



Candlewood Church

PRECIPICE – When we push back



August 24, 2025

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BIG IDEA – God still works through doubt, defiance, and disappointment.

Scripture Focus – **Jonah 1:1-3** The Lord gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: “**Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are.**” But **Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the Lord.** He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish.

It's odd to think about, but the Kingdom of God is a kingdom of opposites, even opposition! God's thoughts, His ways are above and beyond us. When it comes to the purposes of God that He calls us to, it is believed to be extended to the obviously gifted, talented, well-connected folks. People that have it together or come from perfect families. That's not the biblical norm at all. God often calls the rebel, the defiant or even those broken, shipwrecked and washed up on life's shores.

Let's take an honest look at a couple of characters in the Bible – one who pushed back and told God to look elsewhere, the other came out of crushing grief and just decided to do the next right thing.

Jonah & Ruth

Imagine for a moment:

You live in a small town, and every family in your community knows someone who has been kidnapped, beaten, or killed by a violent gang.

This isn't a random crime—it's **systematic cruelty**, carried out with pride.

Imagine this gang broadcasting its victories on social media, boasting that they are pleased and proud of their brutality.

They film prisoners being executed in horrifying ways and boast about it to the world. Their leaders write songs and slogans celebrating how much fear they inspire. Entire cities are enslaved, and children are marched off to foreign lands, never to be seen again.

You'd think we are talking about a terrorist organization like Hamas, taking place in the Gaza strip and around other parts of the world.

What would you think about God calling you to talk them out of being the terrorist bullies of the world?

Today, our first character study on God's calling is Jonah.

Jonah, a whale of a tale trying to avoid God's calling for a very specific reason...

Jonah 1:1-3 The Lord gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are." But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction **to get away from the Lord**. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish.

Jonah believed that God was WRONG.

Ancient Assyria – was the terrorist regime of that day.

Nineveh – was the capital of fear

- **Nineveh was not just a violent city; it was the epicenter of an empire of terror.** A massive city representing a power that terrified the world.

For Jonah, going to Nineveh was like being told to go preach in the heart of ISIS or Hamas, or to walk into Syria or Iraq today, stand in the town square, and announce that God would forgive them if they repented.

Now—imagine God saying to you:

"Go to the capital city of that evil empire, walk down their main boulevard, and announce: 'God has seen your wickedness, but if you turn to Him, He will forgive you.'"

How would you feel?

Angry? (They don't deserve forgiveness!)



1. The Call and the Flight (Jonah 1:1–3)

Isn't interesting that Jonah may not have feared for his life as much as he feared that Nineveh would repent and God would spare them justice and extend mercy instead!

That's Jonah. To him, God wasn't just being merciful—He was showing mercy to the **worst people imaginable**.

Jonah believed God was wrong and he didn't want any part of it!

Jonah didn't believe he was being rebellious, maybe not even disobedient – Jonah thought he was giving God a moment to reconsider!

Holy moly – the epitome of arrogance when we believe God is wrong and we know better!

In discussing a calling from God – what happens when we push back, trying to convince God he's got the wrong person?

God calls. Jonah doesn't answer – he just runs. The Bible says he got up and went the opposite direction, “to get away from the Lord.”

I can imagine the angels in heaven being in shock over this, maybe Gabriel's call went out and says, **“cue up the storm... we got a runner!”**

You can run, but you cannot hide!

David wrote in the Psalms,

“I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.” Psalm 139:7-12

Jeremiah wrote,

Am I a God who is only close at hand?” says the LORD. “No, I am far away at the same time. Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?” says the LORD. Jeremiah 23:23-24.

Jonah may have known this, but thought, “if I run, if I get myself as far away from Nineveh as possible, maybe it won't happen – maybe it can't happen!”

In the first three verses of the book of Jonah, you quickly understand, when God calls, he expected obedience. God did not choose the wrong person and did not just forget about it!



2. The Storm and the Sacrifice (Jonah 1:12–16)

Who sends this storm?

“But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart.” Jonah 1:4

**They did a version of Rock, Paper, Scissors (throwing lots) and Jonah lost.
Jonah 1:8-9**

“Why has this awful storm come down on us?” they demanded. “Who are you? What is your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?” Jonah answered, “I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord , the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.”

I love the sailor’s response when they figured out what was going on...

