

THE NECESSITY OF **! OBEEDIENCE !** AND THE DANGER OF **RUNNING**

SERMON SERIES

The Necessity of Obedience and the Danger of Running - pt 1

"Runner Runner"

(Jonah 1:1-17)

Sunday, April 19, 2026

5-Day Devotional: Running Toward God's Call

Day 1: Celebrating God's Faithfulness in Answered Prayer

Reading: Isaiah 65:24; Psalm 34:17

Devotional: "I will answer them before they even call to me." What remarkable assurance! God's faithfulness in answering prayer reminds us that He is actively working in our circumstances even before we voice our needs. When we receive good news—a healing, a breakthrough, a moment of hope—we witness God's goodness breaking through the darkness. Today, reflect on answered prayers in your life. Have you acknowledged God's faithfulness? Celebration isn't just about receiving what we want; it's about recognizing who God is—a Father who hears, responds, and works all things for our good. Let gratitude fill your heart today, and remember: even when answers don't come as expected, God remains worthy of praise.

Application: Write down three answered prayers from your life and thank God specifically for His faithfulness in each situation.

Day 2: The Danger of Running From God's Call

Reading: Jonah 1:1-3; Hebrews 12:7-11

Devotional: Jonah received a clear directive from God but chose to run in the opposite direction. His story reveals a profound truth: we cannot outrun God, and attempting to do so leads us into turbulent waters. When God calls us to uncomfortable places—difficult conversations, acts of obedience, or letting go of cherished plans—our natural response is often flight. Yet running from God's will doesn't lead to freedom; it leads to storms. God's pursuit of us isn't punishment but correction, a relentless, affectionate effort to redirect our wayward paths. His discipline proves we belong to Him. Today, examine

your heart: Are you running from something God has asked of you? The path of obedience, though sometimes frightening, always leads to His perfect will.

Application: Identify one area where you've been resisting God's call. Confess it to Him and ask for courage to obey.

Day 3: Missing God's Work When We Run

Reading: Jonah 1:14-16; Psalm 46:8-10

Devotional: While Jonah was consumed with running from God, he completely missed the miraculous work happening around him. The pagan sailors encountered the living God and committed their lives to Him—all because of Jonah's disobedience, yet despite it. When we're running with blinders on, focused solely on escape, we miss the beauty of God's ongoing work. He doesn't need our obedience to accomplish His purposes, but our obedience allows us to participate in and witness His glory. God is always working—in the mundane moments, in the storms, in the unexpected places. Are you so focused on your own plans that you're missing His activity? Slow down. Remove the blinders. Look around and see what God is doing.

Application: Take time today to notice and journal about where you see God working around you—in nature, relationships, or circumstances.

Day 4: God's Mercy in Our Rebellion

Reading: Jonah 1:17; Lamentations 3:22-23; Romans 5:8

Devotional: Even as Jonah ran from God's call, declaring he'd rather die than obey, God demonstrated mercy. The great fish wasn't punishment—it was salvation from certain death. This is the heart of the gospel: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God's mercy doesn't wait for us to get our act together; it meets us in our rebellion. The very message Jonah was supposed to carry to Nineveh—repent and receive mercy—became his own experience. God's compassion is new every morning, extended to the obstinate prophet and the wicked city alike. Today, receive this truth: no matter how far you've run, God's mercy is greater. His arms are open wide, waiting for your return.

Application: Reflect on a time when you experienced God's mercy despite your disobedience. Thank Him for His unfailing love.

Day 5: Answering the Call With Yes

Reading: Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 4:18-22; 1 Samuel 3:10

Devotional: "Here I am, Lord. Send me." These words represent the opposite of Jonah's response—a heart surrendered to God's will regardless of personal comfort or understanding. Following Jesus means saying yes to calls we cannot fully see, understand, or explain. It means trusting that God's plan is better than our own, even when it leads to unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory. The disciples dropped their nets immediately. Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." There is no greater satisfaction than knowing God called you to something beyond yourself and you followed Him into it. Today, open yourself to yes. Whatever God is asking—whether temporary or eternal—respond with trust. Walk lockstep with Him, arm in arm, down the path He leads.

Application: Pray this prayer: "Lord, I surrender my plans to You. Help me say yes to whatever You're calling me to, even when it's uncomfortable. Give me faith to follow."