

Jonah: Reluctant Prophet, Relentless God
Week 1: The Prodigal Prophet
Jonah 1:1-17

Introduction:

- A. Some biblical stories have been confined to the classrooms of our children or the yearly VBS.
- B. The story of Jonah is not a fable or just some fascinating VBS story we tell our children. It is a true story about a prophet of God and His call from God. This account is historical (2 Kings 14:25; Matt. 12:40-41).
- C. While many people think the story of Jonah is about a prophet of God or a giant fish, the story is more about the love of God.

The Request from God (vs. 1-2)

- A. God commanded Jonah to go and preach to the city of Nineveh. What do we know about Nineveh?
 - 1. Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria and dates all the way back to Gen. 10:11.
 - 2. Nineveh was a large city (3:3) with a big population (4:11).
 - 3. Nineveh had walls that were 100 ft. high and wide enough for 3 chariots to race on the wall.
- B. Nineveh was a very wicked city. The prophet Nahum who also prophesied to the city of Nineveh, called it “the bloody city” (Nahum 3:1).

The Response of Jonah (v. 3)

- A. Jonah didn’t want to go to Nineveh so he decided to try to flee from the presence of the Lord.
 - 1. He went to down to Joppa. This was 55-60 miles from his home in Gathhepher.
 - 2. Nineveh was about 500 miles northeast of Joppa; about a one month journey.
- B. Jonah boarded a ship headed in the opposite direction of Nineveh.
 - 1. Tarshish was about 2,000 miles west in the opposite direction of Nineveh.
 - 2. Tarshish was in what is now Southwest Spain.
- C. Jonah had several potential reasons for not wanting to go and preach to the Ninevites:
 - 1. Nineveh was an enemy to Israel who was very cruel.
 - 2. Preaching to Nineveh would have been very dangerous for Jonah if they did not repent.
 - 3. Jonah knew if they repented God would be gracious to them and he didn’t want to see that.

The Reaction of the Sailors (vs. 4-16)

- A. The sailors cried out to their own god for help (vs. 4-5).
- B. The sailors cared more about Jonah than Jonah cared about the people of Nineveh (vs. 11-13).
- C. The sailors feared the Lord and offered up a sacrifice to him (vs. 14-16).

Are You Responding Like Jonah?

- A. Some of you may be running from God or saying no to Him right now.
 - 1. Being Baptized (Jn. 3:5) or repenting of your sins (Lk. 13:3).
 - 2. Doing what you know is right (Jam. 4:17).
 - 3. Talking with your spouse, family member or friends about Jesus (Matt. 28:19-20).
- B. Our disobedience to God affects others. Jonah’s disobedience had an effect on the sailors.
- C. We will answer for our disobedience to God.

Conclusion:

- A. God called Jonah to go, but Jonah said no.
- B. Are you guilty of saying no to God in some area of your life this morning?