

## Preachers' Pen Points

### “SECOND TIME” AROUND



I read this verse for a long time before I saw the powerful lesson in it! “Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah *the second time*” (Jon. 3:1). Take a moment to ponder those words in light of Jonah’s behavior.

Earlier God had appeared to Jonah with a commission to preach to the people of Nineveh (1:2). Because the charge of God was distasteful to him, Jonah caught a ship for Tarshish, hoping to avoid the task God had given him. You know the story. A great tempest came and Jonah was thrown overboard. Sinking to the bottom of the Mediterranean in a tangle of seaweed, Jonah cried out to the Lord for a second chance and God graciously responded. He had prepared a great fish to deliver Jonah and in response to his prayer Jonah was regurgitated onto dry land. And then came those words “a second time”: “Arise, and go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you” (Jonah 2:2). God had given Jonah an undeserved second chance to do what was right!

#### The God of the Second Chance

All throughout the Scripture we see this wonderful feature of God. He is the God of the second chance. All throughout Biblical history we see him offering to disobedient people another opportunity to repent and live better.

For example, God’s offer of salvation to sinners is really a second chance (Eph. 2:8-10). We come into this world with an obligation to do the will of God; but “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Yet God has graciously through Christ offered an opportunity to repent (Ac. 17:30-31). Even some of those who have accepted the

gospel allow various things to hinder them from serving God as they once committed to do. Even for them there is a “second time” to make things right. God urged the church at Ephesus that had lost its first love, “Remember therefore from where you have fallen and repent and do the deeds you did at first” (Rev. 2:5).

#### Another Opportunity to Do the Right Thing!

So then, regardless of your circumstances think about what the message of Jonah says to each of us. Maybe you have never given God the worship and service He deserves. Maybe you feel you have blown it, that you have simply neglected to do what you clearly understood that God wanted out of you. You may even feel ashamed to try again because of the embarrassment of having once failed.

Let the words of God to Jonah encourage you to make a new start! God has given you an opportunity to start over, to do what He commands. Don’t miss this opportunity God has given you. Wonderful things await those who turn to Him. Make 2003 the best year of your life!

—Johnny Felker

*We welcome you to this first service of 2003! Our theme today we hope will set the tone for all of our efforts in service to the Lord this year. If you are visiting with us, we invite you to join us in this new beginning.*