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“IN THE WHALE’S BELLY”

Jonah 4: 1-11

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Perspective! On my recent trip to Vietnam, I had the opportunity to talk to quite a few Vietnamese and asked them how they felt about America since the war and where they wanted most to visit if they were allowed to travel outside the country. Each one said they like Americans, and that most wanted to visit America more than any other country, especially California. It was interesting to hear their reasons, but all came from a perspective of wanting something more and better in. Perspectives obviously change depending on where we are in life. Age, job, culture, status, financial position, marital status, sex, place, religion, and circumstances all affect the filter through which we view life, and the decisions and judgments we make. As I meet people and talk with them, I get as many different perspectives as there are individuals. I thought about Jonah this week in regards to perspective and encourage each of you to read this small book.

Jonah had a pretty set view about how life should happen and how people ought to be treated. He was a good guy and God decided to send him to Ninevah to give them this message: *“I am going to destroy you, for your wickedness rises before me; it smells to highest heaven.”* Jonah really didn’t want to do this for some obvious reasons. He would certainly have his life on the line, would clearly be unpopular, and his reputation was at stake. Anyway, he tried running away from this task and found himself in the belly of a whale until he changed his mind. When he was eventually deposited in Ninevah, he found that not only was his message heard, but the people responded by changing their minds (repentance) about what they had been doing. This got Jonah even more upset because God changed His mind, decided to give Ninevah another chance, and forced Jonah to again change his perspective on the situation.

I believe God wants us to bring all of our circumstances to Him because He has the perspective from which we must see and from which we will more effectively live. God has the perspective of seeing us and our world from beginning to end, top to bottom, and from inside out. He dwells within to help us see outward. He dwells outward to help us see inward. Through faith, God will grant us a more clear perspective about relationships, marriages, children, jobs, life’s circumstances, ourselves, and especially Him. When Jonah was in the belly of the whale he was reminded about his connection with God. He said, *“When I had lost all hope, I turned my thoughts once more to the Lord...for my deliverance comes from the Lord alone.”* When we find ourselves in the whale’s belly, remember Jonah. Let’s turn our thoughts once more and get God’s perspective this week.