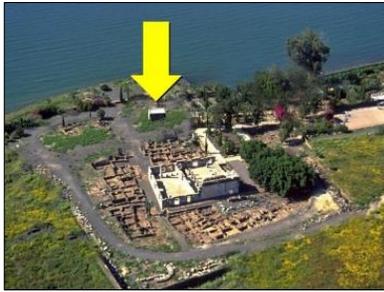


# Weaving the Word

*Jonah and Solomon*

Part 57 – February 07, 2016

**Do you practice what you preach?** “I play it safe ... *I don't preach.*” Oh, but you do. **Every action or inaction sends a message. Truth is: We preach what we practice!** So, *what're you preachin'?*



We're in the most dramatic *and detailed* day of Jesus' ministry!

The Lamb of God has returned to lie down in the green pastures, beside the still waters, in the Rift Valley, in the **Village of Comfort**. In Greek: **Capernaum**. In Hebrew: **Kfar Nahum**. The Village of Comfort. His headquarters.



But, there's no peace for the Prince of Peace. He's crushed by the crowds, and condemned by the Pharisees and teachers of the Law, who've come to Capernaum to scrutinize Jesus' claims.



Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was **blind** and **mute** [and most likely, **deaf**] and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. **All the people were astonished and said**, [to the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law] “Could this be the Son of David?” But when the **Pharisees** heard *this*, *And the teachers of the law* who came down from Jerusalem [to officially **investigate**] some of them said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.” **Others** [of these **examining authorities**] tested him by asking for **a sign from heaven**. – Mat 12:22-24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15-16 NIV



They demanded a proof-miracle *in the skies*, from *God himself*. **“Darken the sun, or stop it in its tracks, or some other heavenly sign to prove that God has sent you.”**

[Two days before the cross] ... Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: “The **teachers of the law** and the **Pharisees** sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and **do everything they tell you**. [Because, for the most part, they're communicating **God's decrees**] But **do not do what they do**, for they do not practice what they preach.” – Matthew 23:1-3 NIV

For instance, they taught that **God had established and reserved specific signs to identify and verify the Messiah when He came.**

In that day **the deaf will hear** ... and out of gloom and darkness **the eyes of the blind will see**. – Isaiah 29:18 NIV

... your God ... will come to save you. Then will **the eyes of the blind be opened** and **the ears of the deaf unstopped**. ... and **the mute tongue shout for joy**. – Isaiah 35:4-6 NIV

Also, **of all the miracles in the OT, nobody opens the eyes of the blind, or the ears of the deaf, or the tongues of the mute**. One of the healed is later *banished* for reminding the Pharisees that ...



**“Nobody** has **ever** heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” **[Because these are reserved]** – John 9:32-33 NIV

So, they’re now asking for a *sign from God*, while disregarding the specific confirming signs that *they had preached* that *God had prepared!* This is why a frustrated Jesus later rebukes ‘em, saying ...

**“... the very work** that the Father has given me to finish, and which **I am doing**, **testifies that the Father has sent me**. And **the Father** who sent me **has himself testified concerning me**.” – John 5:36-37a NIV

Now Jesus calls ‘em out, destroys their illogical, unscriptural, accusation; declares that God’s Kingdom *has come*; and warns ‘em not to harden their blasphemous hearts to a point of no return.

Then **As the crowds increased**, [This is getting’ good! They’re hanging on every word; their eyes darting back and forth between Jesus and their religious leaders] **some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him**, **[holding their ground]** **“Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.”** Jesus said, **[to the crowd]** **“This is a wicked generation**. [The word “*generation*” (genea G1074) can also mean: “*a group of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character – esp. in a bad sense*” (Strong’s)] **A wicked and adulterous generation** [“wicked” in their sinful motives, and “adulterous” in their unfaithfulness] **It asks for a miraculous sign**, [It was hard to hear, so Jesus tells the crowd what was said; which would’ve brought incredulous laughter and scorn; *He’s doing all the signs from God!*] **But none will be given it** [these Pharisees and teachers of the Law] **except the sign of the prophet Jonah**. – Mat 12:38-39; Luke 11:29 NIV



Why? They reject Jesus’ miracles as displays of demonic power. And, they refuse to admit how the scriptures are being fulfilled. So, He gives ‘em a couple more puzzling parables to ponder.

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. – Mat 12:40 NIV

**Their rebellious eyes will refuse to recognize what God has clearly spoken in the scriptures until it’s too late. How about you?**

Sadly, I can relate to that. I know my Bible pretty well. So, there have been times when I chose to ignore the clear commands of God, and lean on my own, sinful, self-serving, understanding. However, I’ve always repented with genuine sorrow; not merely saying, “*Sorry*,” but turning and embracing *grateful obedience*.



