

Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

March 2018

Dear Friends,

God sent Jonah to Nineveh to tell them of their need to repent of their sins and to believe in Him. Jonah was reluctant to go because he thought they might just do what was asked of them! But they were Gentiles, the "goyem", not Jewish. They didn't deserve to be saved because they were different, of a different culture, and above all, wicked and ruthless, and they surely wouldn't listen to any message from God. They might laugh at him, harm him, detain him, or rearrange him. Jonah was like the Grinch who stole Christmas (Dr. Suess)-his heart was 2 sizes too small!

So Jonah ran away and was eventually swallowed by a large fish. He did some reflecting and agreed to go to Nineveh, which relieved his immediate stress, being released from the fish.

The message Jonah was given was short- **Jonah 3:4** "Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." Most likely that's all he said or needed to say-they all repented and believed God, from the King on down, and they were saved. They hadn't even known the "difference between their right hand and their left" yet God had mercy upon them and by His grace, He saved them, using Jonah as His messenger. Just a few words, not verbose. One would think Jonah was joyful, but he wasn't-he was angry! Even the Grinch had a change of heart-his grew 3 sizes bigger, but not Jonah.

How do we understand missions? Do we desire to send people to proclaim the Good News even if they are of a different culture, or don't really "deserve" to be saved, they're not like us, or we might be ridiculed or laughed at, or physically injured, or we are sure that they won't respond positively anyway so it's a waste of time, and the list of reasons why we shouldn't go forward goes on and on.

As we are challenged to send Pastors or others to preach, teach, and have meetings, what will our response be? Will we look upon it as doing what God desires or be angry about it since it may be inconvenient? Finding ways to spread God's Word will be a challenge, often rejected, but The Lord desires that we keep on trying and to look to Him for guidance and the bearing of fruit. Our hearts dare not be too small to want to see others saved, even joining together with others to get the Word proclaimed. Just a few words that made a difference-God's Word is miraculous! Let's be on our way proclaiming repentance and saving grace while there still is time.

Pastor Joel Baker