

God's Calling Requirements Part 61

From the Life of Jonah Part 3

The fasting of the People of Nineveh

"1 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. 3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. 5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." (Jonah 3:1-10 KJV)

"1 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." (Jonah 3:1-2 KJV) Here the Word of God came to Jonah for the second time in relationship to the mission that God sent him to the people of Nineveh. After God spoke to the great fish and vomited Jonah, *"10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." (Jonah 2:10 KJV)* He also spoke to Jonah to go to Nineveh. Notice here that God spoke to Jonah again about the same mission when he was willing to obey God and to fulfill his vow towards God. *Notice here that the time that you are willing to obey God and to fulfill your vows toward Him, then He will speak to you and directs you of what you need to do.*

Some people they will say that God is no more is speaking to me. The reasons behind that, because they are not willing to obey God, walk in His ways and follow His instructions. In the same way God shall speak to you and guide you of what you need to do if you are willing to amend your ways and follow God.

"2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." (Jonah 3:2 KJV) God did not change His mind about His plan for Jonah. What He asked him to do is the same, and He spoke to him, he told him to do the same, to go to Nineveh and to preach to them what God will instruct him to preach of His Word. *God will not change His mind about the mission that He is giving to you because he is dealing with your attitude, and He will give you His Word to go to*

certain people to preach to them His Word and to tell them the message of God to them.

Many who serve God they want to twist the arm of God and they want to do their own will, but this will not work and God will not be bent for their wrong desires and wishes. God when He saved you, He had assigned you the mission that you need to do for Him. *You cannot run away from God and try to do your own. God's Word again and again will come to you and will instruct you to do the same of what He asked you. Even if this will take you years to do, God still will continue to press on you to do the same.*

"3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey." (Jonah 3:3 KJV) *"So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD."* Finally, praise God, Jonah was convinced to go and indeed he went according to the word of the Lord. *God wants you to go according to the Word of the Lord, and not according to your opinion, your wishes, or other people words.*

"Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey." Great city it mean big in size and occupied much people, and that also another reason why God so concern about them. Nineveh at that time were greater than Babylon. In whatever city you are located God placed you there to persevere in giving or sending His Word to those people around you. Nineveh was a three days journey, it means it needs a man to walk three days in order to compass the whole city and visit its places. If average man walk is two miles per hour then per day is approximately 20 miles, and for three days 60 miles.

"4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." (Jonah 3:4 KJV) Immediately once Jonah entered the city he started to preach to them the Word of God and the terrible message that God asked Him to preach, *"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."* Jonah preaching was crying to the people calling them to repent and return to God because otherwise Nineveh shall be overthrown. How Jonah got the courage to preach to the cruel Ninevites, who might even kill him on the spot when they will recognize him an Israelites whom they invaded before, and now he is coming to tell them that their great city will be overthrown after forty days? The previous terrible and horrible experience of Jonah inside the belly of the great fish made him realize the seriousness of the message of God in bringing His judgment on the people of Nineveh and that motivated him the more to the preaching without fear and without reluctant, to cry to the people. Jonah's experience in the belly of the big fish was a visitation to hell. There are people God take them to hell and after that he bring them back to preach what they saw; and you see them preaching without fear. Jonah was such one of them as we read, *"1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, 2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice." (Jonah 2:1-2)* It might be also Jonah had burns on his body because the acid of the stomach of the big fish caused him burns on his skin. Therefore, with a loud voice he proclaimed the message of what he passed through and might be he showed them the burns and the changing of color due to the effect of the whale digestive secretion on his skin, in order to let people as much as he can to hear and understand the serious message of God. In his message the people were

given forty days to repent otherwise the city will be suddenly overthrown by the power of God. *In the same way, when you preach the Word of God you need to do it with passion to warn sinner that the judgment of God shall come on those who refuse Christ's work on the cross and on those who refuse to comply and follow His Word and His ways and His will.*

Jonah was so serious in doing that task that when he finished his first day journey around the city, he found himself no need to continue to reach other places in the next day because the news about God's message was spread to the other parts of the city. *God wants you to do the same when you preach His Word, with full conviction that His judgment will fall on sinners and they will be consumed with His wrath if they will not repent, then the people themselves will spread the message further than what you can reach.*

"5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." (Jonah 3:5 KJV) So the people of Nineveh believed God: Amazingly they took the message of Jonah as God was speaking to them. Jonah opened his mouth and the Holy Spirit of God ministered to them and convicted them to believe. It is not strange with God that He will do the same for us. *Many times our fear block us to see that God can still do great things in convicting the worse sinners and bringing them to Him.* Apostle Paul mentioned the same about the Thessalonians how they received his preaching with the divine power of the Holy Ghost, ***"4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia."*** (1 Thessalonians 1:4-7 KJV) and as the Word of God and not the word of men, ***"13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."*** (1 Thessalonians 2:13 KJV)

and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. Now fasting, putting sackcloth is known to the Jewish the people of God that they will do that in response to repentance and coming back to God. But how the people of Nineveh did such? Probably they knew it from their previous invasions to the land of the Israelites. Or possibly, Jonah explained that to them or heard it from him while he was preaching, or he might told how he fasted three days in the belly of the big fish, how he repented and how God heard his prayers and saved him.