“The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already told them he was running away from the Lord . “Oh, why did you do it?” they groaned.” Jonah 1:10

Even those who nothing of Jonah's God knew **this was a bad plan!**

To save the heathens on the ship, Jonah decides the men should throw him overboard. He doesn’t jump; he tells them to throw him over.

“Throw me into the sea,” Jonah said, “and it will become calm again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault.” Instead, the sailors rowed even harder to get the ship to the land. But the stormy sea was too violent for them, and they couldn’t make it. Then they cried out to the Lord , Jonah’s God. “O Lord ,” they pleaded, “don’t make us die for this man’s sin. And don’t hold us responsible for his death. O Lord , you have sent this storm upon him for your own good reasons.” Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea, and the storm stopped at once! The sailors were awestruck by the Lord ’s great power, and they offered him a sacrifice and vowed to serve him. Jonah 1:12-16

Even in Jonah’s decision to run from his calling, it results in an entire ship of sailors recognizing the one true God and vowing to serve Him!



3. The Prayer & the second chance (Jonah 2:1–9 3:1-3)

- **In the depths, Jonah turns back to God with prayer and thanksgiving before deliverance comes.**

- God spoke to Jonah a second time. “Then the Lord spoke to Jonah a second time: “Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you.” This time Jonah obeyed the Lord’s command and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all. Jonah 3:1-3
- God’s call doesn’t expire because of past failure. Jesus redeems, restores, and recommissions His followers. Obedience the second time still counts.

Jonah was right! God showed mercy to repentant Nineveh

Jonah was still angry. He still believed God was not just. Jonah was the one who was unrepentant – “This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very angry. So he complained to the Lord about it: “Didn’t I say before I left home that you would do this, Lord ? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people. Just kill me now, Lord ! I’d rather be dead than alive if what I predicted will not happen.” Jonah 4:1-3

The book of Jonah ends on a sad, still angry note, “Then God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?” “Yes,” Jonah retorted, “even angry enough to die!” Jonah 4:9

Be angry but sin not! Paul says in Ephesians 4:26-27 And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. Paul is quoting David who wrote in Psalm 4:4 “Don’t sin by letting anger control you. Think about it overnight and remain silent.”

- A lesson from Jonah’s calling is about the durability of a call. In other word’s is God’s calling negotiable or can it be taken away?
 - The Apostle Paul sheds light on this very question in Romans 11:29, “For God’s gifts and his call can never be withdrawn.”
- Another lesson is about knowledge, wisdom, understand and control.
 - Who is in control over the affairs of the earth?
 - Who is most knowledgeable, wise and understanding?
 - Who holds what is right, true and just over all humanity?
 - Is it the one who calls us or is the one being called?

Our next character study is about Ruth’s calling

Naomi’s grief led to Ruth’s calling

Ruth’s “calling” unfolds less like a trumpet blast and more like a holy redirection through grief, loyalty, and everyday faithfulness.



1. Called Through Loss to Covenant Purpose

The book of Ruth deep dives into immediate devastation and displacement – knocking the wind out of their entire family.

Ruth 1:1-2

In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him. The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there.

Together they left a famine in search of food and found nothing but grief.

Elimelech dies in Moab. However, things start looking up because Naomi's boys grow up and get married. Their family had a decade of peace and possibly some joy, **but notice that the men's wives Orpah and Ruth had no children.**

The topic of infertility has always been its own grief to bare, **but in ancient times it was socially and economically devastating! There are six major narratives of infertility in the Old Testament! See Dig Deeper Notes.**

In three short sentences, the family narrative goes very dark.

Ruth 1:4-5 NLT

The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

There is this overwhelming emotional scene in Ruth 1:8 where Naomi decides to tell her daughters – GO HOME.

Ruth 1:8-9 NLT But on the way, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, **"Go back to your mothers' homes.** And may the Lord reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me. May the Lord bless you with the security of another marriage." Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept.

You may know the story, but one of the daughters, **Ruth, refused to go back home** and makes a declaration of faith in her mother-in-law, but more importantly in Naomi's God!



YOUR GOD WILL BE MY GOD

Ruth 1:16-18 NLT

But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. **Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.** Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!” When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

It is so intense after what is considered to be these horrible stacked losses, one after another where you feel that you can’t even catch your breath. Naomi has given up all hope of anything good ever happening in her life.

