

Jonah: Go - Devotional

Monday, March 20

Opening thought - when you think about the story of Jonah (prior to the sermon) what thoughts or ideas come to mind? (Name two or three)

Read - Jonah 1:1-6

- What do you learn about Jonah from this first chapter? What do you learn about God from this first chapter?

Pastor Jerry spoke about the fact that you see blatant rebellion in the life of Jonah and yet, if we look closely at our own lives, we see a similar kind of rebellion (open resistance to God's authority and rule over our lives) in consciously choosing to ignore or turn from God in our decisions.

- What are some common ways Christians can live in rebellion against God?

Read verses 1-2 again. What do you think it felt like [for Jonah] to get this specific call from God to go, in person, to his sworn enemy and announce God's judgment?

How do you see both the judgment of God and the mercy of God in the events of chapter 1:1-6?

Reflect - *God specifically called Jonah to go to Nineveh and announce coming judgment. In a similar way believers have been called to go into a hostile environment and proclaim the good news of the Gospel (Mt. 28:19-20). What barriers exist within you for obeying this call? Who is someone in your life that needs to hear the gospel?*

- *Take time to confess your own resistance or unwillingness to be light and salt to those around you*
- *Ask the Lord of the Harvest to give you a renewed passion for the gospel and for those He has sovereignly placed in your life (work, play, neighborhood, family)*

Tuesday, March 21

Opening thought - consider the city of Palm Bay / Melbourne - how would you describe it? How do you think God sees this city?

Read - Jonah 1:1-16

- What words would you use to describe the boat captain and the sailors, as it relates to the events in chapter 1?

- How does Jonah's presence among them affect them? How does Jonah respond to all that is happening to him?

Pastor Jerry spoke about Jonah and what we know of him prior to the book that bears his name. Earlier in the Old Testament we discover Jonah as a faithful man of God who spoke the Word of the Lord. And yet something has changed in Jonah as we read the events of chapter 1. It would seem he is upset, depressed or even angry at God and the call that has come to him.

- How do you respond (words, actions, attitude) when you are upset or unhappy with how God is allowing events to unfold in your life? (Is this similar to what you see here in chapter 1?)

- What is ironic and unusual about the responses by both Jonah and the sailors in verses 7-10?

Reflect - *It is sometimes easy to read this book and think, "why is Jonah being so foolish and blatantly disobedient to God?" Yet in our own lives we too can easily compromise what we believe because of personal inconvenience, financial loss, embarrassment, pride, selfishness, greed or even addictions. Take time to talk with the Lord about where you are in your own personal obedience to Him. God's love for us comes at the cost of handing over control of all we are (passions, thought life, finances, marriage, private and public behavior, free-time, etc.).*

Wednesday, March 22

Opening thought - when has God asked you to do something that was incredibly hard, difficult or challenging? How did you respond?

Read - Jonah 1:1-17

- How do you see the love, mercy and judgment of God in this whole chapter?

Pastor Jerry pointed out that there was a definite reason behind Jonah's "No!" in response to God's call to "Go!" The problem is that it's not revealed until chapter 4:1-3.

- Read these verses and write out, in your own words, why Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh.

Jonah foolishly thought he could run away from God and escape His call on Jonah's life. Which is why he found a boat headed for the farthest corner of the known world and took this as God's providence to run.

- Why is this a foolish idea and how does Psalm 139:7-10 clarify this foolishness?
- How can we act in similar ways to Jonah (actions or thinking)?

Reflect - *It is futile to think we could ever get away from God! Whatever form of rebellion we take, God is with us in that rebellion and will not allow us to walk away from Him. We can never get away from His plan for us or for others.*

- Our problem may not be obvious racism or rebellion (like Jonah) but rather **passive resistance** to God's call on our lives to Go! We resist inviting that neighbor into our life because they have something you do not care for (view on sexuality, political persuasion, dress or things they wear, etc.)
- Our problem can be that we carry the gospel only to the people we are comfortable with, but not those who we cringe to spend time with.
- Talk with God about these matters and ask Him to give you fresh eyes and a compassionate heart for the lost.

