

GOD'S RELENTLESS GRACE

JONAH

**New Covenant Presbyterian Church
January 24, 2021 10:00am Service**



**1125 Jamison Corner Road Middletown, DE
(302) 378-4446 www.newcov-church.org**

The Worship of God

Third Sunday after Epiphany

Welcome, Announcements and Sharing of Our Vision

Lay Leader:

Preparing to Meet God

Preparing Ourselves for Worship During the Prelude...

First, I'm not a fan of saying who is or who is not a Christian – it's a big religion with lots of different expressions, and I'm the last person qualified to be a gatekeeper of who is allowed to use the term. Secondly, some have suggested we stop using the term altogether, which I'm not a fan of either. "Christian" is a beautiful term from our early days of a faith tradition, and you're not going to see my name on the list of people who think we just dump it.

However, I do think the term "Jesus-follower" is a more helpful term to interject into the conversation. While "Christian" can mean a million different things, Jesus-follower is a little more definable because, by definition, this would be an individual who is living a life that follows the example we find in Jesus. I'm proud to be a Christian, but I long to be a true Jesus-follower. It's what I strive for. It's what I want to be when I grow up. It's what this movement was all about when it began.

While it's not always easy to tell who is or is not a Christian, I think a Jesus-follower is observable. One doesn't need to tell you they're a Jesus-follower, because you'll be able to tell by how they live, whether or not it's true. As I look at the Jesus I find in the New Testament, I think there are a few hallmarks of what it looks like to follow him – traits that can be observed to "spot" a Jesus-follower. They are:

- 1. A Jesus-follower likes to talk about him, but does it in such a way that it causes you to want to know more, not less...*
- 2. A Jesus-follower embraces the love of enemies.*
- 3. A Jesus-follower is the one who is full of compassion for outsiders and the weak.*
- 4. A Jesus-follower is the one who is quickest to show others mercy.*
- 5. A Jesus-follower is the one who, when they describe what God is like, describes Jesus.*

- Benjamin Corey, Five Ways You Can Spot a Jesus-Follower

Call to Worship

L: We have heard a prophet's cry.

P: ***The appointed hour has come, and the realm of heaven has entered our midst.***

L: We have heard a prophet's cry.

P: ***Let us turn from our nets and follow the Lord.***

L: We have heard a prophet's cry.

A: ***Let us set our hearts and hopes on God!***

*Hymn of Praise

Fairest Lord Jesus

*Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O thou of God to earth come down,
Thee will I cherish, thee will I honor;*

Thou, my soul's glory, joy and crown.

*Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,
Robed in the blooming garb of spring,
Jesus is fairer; Jesus is purer,
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.*

*Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight,
And all the twinkling, starry host.
Jesus shines brighter; Jesus shines purer,
Than all the angels heaven can boast.*

*Beautiful Savior, Ruler of the nations,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,
Now and forevermore be thine!*

Prayer of Confession

We claim Christ as our Savior, O God, because the Good News of his salvation has been told to us. And yet, we have listened more to our Lord's word of redemption than to his call to be disciplined in our living. Forgive us for our lifestyles that do NOT reflect the gospel of new life in Christ. Enter our hearts and transform us, turning us from reluctant bystanders to enthusiastic disciples. Help us to live in accordance with the gospel that we may be faithful in our witness. And now, holy God, we turn to you in silent prayer to share our concern and to seek your forgiveness.....Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

- L: Hear the Good News: When it is the Lord God who helps you, who will declare you guilty?
P: *No one, for we are set free from sin through Jesus Christ.*
 L: Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel –
P: *In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!*

Meeting God in the Word

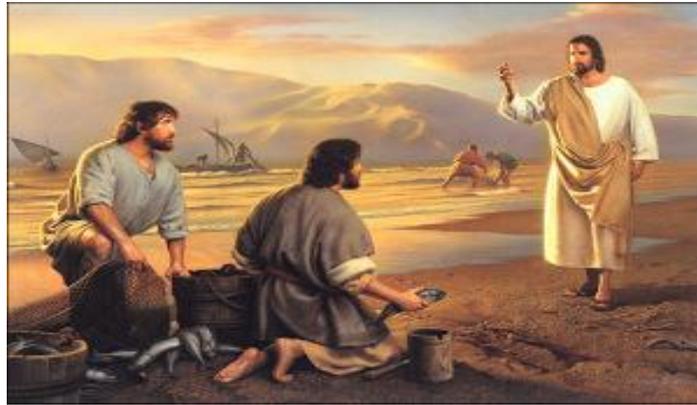
Children's Message

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson

Mark 1: 14-20

Jesus Calls the First Disciples



Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake - for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Second Lesson

