

June 7, 2020

JONAH



The Jonah in Us

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for being a personal God who still speaks to us today. Forgive us for the times we don't want to go in the direction you are calling us. Help us to discern your voice and be obedient to your call. Lord, when our disobedience leads to consequences, have mercy on us and walk with us through the storm. And as difficult as those storms may be, we thank you that they can deepen our relationship with you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Jonah 1:1-4, 9-10, 12, 15-17

¹The Lord's word came to Jonah, Amittai's son: ²"Get up and go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it, for their evil has come to my attention." ³So Jonah got up—to flee to Tarshish from the Lord! He went down to Joppa and found a ship headed for Tarshish. He paid the fare and went aboard to go with them to Tarshish, away from the Lord. ⁴But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, so that there was a great storm on the sea; the ship looked like it might be broken to pieces.

⁹He said to them, "I'm a Hebrew. I worship the Lord, the God of heaven—who made the sea and the dry land." ¹⁰Then the men were terrified and said to him, "What have you done?" (The men knew that Jonah was fleeing from the Lord, because he had told them.)

¹²He said to them, "Pick me up and hurl me into the sea! Then the sea will become calm around you. I know it's my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

¹⁵Then they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased its raging. ¹⁶The men worshipped the Lord with a profound reverence; they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made solemn promises. Meanwhile, the Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

INTRODUCTION

What do you do when that still small voice of God calls you to do something you don't want to do? Like Jonah, many of us run in the opposite direction. But just because you run, doesn't mean God is through with you.

Like Jonah, God speaks to us today and may ask us to do something we don't want to do. And like Jonah, many times we look for a boat sailing in the opposite direction. Unfortunately, we don't realize that our disobedience to God may hurt others as well. But when we run, God still pursues us and tries to get our attention through the storms of life. And it's in the midst of the storm that we can grow closer to God and be transformed.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Do you believe that the book of Jonah is historical, allegorical, or a combination of the two? Do you believe that scripture can be allegorical and still be inspired by God? Do you believe that all scripture needs to be historically accurate or it is not true?
- 2) In his mind, Jonah had legitimate reasons for not wanting to preach to the Ninevites. Has there ever been a time when you disobeyed God's direction and faced the consequences. Who or what is currently the Nineveh in your life?
- 3) In your spiritual life, which direction are you running: towards God, away from God, with God, or behind God? Share a time when you thought you could ignore or run from God? Where did you end up? What does our running from God reveal about our concept of God?
- 4) What kind of storms has God used in the past (or present) to get your attention? What did your storm reveal to you? How long did it take for you to have a change of heart? How did God use the storm to change the way you think about Him and His mercy toward others?
- 5) Jonah's disobedience did not just affect him, it affects everyone around him. How can the consequences of our disobedience affect others? Think about a time when you disobeyed God. Who was affected by your disobedience?