Mission of Mercy

I. Slide#1 Announce:
   A. Doug Wicks: The Seed Company. Bible Translation.
   B. Slide#2 Women’s Retreat - ladies get signed up & please pay balances. Also if anyone would like to sponsor a lady who wasn’t able to pay.
   C. Slide#3 Easter Service - 7:30am the 20th. Lower campus. Outdoor stage.
   D. Slide#4 Patrick & Shari Bailey: Fri night an uncontrolled house fire burned 1000 homes 90% of the Bajao Muslim Village of Isla Verde where the Bailey's have been ministering for 12yrs.
      1. In 3 hours the houses were gone, the Bajao church was gone, our preschool was gone and the neighboring Muslim areas were burned down as well.
      2. There Computer Center was spared and is where they are offering first aide. They are secretly feeding some people in the Computer Center so as not to cause a riot.
      3. If you would like to help: buying pots, pants, clothes, water.[put Bajao Fire on check/ envelope]
      4. We have a school team going in 10 days with Wayne & 5 Loaves.
   E. Prayer: Jonah could say...Ps.118:17-19a (read)

II. INTRO:
   A. Slide#5 George H. Morrison said, The Victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings.
      1. When we fall we often feel our ministry is ended & there is no hope for recovery.
         a) But our God is a God of a 2nd chance.
         b) Micah 7:8 Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise.
   B. Slide#6 I wonder, was the great fish more relieved to be rid of Jonah as Jonah was to get out of the fish? Maybe it was mutual? [Title: Mission of Mercy]
   C. Jonah learned in the last chapter what Isaiah said, When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. Is.43:2
      1. We don’t know where he was vomited up on shore, but we do know…the Lord was there.
      2. The will of God will never lead you, where the grace of God can’t keep you, & the power of God can’t use you.
   D. The Lord is as concerned with His workers then He is with their work?
      1. God wants to work in us as well as work through us.
   E. Steps of Great Awakenings... [whether individual or for a community]

III. Slide#7 [1] GOD NEEDS A SPOKESMAN (1)
A. How do you feel when the word of the Lord comes to you the 2nd time? [2nd chance]
      a) Which of us can claim to be qualified for participation in the divine work?
      b) Are we ever worthy or qualified to work for Him?
      1) None of us qualify for His service, but he asks us to be part of His work.
      2) God is for the defeated. God uses the defeated to do great things.

B. Can you think of any biblical characters who were given a 2nd chance & were restored to ministry?
   1. Abraham (lied about his wife); Jacob (lied to his father Isaac); Moses (killed a man & fled from Egypt); Peter (denied the Lord 3 times).

C. But why? Why is God so gracious to give us another opportunity after we have failed Him? See Ps.103:8-14. Note the Cross...
   1. (11) is the vertical measure (not north to South). His mercy is as high as the heavens.
   2. (12) is the horizontal measure. His forgiveness is as wide as infinity both directions.
      a) The intersection is of course Calvary. - We draw our lines from the cross.

IV. Slide#9 [2] GODS SPOKESMAN MUST SPEAK ONLY WHAT HE TELLS HIM (2-4)
A. His instructions were simply to travel those 787 miles [I punched in Tel Aviv to Mosul] to Nineveh and preach the message the Lord would provide at the appropriate time.
B. He must preach God’s word - What was Gods rebuke to Jobs friends in 42:7? you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.
   1. A doctor must not only give medicine but he must give the right kind of medicine.
   2. Deliver God’s message w/o tampering w/it.

C. 3 day journey – Nineveh was a sprawling metropolis w/perhaps a million people in & around it.
   1. Archeological photos today show parts of the once massive walls still standing (8 miles of wall around the main part of the city).
      a) Walls were 100’ high, 3 chariots could run abreast on top of the wall.
   2. The city was surrounded by an inner wall and an outer wall.
      a) The huge inner wall (50’ wide, 100’ high) was about 8 miles in circumference while the outer wall encompassed fields and smaller towns.
   3. It was a very sinful city. Read Nahum 3:1-4 (ruthless, cruel, violent city)
D. Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown – Only a one line sermon…but it had a whale of an impact.
   1. Only 5 words in the Hebrew text. Yet, 5 words stir an entire nation.
2. It was a 3 day preaching journey [Revival hits day 1]…everyone immediately repents… So why does God give them 40 days of warning? [to show abundant grace?]

V. Slide#12 [3] THEY BELIEVED GOD (5a)

A. This so much proves that Salvation is of the Lord (i.e. not his prophet)…because of 4:1.
   1. Jonah’s heart was not found anywhere in this. – Yet, God blessed His Word.

B. How was this decree different from Constantine’s or the mass conversions of the Middle Ages? [Why? here the people believed first - vs.5]

C. I also like the fact that they didn’t run around the city pointing fingers on who to blame. They all just owned it.
   1. I think if judgment was falling on our Tem/Murr Valley we’d be looking at…It’s probably because Pechanga. It’s those wineries in Tem. It’s them Marijuana Shops trying to come into town I bet. - Greatest to least saw their part in it.

VI. Slide#13,14 [4] FAITH RESULTS IN REPENTANCE (5b)

A. They proved their faith (believed God) by their works of contrition. [outward evidence]
   1. True repentance = a complete turn-about.
   2. Lk.24:47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations.

VII. Slide#15 [5] REPENTANCE LEADS TO ACTION (6)

A. Slide #16 [opps wrong guy] (6) Word of the religious humiliation of the people reached the king of Nineveh, probably Ashur-dan III.