SHE IS DONE!

Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem and are met with a warm welcome from the entire town, but Naomi feels nothing but pain, and abandonment by God.

Ruth 1:19-21 NLT

So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. “Is it really Naomi?” the women asked. **“Don’t call me Naomi,” she responded. “Instead, call me Mara,** for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the Lord has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?”

Remember, the story about God’s calling isn’t about Naomi, and the book we are looking at isn’t called Naomi – it’s about Ruth.

Ruth’s call comes out of complete loss. No one would have ever suspected that anything good could come out of such family devastation. And now Ruth is the young immigrant widow with no children!

Ruth has no running from God, no getting tossed off a boat and being swallowed by a whale – she is just pure grit, determination and hope to do what the next right decision.



Ruth goes out and gets to work.

Ruth 2:2 NLT

One day Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it." Naomi replied, "All right, my daughter, go ahead."

And in taking the next step she runs right into the divine providence of God!

Ruth 2:3 NLT

So Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters. **And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech.**



Ruth is romanced into God's plan.

A whirlwind romance explodes on the pages of scriptures in Ruth chapters 2 & 3. And with some coaching from Naomi, who seemed to have dropped her need to be called Mara, Boaz eventually decides to not only marry Ruth, but also bought back all the land that her father-in-law, Elimelech, previously owned.

Ruth's calling to follow Naomi and then God, may be subtle but it's a powerful story of restoration after loss. Plus, it's the perfect miracle of God inviting a Gentile woman, a Moabite, to be a critical link in the amazing lineage of Jesus, the Son of God.

Ruth 4:13-15 NLT

So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the Lord enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son. Then the women of the town said to Naomi, "Praise the Lord, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel. May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!"

Ruth had a little boy named Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse, who became the father of David, the 2nd king of Israel.

Matthew names Ruth in Jesus's genealogy—"Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth... and David the king" leading to Jesus (Matt 1:5-6, 16; cf. Luke 3:32).

- Ruth committed to Naomi and her God.
- She humbly committed to get to work, helping to provide for her and Naomi.
- She listened to Naomi's match making skills and did what she said. A Jewish Shidduch.
- She had faith in God's provision through Boaz.

- Her quiet, loyal faith bears the Grandfather of King David and becomes part of the lineage of Jesus the Messiah.

God steers Ruth's life through ordinary obedience—hard work, integrity, and loyal love—rather than flashy miracles.

Jonah's is a powerful, gritty story of God's calling to be obedient and do what He says, regardless of if you disagree or are arrogant enough to believe that God is wrong. It's a story of our calling never going away – even through disobedience and rebellion.

Ruth's call is so opposite of Jonah's. It's subtle, but filled with impossible burdens of loss and grief. It is more simple to have the courage to just do the next right thing. To find hope in getting up, going out and seeing what happens next. Ruth's call happened at the crossroads of the two roads. One leading home to live with parents, the other to follow a woman who seemed to be cursed by God himself.

**What is the Spirit of God saying to us today?
God has a purpose and a calling for everyone.**

- **It may come with a miraculous visitation.**
 - **It may come with a voice from heaven.**
 - **It may come with a plan that you don't want to be a part of.**
 - **It may be so subtle, like a breeze that whispers, just take the next step, and God may meet you in the providential field of blessing.**
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SCRIPTURES

Jonah 1:1-3 NLT

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Psalms 139:7-12 NLT

I can never escape from your Spirit! **I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.** I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— but even in darkness I cannot

hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

Jeremiah 23:23-24 NLT

Am I a God who is only close at hand?" says the LORD. "No, I am far away at the same time. **Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?**" says the LORD.

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But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart.

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"Why has this awful storm come down on us?" they demanded. "Who are you? What is your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?" Jonah answered, "I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord , the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.

Jonah 1:10 NLT

The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already told them he was running away from the Lord . "Oh, why did you do it?" they groaned."

Jonah 1:12-16 NLT

Throw me into the sea," Jonah said, "and it will become calm again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault." Instead, the sailors rowed even harder to get the ship to the land. But the stormy sea was too violent for them, and they couldn't make it. Then they cried out to the Lord , Jonah's God. "O Lord , " they pleaded, "don't make us die for this man's sin. And don't hold us responsible for his death. O Lord , you have sent this storm upon him for your own good reasons." Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea, and the storm stopped at once! The sailors were awestruck by the Lord 's great power, and they offered him a sacrifice and vowed to serve him.

