

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ² “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil^[a] has come up before me.” ³ But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. ⁴ But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up.

Jonah 1:1-4

¹² He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.”

Jonah 1:12

¹⁵ So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. ¹⁷ And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 1:15-17

Pray

At one point or another, we have all be tempted to run away from God. More specifically, there are some of us who have in the past or are currently running from Gods call on your life

Whether it's due to fear, disagreement, or anger, I would confidently say that some of us in here are living like Jonah

Running from Gods call on your life does not make it go away. Ignoring what God has asked you to do does not minimize the plan that God has for your life

Jonah received clear instructions from God and more than that, Jonah was and is known as a prophet, so he had a practice of hearing from God and speaking on behalf of God.

As the story goes, what we see from Jonah is not simply disobedience to what God asked of him, but a complete and total rebellion against what God has asked of him.

Jonahs's rebellion didn't cause him to sit still or be silent but led him to running away to a different city in the complete opposite direction of where God had called him.

Show Photo

Jonah, in rebellion to God's plan, fled to Tarshish and went about 2500 miles in the opposite direction

The Lord caused a crazy storm to take place and so the Sailors of the ship, by Jonah's request, threw him overboard and he was swallowed by a big fish

Jonah then spends three days and nights in the belly of this fish

This is where Jonah acknowledges his wrongdoing and vows to be obedient to what the Lord is asking of him

It was at rock bottom, in the belly of the fish that Jonah repented and turned back to God and did what was asked of him

I believe tonight the Lord is calling some of you to be obedient and he's giving you this chance so that you don't have to hit rock bottom

Some of you, perhaps the reason why you feel like you can't hear God speaking is because you haven't been obedient to the last thing God told you to do

Rejection or rebellion of God's word is often followed by a season of silence

We see this play out in Jonah's life

- **1:1-2** Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil^[a] has come up before me."
- **1:3** But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish.
- **2:1** Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying,
- **3:1** Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you."

God told Jonah what to do, Jonah rebelled, God waited in silence, Jonah repented, God repeated Himself

God will not speak something new to you until you obey that last thing he has asked of you
Why would God give you the next step for His plan if you didn't follow the last step he gave you

A question some of you need to answer tonight is, if you're not hearing the voice of God, are you being obedient to that last thing he has asked of you?

If you have heard the voice of God, but you're rejecting what he said, are willing to humble yourself tonight and be obedient to him?

“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³ and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

Joel 2:12-13

That love and grace is offered to you tonight

What happens is that we often want the result of Gods promise for our life without the work it takes to being obedient

We want God’s blessing and favor on our lives, but we don't love when he calls us to sacrifice or to live in a way that is counter cultural

Obedience to God is not rooted in my preference, but rooted in my trust in Him

Full obedience to God is often a blurry picture

There are shapes and maybe color, and even movement but we can't see that specifics because if God gave you all the information you would rely on your sight and not your faith

Half obedience is still full disobedience

By living in disobedience, what we're saying is that we know better than God

That our plan, our wisdom, our experience is better and more trustworthy

However, we see in chapter 2 that Jonah came to trust the Lord again

In Jonah chapter 3 and 4 the story ends with Jonah going to the city of Nineveh to preach and the entire the city and all its officials repent and turn back to God

Because of their repentance and turning away from their wicked lifestyle, God withholds his judgment and instead offers the city grace and forgiveness

Perhaps, it's a rather happy ending for the people of Nineveh and we would think that Jonah would be excited that the people listened to his message and turned to God, but he's not.

¹⁰ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Jonah 3:10

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly,^[a] and he was angry. ² And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? 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. ³ Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

Jonah 4:1-4

Jonah, although preaching a message of repentance, was displeased with the outcome even though people come to the knowledge and salvation of who God is

From Jonah's perspective, his obedience was a waste of time because God acted how he promised. If they humble themselves and repent, He will save them

I need you to resolve in your heart that obedience to God does not guarantee the outcome you want

You can be obedient and follow Christ with all that you have and still receive a bad report, still face financial hardship, still be displeased with the outcome

Following Christ and living in obedience is not about the outcome but about knowing Jesus more everyday

*"Men have been looking so hard at the great fish that they have failed to see the great God."
Leslie Allen*

If you follow Jesus and live in obedience, the outcome will be there, but don't miss the present reality that Jesus has promised to be with you now and walk with you now

Salvation Prayer

"Justice demanded the death of Jonah for rebellion; mercy prevails and grants a new lease on life." Leslie Allen

⁴ From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. ⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food."

Numbers 21:4-5

Prayer for God's Comfort