B. The spirit of a true awakening is contagious.
   1. It spreads rapidly & affects all classes of people.
   2. The king was willing to relinquish his seat of authority & submit to a greater authority.
      a) No human could have forced this powerful king to do this. It would have taken armies to dethrone him.

C. Slide#17 When you come to the King of the universe you must set aside your_______???
      a) Oh, don’t forget Jesus did it first...when He laid aside His heavenly garments of glory & came to earth. And when He laid aside his garments to wash feet.
VIII. Slide#18,19 [6] THE CALL FOR AN ALL OUT PRAYER MEETING (7-9)

A. Every awakening large or small had/has its roots in a prayer mtg.
   1. And prayer is given its rightful place in Nineveh.
   2. Food & drink, the necessities of everyday living were now to be ignored.
   3. Note: the king doesn’t tell them what to pray for...it’s actual praying that matters.
      a) It’s a full blown prayer service in Nineveh.
      b) Did you know, a drowning man never needs to be schooled on how to cry for help!
         (1) Slide#20 You just need to cry out mightily! (8)
         (2) People who say they cannot pray are deceiving themselves. Some of the greatest prayers of the bible come from ordinary people w/ a great need.
            a) From a leper, make me clean. From a blind man, open my eyes.
               From a poor re-publican/publican, God be merciful to me a sinner.
            b) It’s a full blown prayer service in Nineveh.
   4. Prayer changed Nineveh. What might you & I crying mightily to God do today?

B. Slide#21 (8) Sackcloth [ם] - cloth made of black goats’ hair, coarse, rough, and thick, used for sacks, and also worn by mourners. [think burlap against your naked body]
   1. Slide#22,23 Not sure what animals clothed with sackcloth looks like but...
   2. Even the animals were kept from eating & were donning sackcloth.
      a) Thus again showing the peoples sincere remorse.
         (1) Maybe its time we wrap our little hiney’s in itchy burlap for awhile?
         (2) Maybe its time we learn how to cry mightily?
   
C. (9) This gentile city turns from its ways w/o any guarantee of grace…only hope God might turn aside His wrath & spare the city

D. This fear of judgment from God is startling because the Assyrians were a cruel, violent nation fearing no one.
   1. Slide#24 Their chief sin? Violence(8) [reliefs show: empaling enemies. flaying enemies]
E. Slide#25 This was truly the greatest revival this world has ever seen.
   1. What view of God did the Ninevites express in vs.9? (mercy)
   2. Doesn’t our view of God affect our willingness to turn away from our sins & turn toward God? [Yes, that’s what ultimately does it – Our need to get re-focused on HIM]

IX. Slide#26 [7] GOD’S MISSION OF MERCY (10)

A. Most important step, as the others are the human side, now the divine side.
1. Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.

B. God relented? – From the human stand point it “looked” like God repented, but from the divine perspective, it was simply God’s response to man’s change of heart.

1. God is utterly consistent w/himself – It only appears like He is changing his mind.
2. Slide#27 Jer.18:7-10 explains the heart of God concerning nations turning from their sin...
   a) 7 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, 8 if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, 10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.
   b) The goal of God’s judgment is correction not revenge.
      (1) Of course, until He is completely through w/them (like Amalakites).

C. So, was Nineveh’s repentance real? - See what Jesus says in Mt.12:41

1. Slide#28 The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here - but you (Scribes/Pharisees) refuse to repent.
2. Compare: Jesus had preached to his generation for 3 years and had reinforced His message with His miracles, yet they would not repent and believe. Now Nineveh heard from a heartless prophet...1 message, in 1 sentence, by 1 preacher, which emphasized wrath & not love, yet they repented & were forgiven.

D. Slide#29 He had spared Jonah in chap.2, now He spared Nineveh.

1. God’s mercies are always unmerited; His grace is never earned.
2. Repentance is never a work to be rewarded. But this is not to say that God does not act in response to such repentance.
3. Nineveh’s repentance delayed God’s destruction of the city for about 100 years. The people evidently fell into sin again, so that later the city was destroyed, in 612 b.c. (see the Book of Nahum - for their utter destruction by Babylon).

E. When God threatened punishment He provided a dark backdrop on which to etch most vividly His forgiving mercies.

1. This emphasized His grace most brightly to the sinners’ hearts.
   a) God is finished with this city…but not with this prophet.

F. My Jonah Poem for chapter 3:
1. Ejected to Land, Face in the Sand. 2nd Chance, No “if, but, or can’t(s)”. 2nd Time, On the Dime. 3 Days, Voice Raised. 40 Days, And wrath Pays. 1st Day, They Obey. King Dashes, Sits in Ashes. Maybe God will relent? If we repent. All the Kings Horses & all the Kings Men…Covered in Sackcloth & Repented of Sin. God wills “None to Perish”. True Repentance He does Cherish. Nineveh, you may Go. Jonah, your Heart I will now Show.

G. 2 Pet.3:9 The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

1. **Shalom** = universal flourishing. [not just peace but wholeness, completeness, being settled]
   a) Cornelius Plantinga said, “Sin is the vandalism of shalom.”
   b) Shalom only comes through repentance.
   c) Repentance is the hose that shalom flows through. *Sin kinks the hose.*
      (1) Thus, repentance must be done daily.
      (2) And remember, there is **1 human heart cry** that never fails to reach the ears of God. It is the voice of genuine repentance & confession of sin.

H. **Communion:** A time to fast & a time to feast.

1. **Bread:**
2. **Cup:**