

Mission to the Community

God's Word:

Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-9

Key Verse

"Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them."

Jonah 3:5

Breaking It Down:

To many, the book of Jonah is a book that contains historical facts about an event. To others, it is a book with a story written in parable form. Whichever you choose to believe, this book has many important messages relevant to the people of its time and to people today.

In the book of Genesis, when God made the covenant with Abraham, God told Abraham that He would bless and protect him and his descendants. God was going to make them a mighty nation and through his descendants all humans would be blessed. We must remember that Israel was chosen as God's messenger to the rest of humanity. The law was given to them first so they could be examples of righteous living in obedience to God. Throughout the centuries, God always stayed true to His promise to the people of Israel, Abraham's descendants.



At Genesis 18:18, God said that "Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed."

"For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him." (Genesis 18:19)

One day the word of the Lord came to Jonah, a prophet of God. God said he wanted Jonah to go to Nineveh because the people's lives were full of sins and evil deeds. They must know that I am against this kind of living, and if they don't repent and change their ways I will destroy them, God told Jonah. When Jonah heard God's command, he probably started thinking about how evil the people of Nineveh were, how they were always in battle with the people of Israel and how much he didn't want to preach to them. He might even have felt they deserved to be punished by God after all the trouble they had caused Israel. Instead of obeying God, Jonah decided to go to Tarshish, which is in the southern part of Spain. He sought to get away from the presence of God. Jonah never thought about the consequences of disobeying God. Instead, he was focused on what he felt and wanted to do. We all know what happened next and how Jonah got a free ride in the belly of a great fish. Once again, God instructs Jonah on what he must do.

Living It:

Many Christians today are fearful of speaking about their faith. They don't want to look foolish or be unpopular. They are afraid of standing out and being different. Yet, some just don't care about the eternal consequences people will suffer for not knowing God's purpose and love. Jonah was a follower of God; still he had not understood his calling. Jonah had not realized his great blessing of knowing God and his God-given responsibility to share the message to others.

In the midst of the turmoil of our world, many times we Christians forget to honor our responsibility to our neighbors. We have such judgmental attitudes. We look at everything through our eyes and not through the love of God. If we had a choice, I wonder who would be saved.

Maybe people at school or at work have wronged you and you developed an "*I don't care about them*" attitude. I have suffered from the Jonah epidemic myself, due to being earthly focused rather than kingdom focused. This caused in me a sour attitude towards people, and, as a result, I wasn't transmitting Christ's love. We must remember that as followers of Christ we must forgive and let Him be Judge, for only He is righteous and true. We need to learn to love others and be willing to share God with others. We must speak and let them decide whether to obey God or reject Him. We must never decide for them.



“But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A **royal PRIESTHOOD**, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR {God's} OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

Understanding It:

1. Can you imagine if the person who first talked to you about God had decided not to share his blessing with you? Where would you be today? What kind of life would you be living?
 2. Do you believe Jonah had a right to be selfish concerning God’s message?
 3. When was the last time you spoke to someone about Christ’s love for him or her?
 4. Why do you believe God gave Jonah a second chance?
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Doing It!

Take some time this week to speak to one of your parents or a brother or sister from church with whom you have a close relationship. Ask that person to tell you about the individual who first shared Christ with him or her. Ask that person how this individual taking the time to share Christ impacted his or her life. Where do you think this person would be now if this individual hadn’t cared enough to obey God’s word to carry the Gospel message forward? What does this show you that you must do?

