



March 19, 2023  
Jonah 3—Re-LENT-less  
***Worship Notes***

## WELCOME VIDEO

### PREPARATION MUSIC      *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.

There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven.

There is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind.

And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's Word,  
and our lives reflect thanksgiving for the goodness of our Lord.

***Psalm 86:15 But you, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. The God of scripture is alive and able to work mighty miracles for those who love him. The Lord alone is "worthy to receive the glory and the honor and the power" (Revelation 4:11). While people around the world believe in many heathen deities, you never have to fear that God is only one among many or that you may be worshipping the wrong God. The Lord alone is God!***

## WELCOME AND PRAYERS

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Lord, the story of Jonah reminds us of your never-ending love for all creation.

**People: May we be like the people of Nineveh, who were able to acknowledge their sin and open their eyes to your healing presence.**

Leader: Though you stand ready to forgive our sin, we find it easier to bite our tongues, clench our fists, and cling to our hurts and resentments rather than let you open our hearts.

**People: We trust you, Holy One; we pour out our hearts to you. Receive our pain as we offer up what we have hidden from ourselves and from the world—those words and deeds that keep us separated from your love.**

Leader: When we repent, God you relent, lifting us beyond the pain, restoring us to safety, protecting us in the refuge of eternal love.

**People: Jesus has called us to leave our comfortable ways and venture forward with him. Open our hearts, Lord and teach us your ways as we worship you today.**

*(A prayer)* Thank you, Father, for your patience and determination. It is impossible to run from you. You could have let Jonah die and simply found a more willing servant, but you did not give up on him. You had mercy on him in spirit of his rebellion, just as you would have mercy on the Ninevites in spite of theirs. Who am I to judge sinful people who do not even know you, when I who do know you willfully disobey you? Cleanse my heart, O God, and fill me with compassion for the lost. Lord, make me a light to the nations. A light so bright that the whole world can see. Your light is here to put out the darkness: Lord, may the whole world see your light in me.

**SONG OF PRAISE (26)     *Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven***

**Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,  
to his feet your tribute bring;  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
evermore his praises sing.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! praise the everlasting King!**

**Praise him for his grace and favor  
to our fathers in distress.  
Praise him, still the same forever,  
slow to chide and swift to bless.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! glorious in his faithfulness!**

**Fatherlike, he tends and spares us;  
all our hopes and fears he knows.  
In his hands he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! widely as his mercy flows.**

**Angels, help us to adore him,  
you behold him face to face.  
Sun and moon, bow down before him;  
all who dwell in time and space.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! praise with us the God of grace.**

*Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the Lord, O my soul, (Psalm 103:22). A life of praise and an inner joy and contentment are interwoven—they are complements of each other. Such a life is the result of being absorbed with God. For such an individual the pursuit of God's glory, the Lordship of Christ, and the worship and praise of our Creator-redeemer become a natural way of living. To this person the blessing of God never become commonplace. More words from Psalm 103: 3-10-- who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.*

### **SONG OF PRAISE**

### ***May the Peoples Praise You***

You have called us out of darkest night into your glorious light  
That we may sing the wonders of the risen Christ.  
May our every breath retell the grace that broke into our strife.  
With boundless love and deepest joy with endless life.  
May the peoples praise you, let the nations be glad.  
All your blessing comes that we may praise, may praise the Name of Jesus.

All the earth is yours and all within each harvest is your own.  
And from your hand we give to you to make Christ known  
May the seeds of mercy grow in us for those who have not heard  
May songs of praise build lives of grace to spread your Word.  
May the peoples praise you, let the nations be glad.  
All your blessing comes that we may praise, may praise the Name of Jesus.

This our holy privilege to declare your praises and your name  
To every nation, tribe and tongue your church proclaims.  
May the peoples praise you, let the nations be glad.  
All Your blessing comes that we may praise, may praise the Name of Jesus.  
Holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, worthy, worthy is the Lamb who was slain.  
Holy, holy is the Lord Almighty all creation praise your glorious Name.

