

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Reconciliation** Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday, October 10, 2017

8:15 AM **Jon 3:1-10;** Lk 10:38-42 (This is all part of the repentance that we need as individuals and as a society for the well-being of the creation, so that the consequences of our bad choices and our bad habits will not overcome us, which they most certainly will if nothing is done.)

Yesterday we began the Book of Jonah, which I mentioned is a novel, a work of fiction. And yet it quite effectively prefigures Christ in many aspects; I mentioned this yesterday. But there is **one aspect of the story of Jonah that does not prefigure Christ**, and that's the part we read today. **When Jonah preaches the word of God the entire depraved city of Nineveh from the top to the bottom, the leader to the lowest servant, all repent.** They all turn their back on their old way of life, which was leading to violence and destruction, and they accept the word of God. And the consequences of their evil lives are canceled, which is the idea of repentance, that the consequences of bad choices can be canceled either in part or in whole, and something new can take root. This is the ever evolving, ever renewing, ever redeemable creation of God. But as I mentioned, **Jonah is a book of fiction. Indeed people don't respond so generously.**

And that's why **Jesus** said, "And you have a greater than Jonah here," referring to of course himself, **a greater than Jonah, but getting much less response.** But of course the difference is the **difference between fiction and fact.** We can wishfully think that things are going to change in our world. We can wishfully think we are going to change. But **actual change is not so simple and not so easy. It requires going against the grain of our own habits, whether it's speaking about strictly immoral practices or simply practices that are immoral only in their accumulation.**

It is not immoral for example to buy things, but **it is immoral to accumulate an enormous amount of things that you can't possibly use.** It is not immoral for a country to desire its own development, but **it's immoral to develop itself at the expense of other countries or areas or**

**peoples.** It is not immoral to promote **the whole concept of liberty, the whole idea of human freedom,** that is actually a good, but that is a relative good. **It is wrong and immoral to absolutize it,** to make it the absolute pinnacle of a social contract. That's absolutizing something that is relative. **Usually we hear the complaint in the other direction, where modern society relativizes what is absolute,** like the value of life, and that is true, it does. But human society has always done that. **Modern society is peculiar not in relativizing what is absolute, but in absolutizing what is relative.** That never happened before, to my knowledge. That's what we have to look at.

**This is all part of the repentance that we need as individuals and as a society for the well-being of the creation, so that the consequences of our bad choices and our bad habits will not overcome us, which they most certainly will if nothing is done.** That is the way God created everything. That is what Scriptures, Old and New Testament both, testify to. It's only a matter of time, so we have to be about repentance, reconciliation. *Cilia* means eyelashes. Reconciliation means touching eyelashes, restoration of relationship, **restoration of the sort of harmony that God desires among his creation,** among the people created in his own image and likeness.