

Sermon Transcript - 20250713

Go to your Old Testament and go all the way back to the book of Jonah.

I don't guess all the way back is the right way to put that because it's towards the end of the Old Testament, kind of in the middle of your Bibles.

But the book of Jonah.

Jonah is known.

Um, mainly because he got swallowed by a big fish whale.

He got swallowed by something, right?

God created something.

That's a good way to answer that, isn't it?

God created something that swallowed Jonah, and he was in the well for how many days?

Three days, all right.

How many of you would enjoy that three-day break?

Depends on how you ask that question, right?

For Jonah, I've got a feeling as we kind of read through the story a little bit.

We're not going necessarily deal with a lot of this time in the well, but it wasn't just the most pleasurable vacation that he had ever had.

But as we are talking about this idea,

The mission starts here.

The idea that God has called us, we talked about this last week.

God has called us to go and to teach, to go and make disciples in particular.

And we talked about the idea of framing our way.

Week together here the next three days within the idea of the mission.

That vacation Bible school is not about an event.

It's not about free childcare.

It's not about free food.

Although those things are kind of, you know, part of it to some degree, it's a great time, but we want to frame it in the idea.

That we have an opportunity to change lives, to save souls, to bring people to Jesus.

That it is a moment within the mission that we get to make disciples in various different ways.

So the mission starts here.

With us right here, right now.

But here's the truth.

Here is a truth.

And as we're going to see this morning,

It's a biblical truth, but it's not necessarily a good biblical truth.

Is that a real thing?

Is there such a thing as a bad biblical truth, or maybe a challenging biblical truth?

But here it is.

Is that sometimes, even though we know what the mission is, even though we know that God has called us to do it, even though we know how important the mission is and that it can accomplish great things, the truth is sometimes we don't want to go do it.

The truth is, sometimes we just don't want to do it.

Have there ever been things in your life that you know this is important?

I need to be doing this.

It's important that I do this, but I've just chosen to ignore the importance of it.

And I'm just not going to do it.

Have you ever had moments like that in your life where you've just chosen to outright not do something that you know you should do?

I think we've all faced moments in our lives, take it out of the idea of the mission, just in general, we've all had moments like that.

And as we look at the life of Jonah, we're going to see today that that's basically what Jonah does.

Jonah wasn't confused about what God called him to do.

Jonah wasn't, he didn't misunderstand what God had called him to

Him to do.

He was just afraid, he was angry, and maybe a little too uncomfortable in his own world, in his own life.

To do what God called him to do.

So he decided to just not do it.

He decided to go the other direction, go the other way to run away from God, to get away from God, and just ignore him.

And his thought was, I really believe, is if I get far enough.

Away from the call, then God will forget about me.

And obviously, we're going see through our story that that did not happen.

So let's start: Jonah chapter 1.

In verse 1, we'll read the first couple of verses together.

The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Am.

Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.

So that's where we start.

And let's just kind of set the stage within those two verses very quickly.

The first thing that we see here.

Is we see that he gets the call to go.

Okay, it's a summons.

It's a, I need you to do something very important.

I have a specific job.

For you, that you've got to go, and you've got to do this for me.

So, where is he called to go?

He's called to go to the city of

Nineveh.

Nineveh is called, in this particular verse, is called a great city, but it's also notorious kind of throughout scripture and even historically, it is known as a very sinful city.

It is known as a very

Violent city.

It is mentioned throughout scripture that it was known for its selfish pride.

It is known for its cruelty.

It is known for its wickedness.

And Nineveh was feared and hated because of the way that they dealt with people, and in particular, other people that disagreed with them.

Okay, so they were just the type of people that if you didn't agree with me, we're just going to run over you and just take you out and take advantage of you.

And whatever set us back.

Best, you know, we're going to do that.

Well, for whatever reason, they had crossed a line somewhere, somehow, right?

And their sins have finally gotten like the great attention of God to the point that He's fixing to kind of pull a Sodom and Gomorrah on them.

Of you are so evil that ready to do what?

I'm ready to just destroy you.

I'm done with you.

You serve no purpose in right.

Okay, you are that far gone.