May the peoples praise you let the nations be glad.  
All your blessing comes that we may praise, may praise the Name of Jesus.  
May the peoples praise you, let the nations be glad.  
All your blessing comes that we may praise,  
May praise the Name of Jesus. We praise the name of Jesus.

*Psalm 67:5 (May God cause His Face to shine upon us) ...4Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You judge the peoples justly and lead the nations of the earth. 5Let the peoples praise*

*You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. 6The earth has yielded its harvest; God, our God, blesses us....* Could the psalmist have looked across the years to see the gospel go throughout the earth? This psalm surely speaks of the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), when Jesus commanded that the message of God's Good News be taken to all nations. Count yourself among that great crowd of believers worldwide who know the Savior, praise him for his Good News, and share that gospel until there is an abundant harvest.

## **SCRIPTURE AND MESSAGE**

Jonah 3 Re-LENT-less

The Assyrians of Nineveh were perhaps the least likely people of their day to repent of sin and turn to God. Yet when Johan came preaching the Lord's imminent judgment they believed God and immediately proclaimed a fast to show their sincere sorrow for wickedness and idolatry. While many factors may have accounted for their sudden change of attitude, we know God has a way of drawing people and of arranging events so people are more likely to turn toward Him. Assyria in Jonah's day was perhaps ideally primed to hear and respond to a message of repentance. The empire was in decline due to uprisings among its vassal states and political turmoil at home. This event is thought to be around 759BC on the heels of several important events: The death of young king Shalmaneser IV with no successor. This created political instability. There was a famine in Nineveh, a military defeat which coincided with a total eclipse of the sun—for the Assyrians, a sure sign of ill fortune. Floods following the eclipse, an earthquake. In light of these troubling phenomena, it is not surprising that the Assyrians listened to Jonah's message. Like the sailors in the storm who cried out to whatever gods might save them, the Ninevites were probably willing to try anything to return some stability to their land. They heeded the Lord's warning, and he withheld judgment.

Like Jonah, we have been commissioned to take the gospel of repentance and salvation to the nations of the world. In doing so, it might be well to consider our efforts to spread the gospel. With the current state of events (upheavals, natural disasters) in our city, country, world, where is there instability and more openness to a message of grace? (we saw this in the recent increased attention to prayer with the heart related injury of Buffalo's football player Damar). We should remember God invariably responds with compassion when people genuinely repent of their sins and turn to Him!

## **PRAYERS**

### **SONG OF RESPONSE**

*Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy*

**Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,  
weak and wounded, sick and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
full of pity, love, and power.**

**Refrain: I will arise and go to Jesus;  
he will embrace me in his arms;  
in the arms of my dear Savior,  
O, there are ten thousand charms.**

**Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome,  
God's free bounty glorify;  
true belief and true repentance,  
every grace that brings you nigh. (Refrain)**

**Let not conscience make you linger,  
nor of fitness fondly dream;  
all the fitness he requireth  
is to feel your need of him. (Refrain)**

**Come, ye weary, heavy laden,  
lost and ruined by the fall;  
if you tarry till you're better,  
you will never come at all. (Refrain)**

**The writer of this hymn, Joseph Hart was raised a Christian and given a splendid education. He turned away from the Lord in his twenties and became an enemy of the Cross. Later describing himself as a “monstrous sinner,” he wrote, “I ran such dangerous lengths both of carnal and of spiritual wickedness that I outwent professed infidels.” He wrote an anti-Christian pamphlet entitled, “The Unreasonableness of Religion” in response to a sermon John Wesley had preached from Romans 8:32. Later, on a Pentecost Sunday, he was struck by a sermon from Revelation 3:10 (Because you have kept my command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”. He fell on his knees in broken repentance. “My horrors were immediately dispelled,” he said, “and such light and comfort flowed into my heart, as no words can paint.” Soon Joseph was producing Christian writings and entered the ministry. This is his most well known hymn today, and an expression of his testimony.**

## **BLESSING**

## **CLOSING MUSIC**

### **Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy**

**I will arise and go to Jesus; he will embrace me with his arms;  
in the arms of my dear Savior, O there are ten thousand charms.**