

Sermon Outline - Sun, October 11th, 2020 – Finding Ninevah
(Jonah 1:1-6;11-15; 1 Peter 4:7-11)

Overview – This month we focus on the question of calling. Many of us are at a pivot point – whether because of retirement, being laid off, or just getting to the point where you know it is time to move on, lots of us are asking – what’s next for me? This is also true for our young community as we are growing and trying to understand what we are called to next. We will look at this through the lens of two stories – the story of Jonah in the Bible and James Barrie in the movie Finding Neverland. (no spoilers this week)

Exegesis

- Why do we use the word calling instead of purpose? Presupposes that God makes a proposal to us and we can both hear and choose whether to walk towards it. The call is active and the response also requires intentional action.
- Review of the Jonah story – [God tells him to go preach to people in Ninevah and he is not feeling it, buys a ticket in the opposite direction, storm comes, they have to throw him over the side, ends up in the belly of a fish, makes peace with God, goes to Ninevah and the people actually repent, mostly successful prophet ever.]

Key Points –

1. **Calling = God’s Plan + Our gifts & experiences + Our Community of Engagement** – Calling is about your full destiny in the world and is bigger than a job or even membership in a church. It may evolve just as God’ Plan is always unfolding, but it is about a powerful alignment between these three factors and often manifests in multiple arenas.
2. **Calling is a place of deep alignment but it might not line up with what you expected for your life** – We often have visions for our lives that are shaped by our own desires and other people’s expectations. Sometimes we are so focused on those things we never stop to ask if they are really our calling and may ignore what God is asking of us.
3. **Moving into your calling may require a journey through deep discomfort** – The Jonah story reminds us that God rarely calls us to step up to easy tasks. For human beings to be part of God’s plan usually requires some serious stretching so if you experience spiritual muscle pain – don’t be surprised. The initial pain is less than the eventual gain

We are called to be a community that leans into its calling. That is only possible if each of us is willing to do that individually and collectively. Someone out there is called to help support our children’s ministry. Some of us are called to live in our future intentional community of Jubilee House. You may be clear I am called to help lead this community, but I didn’t always see it.....

Core Questions –

1. Do you currently walk with a clear sense of calling? If so, what do you feel called to? If not, was there a time in the past? What do you think is standing in your way right now?
2. How does/might your calling differ from the visions you have had for your life? What external expectations prevent you from leaning into your calling?
3. What discomfort do you need to embrace in order to move into your calling? What upfront pain is preventing you from walking towards the eventual gain?