



40.DAY 2023

40.DAYS 40.VOICES 40.PRAYERS

DAY 21 | JULY 21

A Heart for the Next Generation

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BIBLE READING

2 KINGS 14:25 | He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Dead Sea, in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hopher.

JONAH 3:1-10 | Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

³ Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴ Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

⁶ When Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷ This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

“By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸ But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.

⁹ Who knows? God may yet relent and with

compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

¹⁰ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Let’s talk about the next generation. Let’s talk about winning the youth of Singapore. We do this by fulfilling the Great Commission for both the young and those who do not know Him. It is a call and purpose, something many young ones are trying to find today.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer says the Christian’s calling registers the final radical protests against the world, and what better protest than conversion of someone immersed in the world to be baptised into godliness? What better protest than to inspire a younger one to walk in the ways of the many witnesses who have come before?

Here we take a look at the book of Jonah to see him wrestle with this call, as perhaps some of us might experience.

We see Jonah beginning with the Word of the Lord coming to him to go and preach to the great city of Nineveh – a call we, too, have experienced and received in the Great Commission. Jonah responds to this call by fleeing to Tarshish. Here we see why he might have disobeyed.

1. He fled due to his negative interaction with those he was called to reach out to.

Nineveh was a city renowned for its cruelty and violence. It was prospering in its economy. Most importantly, it was an enemy of Israel. Many of us experience a Nineveh in our marketplace

and in our schools or army camps – they are unlovable, many even our enemies.

They know our way of life, they potentially judge it and we experience increasing condemnation, even bullying, from them. Yet, this is the very place, the very school or camp, we are called to love and win over for Christ. Let us love them. Let us win them over to Christ.

2. Jonah was not willing to change his ministry. In the book of 2 Kings 14:25, we learn that Jonah was ministering by prophesying to his own people, the people of God. Here, in Jonah 1, he is called to reach out to the city of Nineveh and he fumbles.

Let us not make the mistake of remaining within the church walls, but go outside as well. Let us allow God to mould our ministry and to reach out to others.

3. Jonah was following his will and being disobedient to God's. A youth I know told me he has decided to join a CCA – not because he is passionate about the CCA – but because he is passionate about the people in his CCA. He felt it was God's will for him to reach out to them.

God isn't looking for competency here, nor experience, but a heart for unlovable people, a willingness to say it is for this reason I am in this school. It is for these people I would choose this CCA.

We might be tempted to think Jonah is the main character in this story, but he certainly isn't.

God is the One that gives the Word. He initiates and sends the storm, commands the fish and gives a second chance to Jonah.

It is God who wanted Nineveh to be saved, God who desired their repentance and salvation. It is God who also gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus, who was sent from Heaven to earth, was the better Jonah. He was kind to the poor, He was with the sinners, loving the lost, giving of His life daily. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him and He saved as many as He could and preached to as many as He could.

Today, he calls us to go into the great city of Singapore to win our youth for Him. Will you heed that call?

Let us pray: *Father, would You fill us with your Holy Spirit, even as we go forth from here into each school, and each army camp and each marketplace that we have?*

Lord, we pray that You give us a heart filled with love for our youth. I pray that our youths will love the unlovable, the less fortunate, the poor, and bless those around them. May they be so aware of the Great Commission, may it loom in their minds as a call to go forth from here. We pray all this in Jesus' name, Amen.



REFLECT

- 1 In what way is Singapore like Nineveh?
- 2 Who or what is your Nineveh?
- 3 How will you be obedient to God's call to share the Gospel with those outside of your church walls?



PRAY

- 1 The Ninevehs in our lives can often be the most challenging to minister to, but they also can provide us with the most rewarding experiences when we see them turn towards Christ. Pray for God's love to flood your heart, so that you can show unconditional love to these individuals and communities, even in the face of their judgment, condemnation or bullying.
- 2 Pray for a heart that is open and willing to change the way you conduct your ministry. As Christians, we should not confine ourselves within the church walls, but should step out to meet people where they are. Pray that God moulds and shapes your ministry to effectively reach out to those who need to hear the Gospel.
- 3 Pray for obedience to follow God's will, even when it might not align with your personal desires or plans. Pray for the conviction and courage to make decisions that align with God's purpose for you, that you may be a vessel for His love and message of salvation. Singapore as individuals and the Church community take obedient steps of faith. Ask God to raise up a powerful faith movement which will turn the hearts of many back to God.