



# REACH

Reach

Part 4

August 22, 2021

I would like for you stand with me this morning in honor of the Reading of the Word and turn with me to the Book of Jonah chapter, 1:1-3. Notice with me in the **first chapter of the Book of Jonah beginning at verse 1 through verse 3. “Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” But**

Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.”

The Book of Jonah records the story of a Prophet who rebels against the Will of God and ultimately finds himself in the belly of a fish which was providing him transit all the way back to where he started from. I have always found this story fascinating but I believe that I have discovered the key to all of Jonah’s trials... Are you ready? He did not value the Presence of God...

### Point #1 - The Presence of God is Prophetic but it can also be Painful

What was his fatal mistake: He fled from the presence of the Lord and notice the secondary consequence of fleeing the presence of the Lord; his life spiraled out of control. He went down to Joppa; Down into the boat. Down into the lower parts of the ship. Down into the water; Down into the depths of the sea. Down into the belly of a great fish  
Notice Jonah, in his rebellion, went Down, Down, Down...

And too often we find ourselves going down, down, down and could it be due to our fleeing from the Presence of God?

Notice the Words penned by the Apostle Peter in **2 Peter 2:20-22**,  
 “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the  
 knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again  
 entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for  
 them than the first. <sup>21</sup> For it would have been better for them never to  
 have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back  
 from the holy commandment delivered to them. <sup>22</sup> What the true  
 proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit,  
 and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

Notice how Peter is speaking of Church folk leaving the Faith,  
 leaving the Call of Christ and going back to entangle themselves in the  
 world again! See Peter’s Words in verse 21, <sup>21</sup> For it would have been  
 better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after  
 knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to  
 them.”

And just as Jonah fled from God, if we are not careful we will fall  
 into this same trap as what Peter defined. Remember, The Presence of  
 God is Prophetic but it can also be Painful! It is painful because His  
 Presence requires of you to die to your desires and fulfill His Will.

But not only is the His Presence Prophetic and Painful, His Will is more important than our Own Will.

**Point #2 - The Will of Man does not Reserve the Right to Rebel against the Will of God!**

The Will of God for Jonah's life was revealed as a result of the Presence of God being made known and experienced by Jonah. **The Will of God Materializes when the Presence of God is Manifest!** How many of us have made the mistake of Jonah and found ourselves in the belly of a situation that looks like it is going to consume us? If we would have only submitted our will to His Will, we could have saved ourselves so much grief.

Now there may be some that may seek to rebuttal and say that God will never violate the free will of a person thus God can't force us to do anything; but I would dare to say that Jonah's experience would argue that persuasion. We discussed this very point last Sunday.

The bigger issue of the Will of God versus the Will of Man is that the Will of God is always outward focused whereas the Will of Man is always inward focused. Self-Denial versus Self-Consumed.



You show me a selfish person and I will show you a person who is not walking in the Will of God for their life. If everything in their life is about them then God is not in them.

As seen in the life of Jonah, the Will of God is always bigger than us and even when we think that we know the “Why”, we underestimate the “How”. Hear me this morning, Man may seek to provoke your Rebellion but God seeks to provide your Reward. **Quit fighting against the Will of God for your Life, the Will of Man is a snare that will cause you to forfeit your Purpose!**

The Will of Man does not reserve the right to Rebel against the Will of God for your life! Even if the Will of Man is a direction that you manufactured. The Will of God is bigger than you... But not only does the Will of Man does not reserve the right to rebel against the Will of God...

**Point #3 - The Call of Man does not Reserve the Right to Restrain the Call of God!**

In 1 Kings 19:19-21, the text records the story of the Prophet Elijah calling Elisha. The Prophet Elijah had been in a cave arguing with God and finally God broke Elijah down and gave him three specific tasks: Anoint Hazael to be king of Syria, Anoint Jehu to be King over Israel, and Anoint Elisha to be Elijah's replacement.

Imagine the frustration that Elijah must have felt in the midst of his discourse with God and for God to respond with, and I'm paraphrasing, "Fine, you don't want to cooperate. That's fine. I'm going to give you the hardest task you'll ever have to do. I'm going to make you pick your placement!"

Thus we find ourselves at 1 Kings 19:19-21, and the text reads as thus, "So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you? And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him."

Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, doing what he thought he was called to do until the Call of God wrecked his life. Notice when the Call of God came, Elisha went and kissed his parents goodbye, he busted his plows into pieces, butchered his oxen, and fed the whole town and then left in pursuit of the Call.

And many of us need to take a page or two out of Elisha's Book and kiss some folk's goodbye, let some folk's go, get some people out of our lives, stop doing foolish things, bust our plows into pieces, and butcher our oxen; simply put, let go of who you used to be and RUN after the Call of God for your life.

What was Elisha doing? He was eliminating any possibility of turning back after he let go of the Plow of Man and laid hold of the Plow of God.

In the Gospel of Saint Luke chapter 9, the text records in verses 61-62, "Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

"What are you saying to me this morning Preacher?"

You can either plow for the Kingdom or you can plow for yourself but you can't do both. And if you are in the Kingdom, don't look back.

And lastly, Point #4 this morning...

**Point #4 - Man may seek to Restrain your Call, but God seeks to Release your Call!**

We need to kiss some folks goodbye, we need to get some folks out of your lives, we need to destroy what we have always depended on and move on so that we can Pursue the Call of God. I am so tired of hearing folks tell their testimony as if all the things they quit doing was a favor to God; like God owed you something therefore you quit doing some stuff to keep yourself square with God. God does not owe you anything; you owe Him everything!

Elisha kissed everyone Goodbye because Man may seek to Restrain you, but Christ seeks to Release you!

It's time to burn the plow and sacrifice the oxen and quit letting Man's opinions, Man's views, and Man's words restrain the Call of God on your life. God called you; Man did not. Therefore Man's approval of the Call of God is not necessary for God to use you.

This is a word for somebody, God did not call Elisha to walk behind and have to smell the tail end of an ox; and that is not your destiny either!



I will close with this statement... The Call of Man does not reserve the right to **Restrain** the Call of God for your life! Even if the Call of Man is a preconceived idea that you manufactured. The Call of God is bigger than that...

There are three people in this room this morning:

**Release the Purpose of God**

**Reveal the Will of God**

**Revive the Call of God**