



JONAH

for lent

DEVOTIONALS:

26 - 28 FEBRUARY & 1 – 4 MARCH 2023

Read: Jonah 1: 1-9

Running Away

God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and warn them of God's wrath, due to their wickedness. In rebellion and fear, Jonah instead sought to run away from God and boarded a boat heading for Tarshish. Because of His disobedience, God sent a storm so great that it caused even seasoned sailors to be afraid, but Jonah was asleep, and unaware of the storm.

When the sailors woke him and asked him to call on his God, they decided to cast lots to see whose fault the storm was. After the lot fell to Jonah, they asked him where he was from and what he did. His answer "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land," struck terror into their hearts. *It's impossible to run from God, and it inevitably brings consequences.*

Ten things this passage says-

- God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and cry against it.
- Nineveh was a wicked city.
- Jonah disobeyed and boarded a ship for Tarshish, instead.
- Jonah thought he could flee from the presence of the Lord.
- The Lord caused a great wind to rise up and stir up a storm large enough to threaten the ship Jonah was on.
- Jonah was sleeping through the storm.
- Every shipmate was calling out to his god, and they urged Jonah to call out to his, as well.
- The sailors cast lots to see whose fault the storm was.
- The lot fell to Jonah, pointing to him as the one responsible.
- Jonah told them that he was a Hebrew, and that his God had created the sea and dry land.

Ten Things this passage does NOT say-

- God's command to Jonah was optional, and Jonah could do it or not do it as he liked.
- The Ninevites weren't all that bad, and God's judgment of them was unjustified.
- Nineveh was an Israelite city, so it was usual for God to send a prophet to them.
- Jonah intended to obey God eventually.
- Jonah could flee from God's presence.
- The storm that followed was just a coincidence, and had nothing to do with Jonah's disobedience.
- The sailor's efforts to appease the storm by their efforts (crying out to their gods and hurling the cargo into the sea) were successful.
- Jonah was feeling guilty over his disobedience to the Lord.
- God wasn't in control of the lots, and it was just coincidence that it fell to Jonah.
- Jonah was a Gentile prophet, being sent to his own people.

What does this passage teach me about God?

- God's commands are clear, and they are to be obeyed.
- God is just. He must punish wickedness.
- God is omnipresent. I cannot flee from Him.
- God is in control of nature. The winds and the weather obey Him.
- God is the only God. No man-contrived god has any power.

- God knows my sins, and He can cause them to be found out. Just because my conscience is quiet, does not mean He has forgotten.
- God cares about the Gentiles, as well as the Jews.
- God is missions-minded.

How does this passage apply to my life?

- I should be aware of God's presence in my life and never seek to flee Him.
- Obedience to the Lord is not optional. I should obey the first time, every time, or He will just discipline me and give me more opportunities to obey.
- God desires me to share Him with the lost.
- Do not elevate my judgment above God's.

Questions-

- What does "Jonah" mean? *Dove V1*
- What does "Amittai" mean? *Truthful or loyal V1*
- What doubt does Jonah show that it was the Lord who spoke to him? *V1*
- What did God command Jonah to do? *V2*
- Why did God command Jonah to do that? *V2*
- When did God want Jonah to do this? *V2*
- Why was it unique that God would ask Jonah to go to Nineveh? *This was the only case where God sent His prophet to a Gentile nation, instead of to Israel. JMSB says "This was for the salvation of that city and for the shame and jealousy of Israel, as well as a rebuke to the reluctance of the Jews to bring Gentiles to the true God" V2*
- What was Jonah's response? *V3*
- Why do you think he responded in this way? *V3*
- Did he succeed in fleeing from the presence of the Lord? *V3*
- What was the Lord's response to Jonah's disobedience? *V4*
- What did this display about the Lord's character and His power? *V4*
- How did this endanger others traveling with him? *V4*
- What were the sailors' three responses to the storm? *V5*
- What does this say about the severity of the storm? *V5*
- What was Jonah's initial response to the storm? *V5*
- What does the sailors' response indicate about their character and beliefs? *V5*
- What does Jonah's initial response indicate about his character? *V5*
- Why did the captain approach Jonah? *V6*
- What did the captain's question reveal about his faith in his people's gods? In Jonah's God? *V6*
- How did they discover that the storm was Jonah's fault? *V7*
- Based on the cross references you have observed, was this method consistent with how Israel determined this kind of thing? Do you think God spoke through the lot? *V7*
- What did the outcome of casting lots reveal about God's character and power? *V7*
- What was the sailor's response to the outcome of the lots? *V8*
- What did their response reveal about their beliefs? *V8*
- What was Jonah's response to their questions? *V9*
- What did his response reveal about his beliefs? *V9*
- Why do you think he identified God as he did, as the "Lord God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land"? *V9*
- Why was it strange that Jonah claimed to worship and fear God? How were his actions in opposition to that? *V9*

