Jonah is a reluctant messenger of God. It took a fish to put him the place God wanted him to be.

Jonah reminds us that, as difficult as it might be, God needs people to speak and to live the truths of God's love. Jonah brings a message of condemnation. God reveals a message of mercy but, it took Jonah to turn the people of Nineveh to God to begin with.

Of most significance in the first reading is that the ashes of repentance are demonstrated as realities of that time. It really was a significant sign of shame for a person to be covered with ashes.

In this season of Lent, having ourselves received the ashes, Jesus reminds the crowds of the mercy of God. A mercy they would come to know if they only took the time notice. We are reminded that until we take notice of just how generously God is loving us in Jesus Christ, who is the 'something greater here', we will never know God as we should.

It is a reminder to us that knowing God must come through being humble before God. We will never see people in the street covering themselves in ashes in our society. Similarly, we will rarely see the humility necessary to fully appreciate God's grace.

We need to look for humility and make it happen. It is such a good thing for us to have for in it, we find God. Let's not forget those ashes.