For as **Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites**, [to repent of their wickedness before it's too late, or be utterly destroyed (Jonah 1:2, 3:4)] so also will **the Son of Man be to this generation** [of Pharisees and teachers of the Law]. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with **this generation** [of religious leaders] and condemn it; **for they repented at the preaching of Jonah**, – Mat 12:41a; Luke 11:30 NIV

Only one person rejected God's grace at Jonah's preaching.

When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented ... But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry. – Jonah 3:10-4:1 NAS

**Jonah didn't practice the compassion that he preached.**

... and now one greater than Jonah is here. – Mat 12:41b NIV

The Gospels are overflowing with the compassion of Christ.

He felt compassion for her, and said, **"Do not weep."** (Luke 7:13)

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand. (Mark 1:41)

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them. (Mat 9:36)

**Do you practice compassion, or settle for preaching it?** Generations after Jonah, the Ninevites un-repented. And, the book of Nahum (the prophet) again warns of their impending doom.

[Nahum (whose name means "Comfort") writes] "Nineveh is in ruins ..." Where can I find anyone to comfort you?" – Nahum 3:7 NIV

**The Lord cannot comfort those who turn their back to Him.** Jesus says, "One greater than Jonah is *here*." Where? Well, *specifically*, at that moment: Kafer Nahum; the village of Nahum. **He's come to comfort the repentant, and to warn the rebellious.**



The **Queen of the South** [The Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13)] will rise at the judgment with **the men of this generation** [of Pharisees and teachers of the Law] and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth **to listen to Solomon's wisdom**, – Matthew 12:42a; Luke 11:31 NIV

The book of Kings records that this pagan Queen, "Came to test Solomon with hard questions," (1 Kings 10:1) just like these religious rulers; but, unlike 'em, she weighs out Solomon's wisdom, and concludes ...

"... you have far exceeded the report I heard. How happy your men must be! **How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!** [Unlike these religious leaders] **Praise be to the Lord your God**, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel." – 1 Kings 10:7b-9a NIV

Only one Royal in this story fails to embrace Solomon's wisdom.

As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted ... – 1 Kings 11:3-4 NIV

**Solomon didn't practice the devotion that he preached.**

... and now one greater than Solomon is here. – Matthew 12:42b NIV

[John says of Jesus, in Revelation] ... there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. – Revelation 19:11b NIV

Do you know the difference between being “faithful” and “true”? **Faithful means that your heart doesn't stray.** You honor *your* word *and* God's Word. **True means that you're genuine, honest, and authentic.**

**You don't settle for *resembling your various titles*** (e.g. husband, wife, father, mother, friend, follower of Christ); **you *sincerely strive to embody the core nature, signified by your labels.***

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, [those who oppose what is faithful and true] because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. – 1 John 4:4 NIV

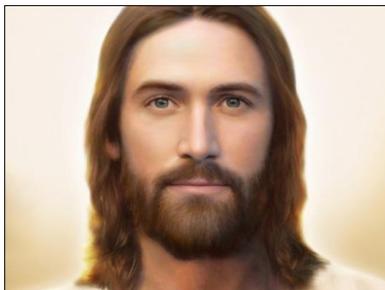
And, because of the One who is greater than Jonah ... **you are greater than your lack of compassion. You are greater than your desire to run away. You are greater than your fear of facing 'em. You are greater than your anger, and greater than your pain.**

*Because* the Spirit of the One greater than Solomon is in *you* ... **you are greater than your addictions and appetites. You are greater than your lust. You are greater than your dysfunctional relationships. You are greater than your mistakes and failures.**

***You are eternal! And, you are loved! And, you're on purpose! And, you are forgiven!***

And, you know it's true; so, ***act like it! Practice what you preach ... and only preach what is true.***

*“But, my life is in ruins.”* Then you'll be glad to be reminded that, **His wounds heal ruins.** He'll never leave you nor forsake you. (Deut 31:6) **He'll turn every dead end into a never-ending, living end.**



Because, **you have a Savior who doesn't waver.** He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Heb 13:8) And, **He's in charge. Not the devil. Not the world. And, not you.**

So, **what'll you tweak this week because of your compassion?**  
And, **what must you adjust, to be faithful and true?**

**Are you trying to get God's attention, or to give Him yours?**

***A wicked generation asks for a sign ... when we have so many.***