What were the consequences for Jonah's action?

- The sailors' fright (4-5a)
- The sailors' prayer to their gods (v 5b)
- The sailors' unloading the ship (v 5c)
- The captain's speech to Jonah (v 6)
- The sailors' word to each other (v 7a)
- The sailors' question to Jonah, "Who are you?" (v 7b-8)
- Jonah's confession (v 9)
- The sailors' question to Jonah, "What have you done?" (v 10a)
- The sailors' question to Jonah "What shall we do?" (v 10b-11)
- Jonah's words to the sailors (v 12)
- The sailors' rowing of the ship (v 13)
- The sailor's prayer to the Lord (v 14)
- The sailors' fear of the Lord (v 15-16)
- Who would you say is the principal person in this narrative? Why?

V2- Nineveh was located 550 miles northeast of Samaria. This would have required Jonah to travel more than a month, if he journeyed the usual 15-20 miles a day. So, not only was the city the largest in the world at the time (second only to Babylon; probably with a population of ~600,000), and known for violence, but it was also quite a lengthy journey from where he was. Jonah had numerous reasons for not wanting to go, but none were GOOD reasons.

This is the only recorded instance of a prophet refusing God's commission. If the location is as suspected, it was as far west of the opposite direction as possible. Definite rebellion. God wanted him to go to Nineveh, 500 miles northeast of Palestine. Instead of going east, Jonah went 2000 miles to the west. God wished Jonah to take an overland trip via the Fertile Crescent. Instead, he took a distasteful sea voyage (the Jews hated the sea). God sent him to the greatest metropolis of the day. Instead, Jonah headed for a remote trading post on the fringes of civilization. The Lord wished to go with His prophet. Instead, Jonah tried to flee from the presence and power of God."

PRAYER & CONCERNS

- **We still need YOU! We need leaders and volunteers to serve in various positions on committees and boards. You may not think you have the gift, talent, and/or time to serve, but all are called to work in the kingdom. We need you!**
- Our **church family members and friends** are experiencing all forms of challenges and concerns. "Lord, give me the courage to face the challenges and ills that come. Help me to persevere and not give up. Give me the strength to face these storms. Pour out your peace over me and keep me in your perfect peace. Amen.
- **Bro. Bob Krell**, after spending a couple of days in the hospital, has returned home. He is appreciative for your prayers and cards for renewing of strength and healing. Thank you, God, for hearing and answering my prayer. Please mail cards and notes of support and encouragement to: Bro. Bob and Mrs. Jean Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090.
- **Ms. Sandy Wamser** having been diagnosed with Epilepsy, is still working with her medical team to find the correct medications and doses to control the seizures. She is very grateful for your love, prayers and support. Special prayers for Mr. Pat as he cares for Ms. Sandy. Cards and notes can be sent to: Mr. Pat and Mrs. Sandy Wamser, 3742 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, WI 53095.
- Our Sweet, Sweet Gentleman, **Mr. Allan Kieckhafer** who passed away on January 25, 2023 was celebrated with a loving, honorable and joyous Celebration of Life Service on 30 January 2023. We have stood on the shoulders of this saintly giant and we give God praise and thanks for all that Mr. Allan taught us, the amazing legacy of service he has left us to live into and the vital a role he played in helping us grow into who we are now. "Almighty Father, you have built up your Church through the love and devotion of your saints: inspire us to follow the example of Mr. Allan whom we grieve his passing. May we, Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church, rejoice with him in the vision of your glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen." We pray for Mr. Allan's family and the community of West Bend. Amen.
- **Ms. Nancy Whitson** is still admitted at The Pavilion at Glacier Valley. She requests your prayers and support as she continues to journey with health concerns. Please send cards and notes of encouragement to: Mrs. Nancy Whitson, 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095.