And so, excuse me, I'm ready to just take to take you out.

But he wants to do what God does for us.

He wants to give them a chance.

He wants to give them an opportunity to make things right.

So he calls Jonah and he says, Jonah, I want you to be the guy that goes and talks to these people and gives them this message of repentance.

For me.

Now, Jonah's job, though, is very different than all of the other prophets.

All of the other prophets that we read about throughout the Old Testament, they did have one thing in common.

Their job was to

Call out sin.

Their job was to look out into the evil world, even outside of the walls of Israel, and go, hey, the sin that you're committing is wrong.

And some of them had to do that even to the people of Israel.

But Jonah's call is a lot like our call.

Jonah's call called him out of the comfort of his home.

Not just out of the comfort of his home, called him out of the comfort of his own country.

He is out of all the major prophets and minor prophets, he's the only prophet that he says, Hey, I need you to leave the comfort of where you are, and I need you to go and plant yourself in the middle of the enemy.

And I need you to preach to them.

Now, listen, it's one thing for me to do it here, right?

Because for the most part, I think all of you like me.

And except for those two, okay?

And even for those two that don't like me, I don't feel like you're going to hurt me, right?

All right, so it's easy when you get the call and it's comfortable.

But Jonah gets the call, and he's called to immediately step out of what?

To step out of the comfort, to step into a situation that is hard and difficult, and it's not the church building.

It's not vacation Bible school.

It's not, you know, it's not the easy.

He is called to the difficult right off the bat.

Now, would God have called him to the difficult if he wasn't capable?

Of it?

Absolutely not.

He would not have.

But he called him to do something that was very, very hard.

So he struggled with it.

He struggled with it.

What does verse 3 say?

But Jonah, what?

What does your Bible say?

But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshus.

He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port.

After paying the ship the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarsh.

To flee from the Lord.

So we have some, we have three words that I think you could build the whole sermon around to some degree when you think about it.

Go, ran, flee.

God says, go do what I've called you to do.

Jonah is so uncomfortable with everything that instead of go, he what?

Ran.

And boy, running takes effort, doesn't it?

For some of us, running takes a lot more effort than for others.

For some of us, running might come easy.

Caleb said in a conversation this week: if you see me run, what?

You run.

Okay, some of us are just that way, right?

If you see me run,

You need to be running as well because there's only certain reasons that I run, and those certain reasons are never good reasons, right?

So, Jonah, though, he's like, Hey, I'm running, I'm getting as far away from what He has called me to do.

And I think in our own way, sometimes we have the same struggle.

God has called me to this, and I'm not sure about it, and so I'm going to run.

But my question that I really want us to talk about, and this is maybe the bulk of what we talk about this morning, is why do we struggle with it?

Why do we tend to run?

From the call of God.

When we know what He wants, when we understand what He wants, when we see the goodness in what He wants.

Why do we struggle with it and why do we run?

I kind of broke it down into three thoughts.

Three thoughts that came to my mind that I'll share with you.

And I'm sure there's other ways that we can break this down.

But it comes down to three words.

Being uncomfortable, inconvenient, and costly.

See, we're all about serving God until we're uncomfortable, it's inconvenient.

And it's costly.

So let's break those things down.

When I think about the idea of being uncomfortable, and I think this is maybe where Jonah was.

Jonah saw the people of Nineveh as these evil people who didn't deserve the forgiveness of God.

They were so bad, didn't deserve the grace of God.

And he was uncomfortable with the idea of God forgiving them and giving them this opportunity.

And I believe that when we face these moments of uncomfortableness,

In our own walk, that I need to be ministering to these people, or I've been called to serve in this way, but I'm uncomfortable with it.

A lot of times, that uncomfortableness comes from.

Misunderstanding.

I'm uncomfortable because I don't understand maybe what I'm called to do completely.

I'm uncomfortable because I don't understand the situation that I'm called to.

Maybe I don't understand the culture of the individual.

Individual, the background of the individual, the upbringing of the individual.

Maybe I don't understand their struggles, or maybe I don't understand their successes.

They're all so much different than mine.

So I look at it and I don't understand it and so I become uncomfortable with it.

