

# THE NECESSITY OF **! OBEDIENCE !** AND THE DANGER OF **RUNNING**

SERMON SERIES

## The Necessity of Obedience and the Danger of Running - pt 4 "Sunburned Scalp and Other Issues"

(Jonah 4:1-11)

Sunday, May 17, 2026

### 5-Day Devotional: Answering God's Call with Obedience

#### Day 1: The Danger of Running from God's Call

**Reading:** Jonah 1:1-17

**Devotional:** Jonah's story begins with a clear call and a deliberate run in the opposite direction. When God called him to Nineveh, Jonah chose Tarshish—not because it was better, but because it was directionally opposite. How often do we do the same? God calls us to difficult conversations, uncomfortable service, or ministry to people we'd rather avoid, and we find our own "Tarshish." But notice: God didn't abandon Jonah. He sent a storm, then a fish—not as punishment, but as redirection. When we run from God's will, we don't find freedom; we find the rough, the sand trap, the water hazard. Today, ask yourself: What is God calling me to that I'm running from? Remember, five minutes a day with God can revolutionize your relationship with Him and prepare you to say "yes" when He calls.

---

#### Day 2: God's Mercy Has No Boundaries

**Reading:** Jonah 4:1-11

**Devotional:** Jonah's anger at God's mercy reveals a troubling truth about human nature: we want grace for ourselves but justice for our enemies. Jonah complained that God was "too merciful, too compassionate, too slow to anger." These are the very attributes we praise God for when they benefit us! Yet when God extended the same mercy to Nineveh—Israel's sworn enemy—Jonah would rather die than witness it. We do this too. We become cynical about others' salvation, questioning whether their conversion is genuine, whether they "deserve" God's grace. But here's the truth: none of us deserve it. The person on death row is equally deserving of God's mercy as you are. God's grace cannot be boxed in by

national boundaries, personal preferences, or our definitions of worthiness. His mercy is for everyone—even those we consider enemies. Who in your life needs you to extend the same grace God has given you?

---

### **Day 3: Moving from Prophet to Evangelist**

**Reading:** Matthew 28:16-20

**Devotional:** Jonah spent his life as a prophet, warning of God's judgment. But in Nineveh, God called him to something more—to be an evangelist, proclaiming not just doom but the path to salvation. This terrified Jonah because it was unfamiliar territory. Many of us feel the same way. We're comfortable attending church, reading our Bibles, even serving in familiar ways. But when God calls us to share the gospel with a stranger, to have that difficult spiritual conversation, or to step into ministry that stretches us, we freeze. Here's the challenge from this week's student panel: if you're not building your relationship with the Lord daily, you're not in position to share the gospel. You can't give what you don't have. Start with five minutes a day in God's Word. Memorize Scripture. Learn to recognize His voice. Then, when He calls you to step beyond prophet to evangelist, you'll be ready to say yes.

---

### **Day 4: Don't Let Your Past Define Your Future**

**Reading:** 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

**Devotional:** A student asked: "How do we live out believing that our sin isn't who we are and we are one with Christ?" This question reveals a struggle many believers face—allowing our sins, mistakes, and failures to define us rather than letting Christ's redemption redefine us. Like Simba in *The Lion King*, we hear the enemy's voice whispering, "You're not ready. You're not good enough. Run away." So we retreat into our past failures and disqualify ourselves from God's calling. But God says, "I know you better than you know yourself, and you're still the one I called." Your past sins are not your identity. You are a new creation in Christ. The same God who showed mercy to murderous Nineveh shows mercy to you. Stop eating grubs when you were designed for so much more. God has poured into you, prepared you, and equipped you. Don't let shame keep you from stepping into His purpose for your life.

---

## Day 5: Saying Yes Without All the Answers

**Reading:** Luke 1:26-38

**Devotional:** Mary's response to the angel's announcement teaches us something profound: she didn't need all the answers to say yes; she just needed the invitation. "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled." She didn't understand how it would happen. She didn't know the pain ahead. She didn't have a detailed plan. But she trusted God enough to say yes. This is what God asks of us—not selective obedience where we calculate the cost and weigh the benefits, but wholehearted yes when He calls. Stop filling God's invitations with reasons, excuses, and demands for details. If God used reluctant Jonah to save 120,000 people, imagine what He can do with your willing yes. The story isn't about having it all figured out; it's about trusting that God will provide everything you need as you walk in obedience. Today, what is God inviting you into? Will you say yes and figure it out as you go?

---

**Weekly Memory Verse:** "For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years doing the best they knew how, but God's discipline is always good for us so that we might share in his holiness." - Hebrews 12:10