

RELENTLESS LOVE: Inescapable

Scripture used: [Jonah 1:1-3 \(NIV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon started us on a new series, “Relentless Love”, based on the Book of Jonah. Today, we delight in the concept that God’s love is tenacious. In [Matthew 12:40 \(NIV\)](#), Jesus says, as Jonah was in the belly of the whale, the Son of Man will be in the tomb for 3 days. This is testament to His enduring promise to be raised to life, to have victory over death, and to love us forever. God’s relentless love is not only unbreakable, it can also be experienced in new ways, and it gives us the courage we need to trust His words of correction so they can be catalysts of development and grace to us.

KEY POINTS

1. **We must anchor our lives in the word of the Lord.** God speaks to us, through Scripture and revelation. He seeks regular communication with us. The Heart of God comes to us through the Word of God, and we must welcome it with a posture of active listening. We are called to be faithful to God’s word when properly taught and applied; this is God’s gift of guidance and wisdom for us. We should not allow all the ways that Scripture is abused or mishandled (that such things are possible are reflections of the intrinsic power of Scripture, able to be used for good or for ill) to cause us to miss out on the gift of Scripture as God’s Word for us.
2. **We must accept correction as a means of God’s grace.** In our Scripture, Nineveh was an economic, political, and military powerhouse. It was also a wicked, brutal, and violent place. It was, and its people were, enemies of Israel. Jonah hated them. Yet God sent Jonah to preach to them, to try to redeem them.
 - a. **Jonah was intended to offer a course correction for Nineveh.** Course corrections are needed to avoid a crash in our private lives - similar to a commercial jet which is given a route upon takeoff, but has to make small adjustments to stay on course and reach its airport destination safely! Accepting course corrections in our lives, relationships, and careers; accepting feedback and correction – this should be seen as grace, and as an opportunity to grow or develop, and not judgment. In our Scripture, there was an opportunity for an evil city to become a righteous community - an opening for grace before the judgment. God sends corrections to develop us, and we must respond appropriately.
 - b. **We often respond to correction based on who delivers it, and how it’s delivered.** When we are giving correction or feedback to others, we should do our best to speak the truth in love, and give our feedback the best chance of being heard. But when we are receiving feedback, the wisest route is not to only accept feedback from those who package it just right. We can grow in remarkable ways when we are open to all feedback, and apply a rigorous internal lens that focuses on whether the feedback is true. Ultimately, if we ignore important feedback, even from a negative source (as Jonah would have been to Nineveh), we will ultimately be the ones to miss out on opportunities to grow.
3. **We should be careful when we feel like running away from God.** In our Scripture, Jonah rebels against God. Jonah judges God, “fires” God, goes in the opposite direction, from Nineveh to Spain. There is a geographical running-away. He’s hoping to escape from God - Jonah went “down” to the bottom of the boat. When we flee from God, we often begin to *go down* in our values, our vision, our dreams. Yet God’s love remains inescapable because it is unrelenting. We can’t outrun God, and a better option is to engage with God when we are angry, frustrated, disappointed, or offended.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Are there examples of words of correction that have had a significant impact on your life, either positively or negatively? Consider memories that you might have and the power of corrective words.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Do you receive correction as grace or as judgment? Does it depend on the circumstance? Is there an example in your life when a word of correction or judgment from God or from another person was actually a redemptive warning or an act of grace? How do we distinguish between valid words of correction and helpful feedback versus abuse and people just trying to tear us down?
- 3) **DO** - Come back next Sunday for part 2 of Relentless Love! Ask God if there is any “course correction” that we should be sensitive to right now, and ask for courage to make that correction!