Intro:
- story of Jonah
  - Jonah, prophet of God during the reign of Jeroboam II, about 800 years before Christ
  - God commanded him to preach to Ninevites (Assyrian city on the back of the Tigris, Israel’s enemy)
    - but he fled in the opposite direction to escape proclaiming God’s message to the heathen city (120k people who didn’t know the truth)
  - great storm can upon the ship he escaped in, thrown over into the sea at his own request
  - Jonah swallowed by a great fish
    - smell, mess, digestive juices, movement of fish, movement of organs
  - Jonah lived in the belly of the fish for three days
  - Jonah repented and prayed to God
  - God commanded fish, and it vomited Jonah up on the shore
    - vomited mess
  - God again commanded Jonah to preach to Nivevites
  - Jonah obeyed, preached, telling them they would be overthrown in 40 days
  - Ninevites believed, fasted, repented in hopes that God wouldn’t destroy them
  - God saw their deeds, relented, didn’t destroy them
  - Jonah was grieved that Nineveh was spared, asked God to take his life
    - but God taught Him why about compassion by having a plant grow to give him shade and then wilt the next day

- What are some things we learn about life, from Jonah?
We can’t hide from God
- Jonah 1:3-4, 8-10 Jonah tried to hide from God, but couldn’t
  - 1 Samuel 2:3 God is the God of knowledge – He knows everything
  - Ps. 139:7-12 God is everywhere, we can’t flee His presence
- God always knows where we are, what we’re doing and saying, who we’re with – sees all and knows all
  - illus.: joke, parents have eyes in the back of their head
    - I was in about 3rd grade, rode bus to cub scout meeting, decided to get off one stop early and walk, for fun
    - I thought everything was okay, but when I got home my mother knew what I’d done
    - had no idea how she knew
    - she had more than eyes in back of her head, she had eyes everywhere
  - illus.: shortly after we moved to Tampa, kids went to Bush Gardens
    - I picked them up, and started telling them about things they had done
    - amazed I knew who they were with, and what they’d done
    - asked how I knew
    - told them: “You’re in Tampa, and I know people!”
- God’s eyes are everywhere, because He is everywhere – knows all, sees all, no one can hide
  - Hebrews 4:13 no creature hidden from His sight, all things are open and laid bare to the Lord’s eyes
- positive aspect, if obeying God:
  - God always with us, help us, save us, protect us
  - all things work together for good for those who live the Lord
- negative aspect, if disobeying God:
  - can’t escape judgement and punishment – give account, every idle word, every deed
  - illus.: think about a recent sin
    - didn’t want anyone else to see or know about
    - but God was there watching, listening
    - how do you think God felt, what was He thinking, as He listened and watched

There are consequences for sin during life on earth – can’t hide from God
- Jonah 1:11-12, 15-17 Jonah thrown into sea, swallowed by great fish – consequence of sin
  - describe being swallowed alive by fish: sounds, water, touch, smell, force upon body to be swallowed, fear
  - illus.: thief on the cross, saved, but had to suffer the consequence of sin
    - although we’re saved, if we sin, we still have to suffer the associated consequences
  - illus.: David, sin with Bathsheba, his punishment was death of his baby
    - although we’re saved, other people may suffer as a result of our sin
  - illus.: today
    - consequences for sexual sin: STDs and AIDS (Rom. 1), children losing their childhood, babies born into homes ill-equipped to raise them and result in their suffering for life, degradation of society as a whole
    - alcohol and drugs: broken homes, poverty, drunk drivers, murder, abuse of spouses and children, prison
    - we can’t do the crime, and expect to avoid the consequence – earth – sin, repentant, hell
Some people won’t repent until they hit rock bottom – can’t hide from God
- Jon. 1:17-2:2 Jonah repented after he was punished, and sought to obey God – after he hit rock bottom
  - describe being in belly of fish: movement, sounds, dark, smell, touch, fear, anxiety, hopelessness after repent

