

Spiritual Awakening

(By Rev. Anthony Menzel, August 8, 2021)

Always Worship the Lord Jesus

Key to spiritual awakening:

Worship all the time

Do whatever God tells you during worship

Move when the cloud/fire moves

We often mention spiritual awakening.

Spiritual awakening occurs when people are transformed.

When spiritual awakening occurs on a large scale, regions and nations are transformed.

However, the large scale transformation often begins with an individual or a small group of individuals.

One person can make a big difference to the Lord Jesus. That's why I often say that one person plus the Lord Jesus is a majority.

Ezekiel 22:23-31

23 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, **24** “Son of man, say to her: ‘You *are* a land that is not [d]cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation.’ **25** The conspiracy of her [e]prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured [f]people; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. **26** Her priests have [g]violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known *the difference* between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. **27** Her princes in her midst *are* like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy [h]people, and to get dishonest gain. **28** Her prophets plastered them with untempered *mortar*, seeing false visions, and divining lies for them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ when the Lord had not spoken. **29** The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. **30** So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of

the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. **31** Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord God.

In the midst of all of the horrible things happening in Israel at that time, God was just looking for one person to intercede for the land.

When we look at Jonah, we see how powerful it can be when one person is transformed, even just partially.

There are many examples of a transformed person being used by God, but what makes Jonah a particularly interesting example is that his transformation was only partial and yet God was able to use him to reach over 100,000 people.

Before we think we are unimportant and before we study the story of Jonah in more detail, I feel led to remind everyone that little becomes much when it is placed in the hands of Jesus Christ.

John 6:5-14

5 Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” **6** But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

7 Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, **9** “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

10 Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. **11** And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* [b]to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. **12** So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” **13** Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. **14** Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

The one Jesus Christ used here was a minor. No one is too young or too old to be used by the Lord Jesus.

Now if we go back to Jonah...

His transformation resulted in spiritual awakening among people who knew very little about God...

Jonah 1:1-7,11-17

1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, **2** “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” **3** But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

The Storm at Sea

4 But the Lord [a]sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.

5 Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that *was* in the ship into the sea, to lighten [b]the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep.

6 So the captain came to him, and said to him, “What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish.”

7 And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble *has come* upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. **8** Then they said to him, “Please tell us! For whose cause *is* this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?”

9 So he said to them, “I *am* a Hebrew; and I fear [c]the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry *land*.”

Jonah Thrown into the Sea

10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, “Why have you done this?” For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. **11** Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?”—for the sea was growing more tempestuous.

12 And he said to them, “Pick me up and [d]throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest *is* because of me.”

13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. **14** Therefore they cried out to the Lord and said, “We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man’s life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O Lord, have done as it pleased You.” **15** So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased

from its raging. **16** Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows.

Jonah's Prayer and Deliverance

17 Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Even in the midst of his rebellion, God used Jonah to change the lives of the other people who were sailing with Jonah. They had been calling out to other gods, but due to their interaction with Jonah, they sacrificed to God and feared him. If their gods had any power, it should be noted that they were demons. Thus, by interacting with Jonah, we see how these men turned from worshiping demons to worshiping God. That is definitely a form of spiritual awakening...

God is so merciful that even when we mess up, He often makes a way for us... It might sound really bad to be inside a big fish, for example, but when we think about it, being inside a big fish is better than drowning. Moreover, the fish didn't eat Jonah; it just swallowed him. Thus, even though the experience of being swallowed was difficult emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually, Jonah did not suffer any bodily harm.

Jonah 2:1,8-10

2 Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. **2** And he said:

"I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction,

And He answered me.

"Out of the belly of Sheol I cried,

And You heard my voice.

3

For You cast me into the deep,

Into the heart of the seas,

And the floods surrounded me;

All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.

4

Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight;

Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'

5

The waters surrounded me, *even* to my soul;

The deep closed around me;

Weeds were wrapped around my head.

6

I went down to the [a]moorings of the mountains;
The earth with its bars *closed* behind me forever;
Yet You have brought up my life from the pit,
O Lord, my God.

