



LESSONS FROM JONAH

The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” Jonah 1:1–2 (NIV)

- Jonah wanted no part of God’s call to go to Nineveh.
- Nineveh was the capital of Assyria and the #1 enemy of Israel.
- Jonah hated the Assyrians. He believed they were godless Gentile pagans who deserved the punishment of the Lord.

But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord. Jonah 1:3 (NIV)

- Jonah had a choice. He could join God in his mission and travel 500 miles northeast to Nineveh, or go in the opposite direction and board a ship going to the farthest place in the known world.

NINEVEH OR TARSHISH?

For Jonah:

Nineveh represented a godless, pagan Gentile threat to Israel’s safety and security. It was the epitome of everything Jonah hated about the Gentile world.

Tarshish represented a place where he could escape God’s call. No price was too high or trip too long to keep from having to follow God to Nineveh.

For us:

“Nineveh” represents an obedience to God that demands more than we are able to give. It’s God’s call to put Him first in your life and join Him in His mission.

“Tarshish” represents running away or ignoring God’s call.

HOW DO YOU HEAR GOD’S CALL?

God speaks through _____.

- Moses heard God through a “burning bush.”
- Elijah heard God through a “gentle whisper.”

The LORD said to Elijah, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper . . . Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" I Kings 19:11-13 (NIV)

KNOW THIS:

Running from God's call makes you _____.

Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship . . .

The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm . . . Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah 1:4-5, 11-12, 15, 17 (NIV)

For, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Romans 10:13-15 (NIV)

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO REALLY HEAR GOD SPEAK?

1. It assures me that I'm in _____.

Jesus said . . . "I know those who are mine and . . . they will hear my voice." John 10:14, 16 (PHI)

2. It protects me from _____.

[God speaks] . . . causing them to change their minds, and keeping them from pride . . . and from falling into some trap. Job 33:17-18 (TLB)

WHAT DOES GOD HAVE TO SAY TO YOU TODAY?

Today, if you hear God's voice speaking to you, do not harden your hearts against him. Hebrews 3:15 (TLB)