

Learning from the Unlikely

This series is about recognizing things in the lives of Jesus followers in the Bible that are worth learning from. A great thing to remember is that when we learn from leaders, particularly from their examples, we have the opportunity to learn in several ways from them. Most of the time we talk about the positive qualities of their leadership that are worth repeating or modifying to fit our style or circumstances. It can be awkward to talk about someone's mistakes but the reality is that we learn from those situations too. We may learn very clearly what not to do, but we may also learn how to handle our own failures that are similar because, like it or not, they will happen.

One of the Bible stories that seems to be commonly taught to children early in church is the story about Jonah and the whale (or big fish). Jonah's experience in that story hardly seems like one worth following as an example of how we are to live our lives. His failures are what got him in that situation. The focus isn't entirely on his failure though. Rather, the focus is on what he did after failing that makes his story one worth emulating. We are all humans, like Jonah, and we also fail and struggle like he did. Coming to grips with our failures and struggles often requires that we fight through what we believe. What we see in Jonah's story is a man who fights on through his struggles.

To the book!

- 1. Read Jonah 1.** This is the first of 4 short chapters in the book of Jonah. It captures the first part of Jonah's fight. God wanted Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach because the Ninevites were evil. Jonah struggled with this assignment and instead of battling internally, he ran from it. His running involved others who ended up in danger with him.
- 2. Read Jonah 2.** This is where Jonah's fighting turned inward. He battled with his beliefs, his assignment, his current situation because of his actions and ultimately came to grips with what he needed to do.
- 3. Read Jonah 3.** In this chapter Jonah has finished his internal battle. He sets out to do what he should have done in the first place and the Ninevites end up turning to God. If only the story ended there...
- 4. Read Jonah 4.** Like many of us, Jonah's fighting was not a one-time event. After the Ninevites changed their ways, Jonah got upset. This time the fight was different though. He was fighting with God and took a woe is me attitude as well. He found himself on the receiving end of some lessons from God.

We are all human and struggle with doubts and frustrations. Like Jonah, it is rare for us to run from these situations and end up anywhere good. Jonah made up ground when he faced his problems and fought through them. We are no different. When we struggle with things, we will be better off if we sort through our beliefs and fight on in faith. We do have to be careful though that in our fighting we make sure not to misplace our frustrations on God Himself. We would not be the first, but when we do that, we need to expect to be corrected so that we can fight on the right way.

Family Night Big Idea

When we struggle, we need to keep going.

Discussion: Read James 1:2-3

- **Elementary School** – Ask, "What is something you had to do that was hard but you felt better after doing it?"
- **Middle/ High School** – Ask, "Why do you think going through hard things makes us stronger?"

Prayer

"Father, help us face the hard things in our lives and learn how to trust you more when that happens. Amen."

Velocity (Middle and High School Students)

Velocity: Meet at the church Wednesday, August 23rd.

Gravity: NO Gravity today.

Today's Songs

The Lord's Prayer.....Matt Maher
Honey in the Rock.....Brooke Ligertwood
You'll Come.....Hillsong

GCC 101 Membership Class

Our next GCC 101 is September 24th after the 11:00 service. If you are interested in becoming a member of GCC or just want to hear more about us, please sign up in the lobby to attend.

PlusONE

PlusONE is your opportunity for spiritual growth by strengthening your personal relationship with God. In addition to attending one of our Sunday services, we encourage our adult population to add something to your worship to grow your faithwalk. Add one thing to your church attendance. Ask us how!

Fantasy Football

Wayne Thaler leads a Fantasy Football group and anyone is welcome to join. The Draft starts September 3rd. If you are interested you can contact Wayne directly at 912-656-9161.