

Encounter Church
Sunday April 27, 2025

Jonah
To Obey or not to Obey

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever made this statement? “Well if I don’t want to do it, I’m not going to do it.” Which in turn would imply that the only things you’re going to do in life are what YOU WANT to do.

That might be a problem! That means everyone else in my life is always going to be doing what I want to do, even if they don’t want to do what I want to do.

But it doesn’t matter what they want, it only matters what I want! That even involves my family, my friends, my church, and my relationship with God that I think I have!

And if they don’t want to do what I want to do and they still do want I don’t want to do, then I just won’t participate!!!

BUT HERE’S THE BIG PROBLEM THAT COULD ARISE IN YOUR LIFE: GOD JUST MIGHT ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING YOU DON’T WANT TO DO.

I thank God for the Book of Jonah. ***God provides a picture of our human nature and our inclination to run from God in favor of serving our self!***

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.”

The people of Nineveh were Gentiles and enemies of Israel. The Assyrians caused the Israelites many problems as an enemy.

Jonah finds it difficult to separate his patriotism and misguided theology from his knowledge of the character of God!

GET THIS: JONAH KNEW GOD! HE KNEW THE TRUE CHARACTER OF GOD! THAT’S WHY HE WENT IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION!

Jonah 4:2- “.....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.”

Jonah knows if they repent and turn to God, He will forgive them and not destroy them. So Jonah runs from God headed to Tarshish.

WHEN GOD ASK US TO DO SOMETHING WE DON'T WANT TO DO:

1. You can always find a boat sailing in the opposite direction.

If you want to run from God, the devil will always offer you a ride!

The Prophet who knew God so well was actually disobeying God!

WHY? The Assyrians and Israelites hated each other. The Assyrians were really barbaric!

Jonah didn't disobey God because he was afraid of them. He disobeyed God because He knew God's character! He knew God would forgive them if they repented!

HE DISOBEYED GOD! He attempted to rationalize his disobedience. Well, God will forgive these wicked people who don't deserve his forgiveness. SO I'M NOT GOING TO DO IT!

OUR MIND MAKES AN EXCUSE FOR WHAT OUR SPIRIT KNOWS IS WRONG!

JUSTIFIED DISOBEDIENCE IS STILL DISOBEDIENCE! AN EXCUSE FOR DISOBEDIENCE IS STILL DISOBEDIENCE IN GOD'S EYES!

2. Disobedience opens the door to deception.

Jonah 1:4-5- "But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold."

THIS IS HOW SELF-CENTERED JONAH IS. THERE'S A STORM BECAUSE OF JONAH'S DISOBEDIENCE.

THE SAILOR'S ARE AFRIAD AND THROWING THINGS OVERBOARD AND JONAH IS ASLEEP.

My sin, my disobedience, affects more than just me. It affects everyone around me!

The captain goes below and awakes Jonah. Look at what Jonah says;

Jonah 1:9- “Jonah answered, “I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.”

Jonah says “I worship the Lord” while living in disobedience to God!

That my friend is deception! I worship God while living in disobedience to God!

We claim we love God but we don’t obey God!

John 14:15- “If you love me, obey my commandments.”

1 John 5:2-“Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.”

HAS GOD ASKED YOU TO DO SOMETHING:

Serve, Give, Witness, Forgive!

I’m not ready! Not the best time. Don’t feel like it! Do it later!

Delayed obedience is disobedience!

Spiritual Maturity isn’t bible knowledge, how much you tithe or how often you attend church. Spiritual Maturity means a very short time between God’s command and our obedience!

WHAT HAS GOD TOLD YOU TO DO THAT YOU HAVEN’T DONE YET?

3. God will use a storm to get our attention.

God won’t let you get comfortable in your disobedience!

THE BIBLE SAYS, “God sent a storm!” God sent the storm in his kindness!

Sometimes God sends storms! Sometimes God allows storms.
MANY TIMES we cause the storms!

Some people claim the devil sent the storm! They want to blame Satan!

The devil didn’t cause you to lose your job, you were always late or lazy!

The devil didn’t get you so deep in debt you can’t pay your bills. You spent more than you made! THAT’S POOR STEWARDSHIP!

The devil didn’t destroy your marriage, you were selfish and treated your spouse like trash!

HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS: GOD IN HIS KINDNESS, WILL USE A STORM TO GET YOUR ATTENTION!

Conclusion: Remember why Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh?

Jonah 4:2- ".....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."

God chose you, God called you, and now you're running from God and now you're stuck in a storm!

You're in a place you never wanted to be. Depressed, hopeless, you see no way out and not sure that life is worth it.

YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS JUST WAITING FOR YOU TO RETURN TO HIM!

JONAH IS CALLED THE PRODIGAL SON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1 John 1:9- "If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness [our wrongdoing, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose]."

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this message?