And when I become uncomfortable with it, that causes me to disconnect from the mission.

It causes me to pull away and to go the opposite direction.

Because if uncomfortableness is in that direction, then that means that direction has to be what?

Something more comfortable.

Or, at least, not uncomfortable.

So, I'm going to get away from it as much as I can.

The second idea is that idea of being inconvenienced.

I don't have time.

Because it might be uncomfortable, we often don't want to invest in what we view is a messy place.

I'm uncomfortable with it, so I'm not going to take the time.

It's not going to inconvenience me to invest over there.

So, what do we do?

We find ways to stay busy.

I still might be uncomfortable, but I'm uncomfortable with things that make sense, if that makes sense.

I'm uncomfortable with things that I'm comfortable with.

The normal things that make me feel that way.

We pour our time into what feels safe.

We pour our time into what feels familiar.

And suddenly the mission of God feels like it's too much.

I just don't have the time.

And so we fill our life with something else that's maybe more convenient.

And so I asked myself, and I was kind of jotting notes down and thinking: how do I know?

That I'm running from the mission because of an inconvenience.

And this kind of this phrase kept coming up: I would, but I have to.

Hey, I need you to help with such and such here at church.

I would, but I have to do this.

Hey, we've got VBS this week, and I need you to do this.

I would, but.

And fill in the blank, hey, we've got such and such going on, and we need like five people.

I would, but I have to do this.

And that phrase often reveals where our priorities truly are.

It sounds responsible on the surface, right?

I would do that.

And that phrase is meant to sound like I'm interested in doing it.

I see the importance in doing it, but

I'm going to make something else more important than that.

And that's what the back end of that phrase does: it elevates your own personal schedule.

Your own personal feelings, your own personal comfort, your own personal timing to a greater importance than that which God.

Has called yourself.

To be part of the mission means you're going to have to be uncomfortable at times.

And it means I'm going to have to say it's okay that I'm not in control.

It's okay that God controls my schedule, that He controls my time.

So we need to ask ourselves: am I too busy to obey, or am I just too comfortable to be inconvenienced?

So, those are the first two ideas.

The third, though, is costly.

And I'm not talking about money, but it's costly to myself.

You know, if I take the time.

To get to know somebody.

And I take the time to get comfortable with someone new in a new situation, in a new dynamic.

And I quit worrying about the inconvenience, and I just let God kind of control that direction, then you know what it might do?

It might change me.

Getting to know someone that's different than me might actually change me. And

you know what? It

might cost me, it might cost me my pride.

It might force me to think about long-held assumptions.

It might require me to admit that I've been wrong about something, about the way that I feel about some people.

It might make me realize that I'm wrong about how I feel about something scripturally.

And sometimes we're not willing to pay that cost because we love comfort.

More than the calling.

And I think that's where Jonah was.

Jonah was more worried about how he felt.

and about what he thought and about his opinions and about his comforts and about his understandings.

And he wasn't willing to pay the cost to let all of those things go and just simply say yes.

To God.

That's why he ran.

That's why he tried to get as far away from the presence of God as possible.

And if we're not careful, we can do the same thing as well.

So, what happens?

Let's go to verse four.

Let's read verses 4 through.

We'll kind of maybe go through the end of the chapter here.

The Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose, the ship threatened to break up.

All the sailors were afraid, and each cried out to his own God, and they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell asleep.

The captain went to him and said, How can you sleep?

Get up and call on your God.

Maybe he will take notice of us.

And that way we will not perish.

Then the sailors said to each other, Come, let us cast lots, find out who is responsible for this calamity.

They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

So they asked him, Tell us who is responsible for making all this trouble for us.

What kind of work do you do?

Where do you come from?

What is your country?

From what people are you, he answered, I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the seas and the dry land.

This terrified them.

And they asked, What have you done?

They knew he was running away from the Lord because he had already told them.

So the sea was getting rougher and rougher.

So they asked him, What should we do with you to make the sea calm down for us?

Pick me up and throw me into the sea, he replied, and it will become calm.

I know that this is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.

Instead,

The men did their best to row back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before.

