

JONAH: LIFE. LESSONS.

A CALL TO ACTION - JONAH 1:1-3



SERMON NOTES:

1. We must always _____ the scripture.
2. We must always seek to _____ God's will.
3. We must always look for ways to _____ others.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Today, I am committing to serve _____ in some way all in hopes of earning the right to tell them about the love of Jesus Christ.
2. Today, I will read the entire book of Jonah and start reading the Gospel of Matthew (see May calendar reading plan) every day for the next 22 days, striving to obey all of Jesus' teachings and commands.
3. This week, I will pray daily for all of my neighbors, by name, as God directs and guides me (www.blesseveryhome.com).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Open your group in prayer, and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions and Next Steps above, or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the three essential questions at the end before the Digging Deeper Section.

1. Just to break the ice, share one of your favorite mom sayings or memories. If you're a mom, what do you say that your mom used to say to you?
2. Have you ever had a wrong attitude about God's will because you thought what God wanted was impossible? If so, what was the thing that seemed impossible to you?
3. The Assyrians were a cruel people (see Digging Deeper) who had often abused Israel. One of Jonah's problems was that his narrow patriotism took precedence over his theology. In what ways are Christians in your country vulnerable to "narrow patriotism"? What would appropriate patriotism involve?
4. Does God still speak to people today and give them assignments they are expected to carry out?
5. How do you know when God is calling you to participate in a specific part of His mission?

THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

If you have more time, the following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message!

1. **What do you think?** How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking? What point in this message was most impactful for you?
2. **What will you do?** How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?
3. **How can you help others in your group?** How can you encourage, affirm, pray for, and keep accountable the commitments they put into practice?

DIGGING DEEPER:

Nineveh

The capital city of the Assyrian empire featured the great temple of Ishtar. Nineveh's ruins are located within modern Mosul, the second largest city of Iraq on the east bank of the Tigris River. Genesis 10:11-12 credits Nineveh's founding to the ancient hunter Nimrod, and modern studies show its occupation in prehistoric times. The city's circumference reached almost eight miles. From about 1363 B.C. Nineveh flourished as a strong city-state until Sennacherib made it the capital of all of Assyria about 700 B.C. It fell to the Medes and Babylonians in 612 B.C. Archaeologists have uncovered many finds from Nineveh, including King Assurbanipal's library. (Trent C. Butler, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Holman New Testament Commentary* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005])

In the minds of the listening circle Nineveh stood for the essence of human self-exaltation and anti-God power. And did not Sennacherib call himself "the great king" and think of himself as the great "I am" in his program of world conquest? These are the associations that would come crowding into the minds of those who heard mention of the "great city" of Nineveh. This phrase tolls like a bell through the book of Jonah (1:2; 3:2, 3; 4:11), to be given a twist in its last occurrence. But as the moment it connotes what is big and bad, an intolerable affront to God. Nineveh is another Sodom, an unhallowed haunt of wickedness meriting destruction. Perhaps the listening circle would be reminded, too, of Nahum's last words about Nineveh's downfall in 612 B.C.

All who hear the news about you
Clap their hands at you.
For who has not experienced
Your unremitting wickedness? (Nah. 3:19)

(Leslie C. Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976])

Story of Application

On the small island of Inagua in the Bahamas, a man was near the small commercial port where salt ships dock to load their cargo. Three fifty-foot-high posts were lined up several yards apart on one side of the loading area. Since the posts were on land rather than in the water, he had a hard time figuring out why they were there.

Finally, he asked a local person about the posts. He learned that the water in the channel is too shallow for the large salt boats to enter. The boats must make their way to the dock through one long, narrow channel. As a ship's captain enters the harbor, he aligns the three posts so that from his perspective they are a straight line, letting him see only one post. Then he knows he is in the deep channel and can safely maneuver to the dock.

God had to teach Jonah a lesson—one also connected with the sea. Jonah had to learn the danger of trying to maneuver his life to suit his feelings and needs rather than aligning himself with God and His will. So we must learn that we cannot pick the mission to accomplish for God. We have to align our own lives with God, listen for His message to us, and steer ourselves only where He leads. God does not call us to determine what we want to do and then to ask Him to bless our choices. Mission for God is not a smorgasbord of choices. It is a command to join God where He is at work. (Trent C. Butler, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Holman New Testament Commentary* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005])

KIDS' DISCUSSION:

We should listen to God and do what He says. God spoke to Jonah. He wanted Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh about God. Jonah didn't want to listen, so he did his own thing. Because Jonah did not listen to God, he found himself in all kinds of trouble. Jonah learned the hard way how important it is to listen when God speaks to us. God has good things for us. Because God speaks to us through the Bible, we should read God's Word, listen to it, and obey it.

In today's sermon Pastor David taught us to study, obey, and serve:

STUDY the Bible: Put your Bible up to your ear. Did the Bible make any sounds? Of course the Bible does not make any sounds, but when we read it, there is so much we can hear! Are you spending time each day reading the Bible? If not, make a goal to read the Bible each day this week. Younger kids, you can ask your parents or an older sibling to read it to you or with you. See Temple's May calendar. We are being asked to read Matthew 1-6 this week. Remember that we are not "quarantined" from God during this time! You can be close to God anytime by reading the Bible.

OBEY God's will: Pastor David told us in his sermon that "Obedience will always bring blessing into our life." What are some ways you can be obedient to God this week? Here are some ideas: Obey your parents. Do what your parents ask you to do the first time. Remember that delayed obedience is still disobedience. Show kindness. Choose kind words when talking to your brother or sister.

SERVE others: We all like to play the Hide and Go Seek game. Unlike the game, we cannot hide from God. He always knows where we are and what we are doing. Let God see you serve someone this week. Serve your mother today. It's Mother's Day! Do not think about yourself. Instead think about what you could do that would serve someone else. Draw someone a picture. Write someone a note and tell them what you like about them. Pray for someone else. Best idea of all, tell someone about Jesus!

KIDS' ACTIVITY: FLOAT YOUR BOAT

Design a tin foil boat and see how many pennies it will hold.

Materials needed: tin foil, bowl, scissors, pennies, and water

Directions: Cut a piece of aluminum foil into a 6" x 6" square. Fold up the sides of the boat so it will not sink. Place the boat in a bowl of water. Begin adding pennies for the boat's cargo. See how many pennies your boat can carry before it sinks. Send us a picture of your boat!

Sin is a burden, and it weighs us down like these pennies. Let's read God's word, obey God's will, and serve those around us so we won't "sink!" Send us a picture of your boat on instagram @tbclifechildren, and we will send you a surprise in the mail!