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Jonah 4:9 NLT

Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?" "Yes," Jonah retorted, "even angry enough to die!"

Ephesians 4:26-27 NLT

And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

Psalms 4:4 NLT

Don't sin by letting anger control you. Think about it overnight and remain silent.

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NOTES



Jonah

Summary of the Book of Jonah

- **Author & Context:** The book doesn't identify its author. It's a narrative about the prophet Jonah, son of Amittai (cf. 2 Kings 14:25).
- **Theme:** God's mercy extends beyond Israel—even to Israel's enemies.
- **Structure:**
 1. **Jonah Runs (Ch. 1)** – God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh, but Jonah flees by ship toward Tarshish. A storm arises; Jonah is thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish.
 2. **Jonah Prays (Ch. 2)** – From the belly of the fish, Jonah prays a psalm of thanksgiving. God commands the fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land.
 3. **Jonah Obeys (Ch. 3)** – Jonah preaches in Nineveh. The people repent, from the king to the commoner. God relents from destroying the city.
 4. **Jonah Complains (Ch. 4)** – Jonah is angry at God's mercy. God provides a plant for shade, then destroys it, teaching Jonah that His compassion extends to all people—even the wicked Ninevites.



Jonah – The God of Second Chances

Big Idea:

God's mercy is bigger than our failures, fears, and prejudices. His call is not only to us, but through us—for the sake of others.

1. When God Calls, Don't Run (Jonah 1:1–3)

- Jonah fled from God's call because of fear and prejudice.
 - Disobedience led to storms that affected everyone around him.
 - **Application:** Following Jesus means saying "yes" even when the call is uncomfortable. Running only deepens the storm.
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2. In the Deep, God Hears Us (Jonah 2:1–9)

- Jonah prayed from inside the fish—a place of hopelessness.
 - His prayer was full of gratitude *before* deliverance came.
 - **Application:** In dark, desperate moments, prayer reconnects us to God. Gratitude lifts our eyes from despair to hope in His salvation.
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3. God Gives Second Chances (Jonah 3:1–3)

- “The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time.”
 - Jonah obeyed, and an entire city repented.
 - **Application:** God doesn't discard us when we fail. In Jesus, our story is one of redemption and recommissioning.
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4. God's Mercy is Greater than Our Comfort (Jonah 4:1–11)

- Jonah was angry at God's compassion for Nineveh.
 - God used a plant to reveal Jonah's misplaced priorities.
 - **Application:** God cares about people more than our comfort. Following Jesus means embracing His compassion for all—even those we struggle to love.
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Conclusion / Call to Action

- Are you running from God's call?
- Are you in the depths, needing to cry out in prayer?
- Do you need to accept God's second chance?
- Will you allow God's mercy to shape how you see others?

Invitation: Jesus is the greater Jonah—He didn't run from His call, but entered the depths for us, so that through Him all people could find mercy and new life.



Jonah Before God's Call

- Jonah is first mentioned in **2 Kings 14:25**:

“[Jeroboam II] restored the border of Israel ... 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.”

- This places Jonah during the reign of **Jeroboam II** (c. 786–746 BC).
- He was from **Gath-hepher**, a small town in the region of Zebulun (near Nazareth).
- His earlier prophetic ministry was to **Israel**—and he prophesied something positive (territorial expansion), which sets him apart from contemporaries like Amos or Hosea, who were often critical of Israel's sin.

Summary: Jonah was already a recognized prophet in Israel before God sent him to Nineveh. His reputation was likely that of a *nationalist prophet* (prophesying Israel's success), which makes his reluctance to preach repentance to Nineveh—Israel's enemy—even more understandable.



How Old Was Jonah When Called?

- The Bible does **not** give Jonah's age.

- Jewish tradition (e.g., rabbinic midrash) sometimes connects him to the widow's son raised by Elijah (1 Kings 17), but this is speculative and not supported by scripture.
- If Jonah was active under Jeroboam II (786–746 BC), he may have been in his 30s–50s during the Nineveh mission. But this is an *educated guess*, not fact.

Summary: We cannot know Jonah's exact age. Historically, he was a mature prophet already serving in Israel when called to Nineveh.