The message that Jonah delivered to them caused the fear of God to fall on them. Therefore what we need when we preach is not to convince the people but to obey fully God who can change the mind and the thoughts of the people and convict them to repent and to fear Him and to be changed.

from the greatest of them even to the least of them. They complied all with fasting and putting on sackcloth ***"6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes."*** (Jonah 3:6 KJV) So here the command of fasting and putting on sackcloth came from the highest authority in Nineveh, from the king, and who can think that the king did it first, that he repented and commanded the whole city to do such as we read here, ***"7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands."*** (Jonah 3:7-8 KJV)

How the king heard of Jonah and his message? Most likely from the people who heard the message. Jonah might even explain to those who respond to his preaching how he was swollen by the big fish when he disobeyed God and ran to Tarshish. Might be the story of Jonah brought more horror to them from God, so the more they were earnest to spread the message and it reached to their king. May be they knew that Jonah had come to them from the same place that they invaded and destroyed years ago and that God is going to overthrow the city of what they did if they will not repent, that made them more afraid. *See here, your enemy you should never plan to harm him, but do your best to preach to him the Word of God.* Nineveh at that time was greater than Babylon, but Jonah alone subdued Nineveh in one day without any army or weapon but with the gospel of God and His salvation. Therefore we too, we need to do the same, reaching our enemies with the Gospel of Jesus and with the Word of God.

The king when he heard the message, he repented and he started to work and to serve God, ***"7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands."*** (Jonah 3:7-8 KJV) The king became a worker for God. He used his authority over the city to bring the justice of God over everyone of the people and his subjects, publishing proclaiming the instructions of fasting to everyone, man and beast, neither to eat nor to drink, but to everyone to be humbled, humiliated and put on sackcloth and cry and pray mightily to God asking for His mercy, in addition the king instructed the people that everyone of them need to turn away from doing evil and from their violence.

True fasting is accompanied by repentance that shown in humbleness, showing humility, turning away from doing evil and refrain from violence which we practice to enforce doing our own.

"9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (Jonah 3:9 KJV) Here the king explained to them in his proclamation that these measures of repentance may cause God to turn away from his fierce anger so they will not perish. He was pleading the mercy of God. The king also said, ***Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not, it***

means he was convicted that they were wicked people and they deserved the judgment of God. That was a great humility and shows the great humility that the message of God brought upon the king.

“10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.” (Jonah 3:10 KJV)

And God saw their works: When they heard the message they worked it out to produce fruit goes with repentance as John the Baptist said in his preaching, ***“8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:” (Matthew 3:8 KJV)*** Repentance need to be associated with good work. Paul when Jesus appeared to him cause him to loss temporarily his sight and caused Paul to repent, whom later obeyed the Heavenly vision and went and preached to the nations that they need to repent and turn to God and do works go along repentance: ***“19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.” (Acts 26:19-20 KJV)***

And God saw, that they turned from their evil way: Repentance associated with turning away from their evil way, to turn away from stealing, cheating, extortion, telling lies, violence against others, abuse, taking advantage, immoralities, etc.

That is why we need to be obedience to the Heavenly vision and go and preach the gospel, because when the people repent and turn from their evil ways they will be holy people, God’s people, helpful people and workers with us in His Kingdom.

My Dear and Beloved: What we learn from the story, that whatever people are ruthless and hard in heart God can change them, therefore we still need to preach the message to them. The people of Nineveh were cruel people, yet they repented on Jonah preaching. And they showed their genuine repentance by humility and fasting.

God’s Word teaching us new things every day and directs us how God wants us to live our lives. Let us commit ourselves to the principles we learn in this message; to continue to obey God and to be obedient to the Heavenly vision that we need to go and tell others about Him, trust Him that He will change the people and He will work of what we preach and teach of His Word.

Let us pray

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died for my sins on the cross and rose from the dead to give me eternal life.

Confess your sins now to the Lord _____. Now renounce all the wrong evil doings and your violence and turn to God and do the good works that God prepared for you to do.

Be willing to be obedient to the Heavenly vision and what God wants you to do.

Lord I put myself into your hand to use me in a new mission work and field for your glory. Give me the strength, the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit to do that.

Lord I pray for my Brethren who repented and come back to you, Lord restores them back to your good plan that you have for them. Lord I pray that they will submit themselves fully to you and start to reproduce the fruit of the Holy Spirit that you desire to see in their lives, and that they will be willing to go and preach your Word to the places that you are sending them.

Lord we commit ourselves as a church to go and do the mission work that you wants us to do. Lord refill us with the Holy Ghost and give us the spiritual gifts that we need in your ministry to go and preach the gospel and evangelize and reach the lost and make new disciples. Lord protects us and provide for us and enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

Dr. Ramiz Khalaf
The Church Overseer
Church of God
United Arab Emirates
Email: thebread1@gmail.com
Mobile Tel #: 00971551902647

Note: The Bread of Life is a weekly publication from the Church of God, United Arab Emirates. For further issues and more spiritual enrichment you can visit our web site at: www.churchofgoduae.com.

Share the message with your friends.

Please share with us your view about the message and if you have any question.

If you have a prayer request, please send it to this whatsapp Number: 00971551902647, or to this email: thebread1@gmail.com.

Please send your tithes, your first fruit, and your various offerings to the church to this account

BANK NAME:
First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB)
ACCOUNT NAME:
RAMIZ BAHNAM ABBO KHALAF

ACCOUNT NO.:
1576003753162014
IBAN:
AE380351576003753162014
SWIFT CODE:
NBADAEACPU

Or contact me to this whatsapp Number: 00971551902647, or to this email:
thebread1@gmail.com.

If you need counseling in area of your life, whether about family, children or finances,
please be free to contact me to this whatsapp Number: 00971551902647, or to this
email: thebread1@gmail.com.