Then they cried out to the Lord.

Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life.

Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man.

For you, Lord, have done, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.

Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.

At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.

So, this is the idea that I really want to kind of maybe close our thoughts with, and because of time, and I could just kind of keep going with this story.

God shakes us up when we settle.

God shakes us up when we settle.

I think the most powerful, maybe, phrase in this whole chapter here is that Jonah went below and went to what?

Went to sleep.

And we usually don't sleep unless we're somewhat comfortable, right?

So Jonah's running away from God.

He's been called to the mission.

The mission's over here.

He's running away from God and he's running in a direction.

He's getting to the point to where he's comfortable in running away from God.

He's okay with running away from God.

He thinks that his new direction is going to keep him from all the trouble, all the challenge, all the uncomfortableness that goes along with it.

But he's settling instead into disobedience.

He's settling into his own personal comfort, and he's settling into a version of his faith where God doesn't have to be said yes to.

I can say no to God sometimes, and I'm still going to be okay.

But God sends a storm.

To wake him up.

And this isn't just a random storm.

It's on purpose.

It's God's way of saying, you may have settled in, but I'm not finished.

And I get the last word here.

I have the final say.

And God makes Jonah uncomfortable very, very quickly.

And God is showing Jonah that you can run, but I still win.

You can hide, but I still move.

And that is just the truth in our life: that comfort.

Can be very dangerous.

When we focus on comfort instead of calling, we risk falling asleep spiritually.

And sometimes those storms that we face, they're not really.

They're not really God punishing us, per se.

They may just be God trying to get our attention, trying to get us to refocus.

It's as if God's saying, I need to shake up your life so your heart will focus on where I need you to be so that we can accomplish all these.

Things together, but the truth is, God's storms are going to be there if you run from Him.

If you run from God, you will always find storms in your life.

And the storms away from God will always be, will always be more uncomfortable, more unsettling, more inconvenient, more costly than the mission that God calls you to.

Always.

So you have to make the decision which direction am I going?

Am I going to answer the call or am I going to run from the call?

So what happens?

Verse 17.

Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

You know, when you're alone for three days and three nights, you get to do a lot of thinking, don't you?

A lot of soul searching.

And as you read through chapter two, we're not going to do that together, but as you read through chapter two,

You see that that's exactly what Jonah does.

Jonah does a lot of soul searching and he gets back to where he realizes I've got to answer the call of God, which brings us to maybe my

Favorite part of the story in chapter 3 and verse 5, or verses 1 through 5.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time.

Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I gave you.

Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh.

Now, Nineveh was a very large city.

It took three days to go through it.

Jonah began by going

A day's journey into the city, proclaiming 40 more days, and Nineveh will be overthrown.

The Ninevites believed in God.

A fast was proclaimed, and all of them from the greatest to the least put on sackcloth.

And you go on through the rest of the story, and the city at this time turns back to God.

This is why I love this particular story.

It's because before we ever get to the great grace of God to the city of Nineveh, we first see it individually with Jonah.

How easy would it have been for God to go, well, Jonah's going that way.

I'm going to grab somebody else.

This is time-sensitive.

I don't want these people to be lost.

I want these people to have an opportunity to come back and be with me.

This doesn't have three or four days to wait on Jonah and his problems.

And I'm just going to let him go.

How easy?

Could God have done that?

Could God have done too many problems over here with Jonah?

Too much drama, too much baggage.

I'm going a different direction.

I going to go grab someone else.

Could God have done that?

Yes.

God doesn't give up on people, does He?

God doesn't say, just because you don't want to serve me doesn't mean I don't want you.

And so he has this moment with Jonah, and he allows Jonah to take the time he needs to grow to the point that he's ready to do what God's called him to do.

He's going to do the same thing for us.

He's always going to give us time to grow and mature and be ready for the mission when the time comes.

And then it says: The word of the Lord came to Jonah: a what?

A second time, a second time.

We're not on a one-chance basis with God.

We have a first chance and a second chance.

And a third chance, and on and on, as long as we come back and repent and we ask for that forgiveness, God will continue.

To give us those chances.