Jonah 3: 10 – 4: 11

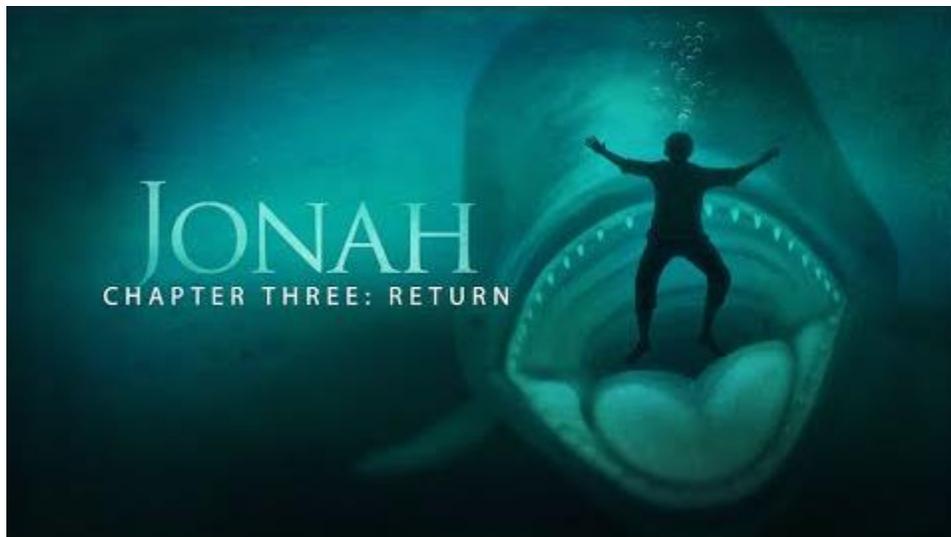
Jonah's Anger and His Reproof

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, 'O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.' And the Lord said, 'Is it right for you to be angry?' Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The Lord God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.'

But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?' And he said, 'Yes, angry enough to die.' Then the Lord said, 'You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?'



Sermon

WTVEAST Newscast: *Religion in a Box*

Responding to the Word

***Hymn**

We All Are One in Mission

*We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,
Our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.
A single, great commission compels us from above
To plan and work together that all may know Christ's love.*

*We all are called for service to witness in God's name.
Our ministries are different; our purpose is the same:
To touch the lives of others by God's surprising grace,
So every folk and nation may feel God's warm embrace.*

*Now let us be united and let our song be heard.
Now let us be a vessel for God's redeeming word.
We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,
Our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.*

***Litany of Faith**

- L: When God's Word comes upon the world, the world is never again the same. An old age ends, and a new day begins.
- P: *So, young Jonah, why do you sit and sulk?***
- L: When I caught wind of the Word of the Lord, I tried to run away. Why should I go to a hostile people in a faraway place, to deliver a message from another land's God?
- P: *But you did go, and they believed and repented. So, young Jonah, why do you sit and sulk?***
- L: Why did God attend to THEIR prayers? They were not the people of God!
- P: *But THEY did not need three days in a fish BEFORE they rose up to follow the Lord.***
- L: When God's Word comes upon the world, the world is never again the same.
- P: *So, old Zebedee, why do you sit and scowl?***

L: When I caught wind of the Word of the Lord, I went on mending my nets. Why should I leave my home and my work to chase a carpenter's dream?

P: *But James and John went; in fact, they believed strongly enough to boldly follow where led. So, old Zebedee, why do you sit and scowl?*

L: Why did God have to appear to THEM and all THEM, especially since they followed and left me behind?

P: *They did not want to continue casting nets from a boat to catch the fish of Galilee. God had a different and larger mission for them, and they responded in faith. And God also has a mission for us.*

A: *God's Word has come again to the world, and all of us are called to leave our old lives behind and follow. May we be found faithful to Christ's call to us.*

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Cares Chorus:

*I cast all my cares upon you. I lay all of my burdens down
at your feet. And anytime I don't know what to do,
I cast all my cares upon you.*

The Call to Celebrate Our Gifts

The Invitation *You are invited to place your offering in the basket in the back of the sanctuary.*

Prayer of Dedication

Going Out to Serve God

* Hymn

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant?

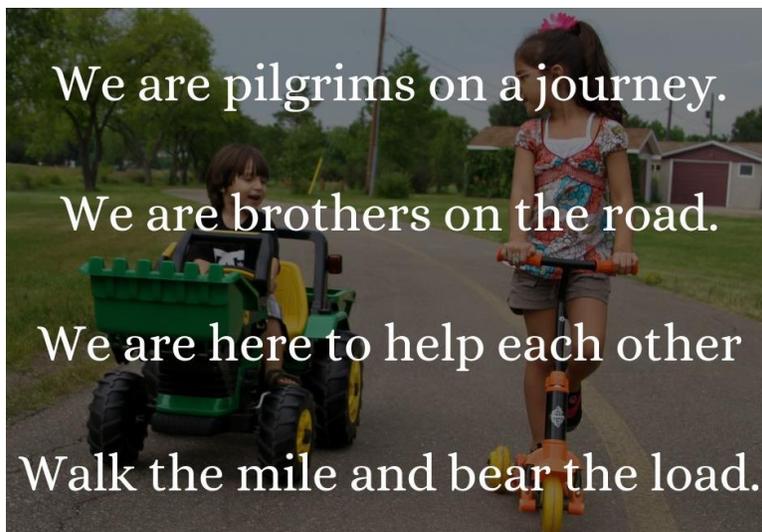
*Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.*

*We are pilgrims on a journey; we're together on the road.
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.*

*I will hold the Christ-light for you, in the nighttime of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.*

*I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.*

*When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together, of Christ's love and agony.*



*** Blessing**

L: Friends, Jesus' call to follow him is a call to radical faith – radical religion – that cannot be put in a box.

P: *It involved our whole person – everything that we ARE and HAVE.*

L: May you hear God's call clearly, and respond with your whole being,

P: *That we might be found faithful to our purpose, and experience the joy of abundant life.*

L: And may the blessings of God ...

***Response**

*He Is Lord
 He is Lord, He is Lord!
 He is risen from the dead and he is Lord!
 Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,
 That Jesus Christ is Lord.*