Nineveh and Its Return to Idolatry

- After Jonah's preaching, Nineveh repented (Jonah 3:5–10). But this repentance was **short-lived** in the bigger picture of Assyrian history.
- Within a century, Assyria returned to its violent, idolatrous ways.
 - The prophet **Nahum** (c. 650 BC) prophesied judgment against Nineveh, describing its cruelty, idolatry, and bloodshed (Nahum 3).
 - About **150 years after Jonah**, in **612 BC**, Nineveh was destroyed by a coalition of Babylonians and Medes.
- So while Jonah's mission sparked genuine repentance, later generations did not continue in it.

Summary: Nineveh's repentance lasted a generation or two, but by 100–150 years later, Assyria was again known for cruelty and idolatry. The empire fell in 612 BC, fulfilling prophetic warnings.



The Assyrian Empire & Nineveh's Wickedness

1. Extreme Violence & Cruelty

- Assyria was notorious for its **brutal military tactics**. Ancient inscriptions and reliefs (like those from Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh) proudly record:
 - **Impalement** of captives on stakes.
 - **Flaying alive** enemies and draping their skins on city walls.
 - **Beheadings** and making heaps of skulls outside conquered cities.
 - **Dismemberment** and mutilation of prisoners.
 - These were not hidden atrocities—the Assyrians bragged about them in carvings and annals.
 - For Israel, Assyria wasn't just "a wicked nation." It was *the* superpower known for terror.
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2. Idolatry & Occult Practices

- Nineveh was a major center for worship of **Ishtar** (goddess of love and war), **Nisroch**, and other gods.
- Their religion blended sexuality, divination, and violence. Ritual prostitution and sorcery were common.
- Nahum 3:4 later condemned Nineveh as a "city of sorceries" and compared it to a prostitute seducing nations with idolatry.

3. Arrogance & Oppression

- Assyria prided itself on **dominating weaker nations** through fear, forced tribute, and relocation of conquered peoples (mass deportations).
 - They were infamous for humiliating kings and enslaving populations.
 - To Jonah's people, Assyria wasn't just an enemy—it was an **existential threat** to Israel's survival.
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Why Jonah Thought God Was Wrong to Save Them

- Jonah 4:2 reveals his real heart:
“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.”
- Jonah *knew* God would forgive if Nineveh repented. But to Jonah, saving Nineveh meant:
 - **Mercy on monsters** – people guilty of unthinkable atrocities.
 - **Delaying justice** – allowing a brutal empire to continue oppressing others.
 - **Threatening Israel's future** – because Assyria later *did* invade and destroy the Northern Kingdom (722 BC).

From Jonah's perspective, God's mercy looked like **misplaced justice**. He would rather see Nineveh burn than see them forgiven.



Six major narratives of infertility in the Old Testament!

1. Sarah (wife of Abraham)

- **Reference:** Genesis 11:30; 18:11–14; 21:1–2
 - Sarah was barren into old age. God promised Abraham descendants, and miraculously Isaac was born.
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2. Rebekah (wife of Isaac)

- **Reference:** Genesis 25:21
 - Rebekah was barren for 20 years until Isaac prayed, and she conceived twins—Esau and Jacob.
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3. Rachel (wife of Jacob)

- **Reference:** Genesis 29:31; 30:1–2, 22–24
 - Rachel was barren while her sister Leah bore many children. God later “remembered” Rachel, and she gave birth to Joseph and later Benjamin.
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4. Hannah (mother of Samuel)

- **Reference:** 1 Samuel 1:2–20
 - Hannah was barren and mocked by Peninnah. After prayer and a vow, God gave her Samuel, who became a prophet and judge.
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5. The Shunammite Woman

- **Reference:** 2 Kings 4:14–17
 - A wealthy Shunammite woman had no son. Elisha prophesied she would have a child, and she conceived miraculously.
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6. Samson's Mother (wife of Manoah)

- **Reference:** Judges 13:2–3
 - She was barren until the angel of the Lord announced Samson's birth, who would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines.
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 **Total: 6 main stories of barrenness in the Old Testament.**

Patterns & Purpose:

- These stories emphasize **God's power to bring life where there is none.**
- Barrenness sets the stage for **divine intervention**, showing that the child's birth is part of God's covenant plan.
- Often, the children born to barren women become **key figures** in salvation history (Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, Samson).