

Tool Time?

Dr. David Bray

Think about this: God uses many types of tools. He uses people as tools, He uses Nations as tools, He uses media (books, television, radio, etc.) as tools, He uses churches as tools, and He even uses buildings as tools. God has even been known to use a donkey as a tool. Jonah is a great example of God picking up a tool to accomplish a task. God called him to go and preach to the people of Nineveh. At that time Nineveh was ruled by the Assyrians, who were the enemies of the Israelites. They were brutal people who were well known to use their brutality on their enemies. God wanted to use Jonah as a tool for reaching out to Nineveh for His Glory. Jonah rejected God's command to go, because "the Ninevite people were different." Because Jonah rebelled against God, God had to punish Jonah.

There is the spirit of Jonah in churches in America today. God has given us a command to reach out to the world for Him. We often run the other way and lose the blessings that God would have for us. Let's look together at this story and the three things that "mark" the "Spirit of Jonah." Jonah was wrong in his thinking about these three things.

Message Text: "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. ²So he prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. ³Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" (Jonah 4:1-3).

If we want to avoid the Spirit of Jonah we must have the right:

- 1 _____ - Are we really the center of the World? Three things to give us the right perspective. "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country?" Jonah 4:2
- A) God is a "_____ God" (Genesis 12:1-3)
 - B) God is the Center of the Universe not you. _____ or _____.
 - C) God calls us to be citizens of His kingdom 1st (Matthew 6:33-34)

- 2 _____ - What do you think God cares about more? Jonah 4:10-11 "But the Lord said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one

hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?"

Some lies that we believe:

- A) If we build a building people will come and the church will grow.
- B) We need to take care of _____ and then we will reach out.
- C) Making the building look nice takes precedent over outreach.
- D) If the church grows with this new building then there will be more people. If there are more people then we will have less work to do.

Buildings are only tools that God can use for His Glory.

3 _____ - Are you a "Dog" or "Cat" in your theology? *Psalm 8:1 "Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!"*

- A) What is the purpose of your existence?
- B) What is the purpose of Kihei Baptist's _____?
- C) What is the purpose of Kihei Baptist's _____?
- D) Does God deserve the worship of everyone?

Consider: How could this story of Jonah been different? What if Jonah had obeyed God in the first place? He may not have had the chance to ride in a whale for 3 days, but He would have had a better story. It would have gone like this. Jonah was called, Jonah went and preached, people turned toward God, God turned away His wrath, and Jonah returns home a hero for turning foes into friends.

We need to continue to recognize that the purpose of the Universe is "God's Glory." There are people who are dying and going to hell throughout the world and God is calling us to become part of reaching them for Christ. If this church fails to be God's instrument in reaching Maui, then God will use another instrument. Let's avoid the "Spirit of Jonah" and participate in reaching the world for Christ!

So, "WHY OUTREACH?" Because people who LOVE GOD want to say with their LIVES, "GOD, YOU DESERVE THE _____ OF ALL PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD!"