7

“When my soul fainted within me,
I remembered the Lord;
And my prayer went *up* to You,
Into Your holy temple.

8

“Those who regard worthless idols
Forsake their own [b]Mercy.

9

But I will sacrifice to You
With the voice of thanksgiving;
I will pay what I have vowed.
Salvation *is* of the Lord.”

10 So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry *land*.

When Jonah humbled himself in prayer and reaffirmed the goodness of God,
transformation occurred inside of him...

That transformation resulted in him being able to leave the trial he was in...

Humility is often the road to a promotion in God’s Kingdom...

1 Peter 5:5-7

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be
submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

“God resists the proud,

But gives grace to the humble.”

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt
you in due time, **7** casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Casting our cares on the Lord shows that we trust Him;

it shows humility because we are recognizing that God knows better than we do...

Jonah 3:1-4

3 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, **2** “Arise, go to
Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.” **3** So Jonah

arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, [a]a three-day journey *in extent*. **4** And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

That a transformation had occurred is evident because after he was vomited by the big fish, Jonah was now willing to go to preach in Nineveh, whereas before he was disobedient to God's request.

His own spiritual awakening resulted in the spiritual awakening of the whole city...

Jonah 3:5-10

5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. **6** Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes. **7** And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his [b]nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. **8** But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. **9** Who can tell *if* God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?
10 Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

When I talk of spiritual awakening, this is what I am talking about...

A whole society that turns to Jesus Christ with their whole heart...

What I want to see is a long-term change...

That is why I am not praying for revival...

Revival can last weeks or months;

I want to see change that lasts at least for decades, preferably until the Rapture, so that the maximum number of people will be saved...

One thing about Jonah's ministry that is amazing is that Jonah was used by God mightily even though his transformation was only partial...

Jonah 4:1-4

4 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. **2** So 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. **3** Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for *it is* better for me to die than to live!”

4 Then the Lord said, “*Is it* right for you to be angry?”

Instead of being happy about the Ninevites getting saved, Jonah was angry that they were not destroyed.

Thus, Jonah had been transformed enough to become obedient to the Lord and carry out the ministry that God asked him to do.

However, he still was not totally transformed. He loved God in a limited sense, but he did not love the Ninevites. His lack of love and forgiveness of them indicate that Jonah was only partially transformed.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. **2** And though I have *the gift* of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **3** And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body [a]to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Without love, we will give up the eternal rewards we could have earned by doing things for the Lord. No matter how great our works are, we will not be rewarded in eternity for them if we do not do them with love.

1 John 4:20-21

20 If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, [d]how can he love God whom he has not seen? **21** And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

Someone could argue that the Ninevites were not Jonah’s spiritual brothers. However, they became spiritual brothers when they repented.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus tells us to love our enemies.

Matthew 5:43-45

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ **44** [o]But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, **45** that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

At the end of the book of Jonah, Jonah, not the Ninevites, was the one who was in danger spiritually.

Mark 11:25-26

25 “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. **26** [d]But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

Proverbs 17:5

He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker;
He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

To the very end, God was so good not only to the Ninevites but also to Jonah, for God kept disciplining Jonah in an attempt to finish Jonah’s transformation and ensure Jonah’s salvation.

Jonah 4:5-11

5 So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. **6** And the Lord God prepared a [a]plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah [b]was very grateful for the plant. **7** But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it *so* damaged the plant that it withered. **8** And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah’s head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, “*It is better for me to die than to live.*”

9 Then God said to Jonah, “*Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?*” And he said, “*It is right for me to be angry, even to death!*”

10 But the Lord said, “You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which [c]came up in a night and perished in a

night. **11** And 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?”

My prayer today is that each of us would experience spiritual awakening individually. I pray that we would experience spiritual awakening fully so that we will be a lot easier to work with than Jonah was. I pray that as that spiritual transformation occurs, we would make a permanent, positive impact on our society as a whole, and we would help to bring about spiritual awakening.