen and be drawn to Him when he speaks to our hearts. So in our life time, as disciples we must share the compassion of Christ with others who have not received the Lord. Today Jesus is talking to us through the scripture in Mark 1:15. It says, " the time has come and the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the good news!" God bless!