

Third Sunday after Epiphany, January 21, 2018

Jonah 3:1-5, 10, The Light to Lighten the Gentiles Shone in Nineveh.

Rev. George Ferch

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

- The ministry of Jonah, “the reluctant missionary,” is a gem with many facets.
- The Epiphany Gentiles the LORD God called to repentance in this case were the Ninevites.
- **The Light to Lighten the Gentiles Shone in Nineveh.** Jonah proclaimed judgment on sin and unbelief. Those who repent experience God’s compassion.
- The Jonah we meet at this point “obeyed the Word of the Lord and went to Nineveh.”
- Jonah went to proclaim the message God had entrusted to him.
- God gave the earth 120 years before the Flood.
- Jonah preached that God will punish all who do not worship him.
- St. Peter wrote in his second epistle, “For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household.”
- This is not the only message through which God accomplishes his will to save sinners.
- God’s compassion that prevented his punishment came as healing balm to the broken hearts of the Ninevites.
- The Ninevites bore fruits of godly contrition.
- God did not bring his judgment down on the Ninevites.
- God accomplishes his will to save sinners through the preaching of his Word.
- We do not ignore God’s compassion and love that turns us from evil and violence because of our faith in him.
- The Epiphany facet of this gem matches Peter’s words, again in his second epistle, “He (God) is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” [3:9]
- This is why we preach God’s Word. The light shines to enlighten the Gentiles. God accomplishes his will to save sinners. That is how God has spared us by his compassion and love from the judgment we deserve. Amen. <SDG>