- Words cannot begin to express the heartfelt sadness and grief we are experiencing for the passing of our beloved **Ms. Beverly “Bev” June Vogel**. To Ms. Bev’s family: “Always be assured that you have our full support, prayers and love.” May God grant us grace, that in pain we may find comfort, in sorrow hope, in death resurrection. Amen.
- **Mr. Don Walters** is still experiencing several medical challenges. We’re keeping Ms. Joyce in our thoughts and prayers as well. Letters and notes of encouragement and love can be mailed to: Mr. Don and Mrs. Joyce Walters, 5368 Woodlawn Summit, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Ms. Jeri Bowerman**, had cardiac stents inserted. Please send her your cards and notes of love, support and courage: Ms. Jeri Bowerman, New Perspectives Senior Living, 2130 Continental Drive, #322, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mr. Chuck Rogge** is still on a journey of healing. He is grateful for the cards and notes of support. Please continue to flood the mailbox with love and support to: Mr. Chuck and Mrs. Sue Rogge, 5011 Hwy. P, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mr. Dick Simmons**, diagnosed with acute leukemia. “Dear God, we place our worries in your hands. We place Mr. Dick’s sickness under your care and humbly ask for strength and comfort. Be near him in times of weakness and pain; sustain him by your grace, that Mr. Dick’s strength and courage may not fail; give him confidence in the power of your grace, that even when he is afraid, may he put his whole trust in you. We pray all of these things in Your name. Amen. Mr. Dick, Ms. Shirley and family, we are sending you love, hugs, support and prayers during this difficult time. Cards, notes filled with prayers and support can be mailed to: Mr. Dick and Mrs. Shirley Simmons, 2908 Valley Avenue, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mr. Len McGinnis, Jr.**, continues to quietly face medical challenges. Your cards and notes of support and well wishes for Mr. Len and Mrs. Shelia McGinnis can be mailed to: 1230 Vogt Drive, West Bend, WI 53095.
- **Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf**, appreciates your continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: alankempf33@gmail.com; or cards and notes to Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.

Prayer: The First Four Days of Lent Ash Wednesday ~ Lord, it feels like we are embarking on a Lenten journey together, you and I. The beautiful words in the today's prayer talk about the "quiet remembrance of our need for redemption." That feels like what I am looking for - or what you are looking for in me. I want to remember how much I need you in my life and how much my life needs redemption. I want to remember it clearly and in the background of my day today and all through Lent.

On this special day, Ash Wednesday, may my small sacrifices in fasting be a way to clear away the clutter in my life to see you more clearly. May my longing for meat and other food, help me to focus my life today more outside myself. Let me be aware of those who are in so much more suffering than I am and may I be aware of them as the brothers and sisters you have placed in my life.

Lord, I know there is darkness within me and around me. Bless these days with your Word. Let your Light shine in the darkness. Help me long for that Light until we celebrate it at the Vigil six weeks from now.

And most of all Lord, help me to honor this day with the ashes on my forehead. They help me remember where I have come from and where I am going. May I acknowledge to you my sins and my deep need for your loving forgiveness and grace. I pray that this Lenten season will make me so much more aware of how much I need your healing in my life.

Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martín