And to me, that's one of the greatest parts of this story: to see that individual relationship that he has with Jonah and the patience that he gives Jonah.

And the time that he gives Jonah, and the grace that comes along with all of that from this particular phrase.

But then Jonah goes on.

He says, All right, I'm going to do it.

And he goes through, and what's the message?

The message is pretty simple, isn't it?

He goes through and he says, Hey, in 40 days, the city is going to be overrun.

In 40 days, it's over, people.

You've got 40 days to get it together.

That was the message.

And to me, that's so important because when we talk about the mission, one of the things

that makes us the most uncomfortable about the mission.

Talked about this last week a little bit, is what we have to say.

And we get so uncomfortable when we have to worry about answering questions and making sure we're saying the right thing.

But from the story of Jonah, I see that maybe sometimes our words really just need to.

Be fewer.

We worry about having enough words.

God says, Jonah, here's your message.

It's short and it's simple.

One of the most important things that we can share with people as they are coming to Jesus, as they're coming to Jesus, there's a lot of things that we can talk about.

There's a lot of things in the message.

Of Jesus and the gospel, but the most important thing that we can share with people as they are coming to Jesus is that Jesus loves you.

Because if people don't understand how much Jesus loves them, they'll never understand the power of the cross.

They'll never understand why Jesus died on the cross for them.

They'll never understand the importance of their baptism in that moment of having their sins washed away.

Why would God wash my sins away?

Why would He get rid of all these things that I've done?

Why would He forgive me of all these things?

Things because of how much he loves you.

So if you can't think of anything else to share with people, share with people how much God loves.

If that's all you can remember, remember that God loves.

That's the great commandment.

That's the greatest verse that we remember.

For God so.

Loved the world.

It all boils down to that.

If we don't teach that, then everything else is empty because it all comes back to.

The love of God.

We don't need to worry about saying the wrong thing.

We don't need to worry about knowing enough.

We don't need to worry about messing up.

Sometimes our words need to be simple.

Sometimes we need to just focus on the idea of love the Lord.

Love your neighbor.

And when we truly love, our words flow more naturally and often fewer are really and truly needed.

So, what do we take away?

Here's the things that I want you to think about this morning.

When Jonah finally stopped making it about his fears, about his opinions, or his comfort.

And simply following God's lead, God did what only God can do.

And the same thing happens in our lives.

We get away from my st.

When we get away from what I want, when we get away from my needs, when we get away from the way I want to do it, and we make it about God, God will use us.

To do great things.

This great city, this great city that was known for its pride and its violence and all of these other things, because Jonah walked through and for three days shared a simple message from God.

The entire city.

Mourned their sins and worship God. But

here's what I'm asking you: Are you running for something from something?

Has God called you?

Has God reached to you and put a burden of something on your heart, a mission in your soul?

And you've gone, mm, not doing that.

And have you run the other direction?

What are you avoiding from the mission of God?

And then, very simply, will you stop making it about yourself?

Will you stop making it about your comfort and start making it about God's mission?

Let's close with a word of prayer.

God, our hope and our prayer today is that above everything else, we will align our heart.

To your mission.

And we pray that you give us the courage to overcome our own struggles along the way that we know we're going to mess up.

We know that.

That we're going to have times where we struggle with it, where we're going to want to throw our hands up and say, I'm not doing this.

But in those moments, God, help us to remember how much you've loved us up to that point, how much you're going to continue to love us.

Help us to remember how powerful your son's death is in our life, and that brings us so close into a relationship with you.

And let us draw from that relationship the power and the strength and the courage that we need to keep on in the mission.

God, we pray for those this morning who are lost.

We pray that you will use each and every one of us to be a light into the world, to bring salvation into their lives, to bring that message of Jesus, the gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection into their life.

God, be with us this week as we get into maybe our biggest effort of reaching into our community.

We pray for our vacation Bible school, God.

We pray that it touches lives and touches families and touches hearts, God.

We pray for our teachers and our group leaders and just everybody that's going to serve this week.

We pray that we all do that with your mission in mind.

May it be a week that blesses our community in the most powerful of ways.

It's in your son's name we pray.

Amen.