Sermon Notes - Jonah: Go

Church theme this year: Healthy Disciple

- Healthy disciples are not only concerned for a strong inner life but also for concern for others outside of the disciples immediate self.
- Familiar story; more than a Sunday school story, or myth / fable; it's a story of a man of God rebelling against God.
 - Rebellion against God does occur in us - living how I want to live based solely on my view of things or my perspective. We don't realize how much we rebel against God. For others we are living daily in rebellion against God and consciously choosing to ignore or turn from God in my decisions.
 - Choosing to rebel - don't say that unkind word, don't pour that next drink, don't look at that web site, don't enter into that gossip, etc. Yet we do! We sin. Actively sinning. Eyes wide open and sinning.
 - These are the issues within the story of Jonah
- Also a story of God's inexhaustible grace and mercy! We need to see this too.

Takeaway Truth: *Saying "No!" when God says "Go!" is a foolish and futile act of rebellion.*

- Opening 3 verses set the stage for the rest of the book.

I. The Call of God - vs. 1-2

Genres of literature in the Bible (narrative, poetic, prophecy...)

- Prophets: Major and Minor (like Jonah; shorter book)
- Prophets - emissary for the Kingdom of God and a voice for the Lord among the people. Help the people know when to repent and return to the Lord, or else!
- Prophets are to live in a specific way and speak what God wants

Jonah is a unique book - God's message is not that long; historical narrative about the life and decisions of Jonah (emphasis is on him and his actions)

- Jonah is a contemporary of Elisha; a true prophet and a godly man

"He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher."
2 Kings 14:25

- His hometown was a fertile land, but a dangerous place to live (due to close proximity of Israel's enemies)

Jonah's call is unique because:

1. He must go to Nineveh - walk there
2. You must deliver this message to your enemy in person
 - A. Not announcing this news from the safety of his hometown

II. The City of Nineveh - verse 2

Modern day city of Mosul (near the Tigris river)

In Jonah's day - a prosperous city due to close trade routes, yet a brutal and evil people in war and the ones who invented crucifixion and later used by God to punish Israel.

"Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder— no end to the prey! The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot! Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end— they stumble over the bodies!" - Nahum 3:1-3

- This is Nineveh; called to go to this place and announce destruction
- Jonah's response: NO!
- Yet what has God called us to do!?

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Mt. 28:19-20

- Our response: NO!
- Let's not be too judgmental of Jonah

III. The Choice of Jonah -

Jonah said "No"

Found a ship going to the end of the known world. (last outpost of civilization)

- And he even finds a boat going to Tarshish ("hey, God must want me to go there!")
- We find providential approval to justify our sinful rebellion or sinful temptations
 - We will read into these circumstances to get our own way!
 - God calls us to obey not get and scheme for our own way

Eyes wide open rebellion....but why?

- Why would Jonah do this?
- How does this choice mimic our own rebellion?

- *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."* - Jonah 4:1-3

- Saying "No!" when God says "Go!" is a foolish and futile act of rebellion.
- He can't believe God would save "these people" - issue here is that God doesn't share God's heart or zeal for the lost or devotion for those in captivity to sin
- Racism in Jonah's heart toward the Ninevites
- We too can "go with God" in obeying his call and go up, or disobey God and go down.
 - Foolish to think we can avoid God's presence and will

- *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.* - Psalm 139:7-10

- Futile we could ever get away from God!
- Whatever form of rebellion we take, He is with us in that rebellion and will not allow us to walk away from Him
- We can never get away from His plan for us or for others

- CPC - problem may not be obvious racism or rebellion but rather **passive resistance**
 - Inviting that neighbor into your life (yet they have something you do not care for (view on sexuality, political persuasion, dress or things they wear, etc.)
 - We carry the gospel to the people we are comfortable with
 - Saying "No" when God says Go!

God's plan for Nineveh did come to pass, no matter Jonah's response. But will we be actively obedient in the process or passively resistant and disobedient to the call of God.

- He is a sovereign God who always gets his way
- We cannot thwart God's plans - to save whom He wants and to work in us as He wants