- illus.: school of hard knocks – hardheaded, hardhearted people
  - some people learn by experiencing the consequences of sin – e.g., Jonah
  - put their souls at risk:
    - most die in sin and will be punished in hell
    - a few learn from their mistakes and repent (Matt. 7:13-14)

- Heb. 12:5-6 God chastens Christians, when they turn back to a life of sin
  - God’s school of hard knocks
  - life is a lot better when we learn from God’s word, rather than be chastened – hard knocks
    - better to obey God without being chastened
    - than to suffer chastening of the Lord, and then obey

- application:
  - #1: when someone refuses to believe in God, and want to live in sin, the quicker they suffer the consequence the better
    - parents try to lessen the consequence, which is not always best
  - #2: to help others, some times we have to let them hit rock bottom first
    - if want to help someone who isn’t going to repent until they hit rock bottom, have to be patient and wait till they want help
    - sometimes we have to turn them over to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, so they might be saved (1 Cor. 5:5)
If we repent and obey God, He saves us
- **Jon. 2:7-10** God saved Jonah after he repented, changed his heart
  - **describe being vomited up:** whale flailing to get close enough to expel Jonah on dry land, whale convulsing, vomited up Jonah with other food, smell, mess, filth, slime, hair and skin and clothes
  - **describe feelings:** out of fish, now safe on shore, not in darkness inside whale, light, pray to God, dedicated to obey

- **God commands us to repent**
  - **Lk. 13:3, 5** unless we repent, we will perish
  - **Acts 17:30** God commands all men everywhere to repent
  - **2 Pet. 3:9** God doesn’t want anyone to perish, but for everyone to repent

- **application:**
  - **#1:** when we repent and obey God, He saves us
    - but we must continue to endure the abiding physical consequences of sin
    - **illus.:** thief on the cross, saved, went to Paradise, still had to suffer painful death, crucifixion
  - **#2:** the best life on earth is one that avoids sin, and avoids the consequences of sin
    - although everyone can be saved, and life in heaven for eternity

People have to hear the message before they can repent and obey
- **Jon. 3:1-5** Ninevites heard the word of God, believed, repented – **Rom. 10:17**
  - **120K people didn’t know the truth** – their right from their left

- **application:** our job is to get out the message, like Jonah
  - we can’t make people obey
    - God doesn’t hold us responsible for their obedience, just for getting out the message
  - **illus.:**
    - **Ezekiel:** blood on his head if not get out the message
    - **Paul:** innocent of blood of all men, because he got the message out, the whole counsel of God

  **Are you innocent of the blood of all men?** – heart stopping question – friends, family, neighbors

- **Jon. 4:1-3** we must put the souls of people before our own personal interests to get the message out
  - **Jon. 4:2** characteristics of God – we have to have the same characteristics
  - Jonah didn’t want to preach to them because he was afraid they would repent
    - Ninevites, their enemy, Jonah apparently wanted God to be angry at them and destroy them
    - Jonah put national interests before spiritual interests

- **illus:** have you ever harshly criticize people for their sin, but not share the gospel with them
  - **co-worker** comes in smelling like alcohol and hung over, criticize him behind his back
  - **schoolmate** cheats on a test, criticize behind back
  - **neighbor** talks to you, gossiping about others, listen, without sharing truth of gospel about gossip
  - when we do things like this, aren’t we like Jonah – not put soul’s before our own interests

- our job, as a church and individually, is get the gospel out to a lost and dying world
  - we’re doing that, but are we doing it to the extent we should
  - what can we do differently as a church. . . .
  - what can you do differently, individually. . . .
Summary / Inv.
- **Jon. 3:10** our deeds reflect what’s in our hearts - God saw their deeds and relented
  - illus.: boy tells girl he loves her, then lies to her about other girls – deeds show not really love

- What do your deeds reflect? What do they show is in your heart? – love God, love world, love Satan

- inv.: if you aren’t a Christian. . . . / if you are a Christian. . .