

JONAH: LIFE. LESSONS.

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE OF DISOBEDIENCE - JONAH 1:4-6



SERMON NOTES:

1. Sin and Disobedience are a _____
2. Sin and Disobedience are _____
3. Sin and Disobedience do not separate us from God's _____

NEXT STEPS:

1. Today, I will examine my life and circumstances to see if God is trying to speak to me regarding an area of my life in which I am being disobedient to Him.
2. Today, I will confess to both God and to another person about an area of my life in which I am being disobedient to Him.
3. This week, I will pray daily and give thanks to God for the grace He shows to those who admit their mistakes and turn back to Him.
4. This week, I will talk to another person about a step, action, or direction that I believe God is asking me to take.

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. In Verse 3 it seemed like things were falling into place for Jonah. Is it possible to be out of the will of God and still have circumstances appear to be working on your behalf? Why? Like Jonah, can you be rebelling against God and still have a false sense of security that includes a good night's sleep? Why? (see Digging Deeper: Disobedience is Easy)
2. What was the Lord's response to Jonah's disobedience (vs. 4)? What did this display about the Lord's character and His power?
3. Unlike in Verse 1, God was now no longer speaking to Jonah through His Word. Why? How did God speak to Jonah in Verses 4-6? Was Jonah listening? Why? Which portions of the Word of God (passages or topics) have you been tempted to discard? Is it possible to miss God speaking to you, because you are spiritually asleep?
4. What were the sailors' three responses to the storm (vs5)? What does this say about the severity of the storm? What does the sailors' response indicate about their character and beliefs? What people today are closest to the position the sailors occupied in Jonah's day?
5. Besides the voice of the Lord, what things did Jonah lose because he wasn't a blessing (Gen. 12:1-3) to others and was disobedient (see Digging Deeper: Jonah's Disobedience)? What happens in our own lives when we are disobedient?
6. Read Psalm 139:7-12. How does this relate to Jonah's story? What about your story? Why can these verses be comforting but also discomfoting?

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:

Disobedience Is Easy

In most cases, disobedience is easy. As I was studying for this message, I almost ran by the fact that as Jonah disobeyed God & made plans to head for Tarshish, a boat was sitting at the dock, just waiting to go to that very place. Coincidence? I don't think so. Divine providence? Absolutely not! The schemes of the Devil? You'd better believe it.

Church, you see when it comes to planning, please understand that the Devil plans and prepares for events just like we do. Sometimes our plans are immediate... let's go eat lunch in an hour and sometimes our plans are more long term... let's start planning how we're going to put the kids through college. Either way some plans are easy and some plans are hard, and I assure you that when it comes to our relationship with God, the Devil will do all he can to make disobedience easy. Just like he did for Jonah, the Devil will always give us a boat headed for Tarshish and that's why in Ephesians 6:11 the Apostle Paul tells us to, "put on the whole armor of God, so that we can take our stand against the schemes of the devil." Notice on the screen that The Living Bible puts it his way, "Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan."

The Devil is a planner, he's a schemer and I am afraid that most us radically underestimate the spiritual battle we are in and just how much the Devil wants to ruin our life. Christian, non-Christian it really doesn't matter, the Devil wants to ruin your life, and I assure you, he is not in a hurry. If it takes 6 months, he'll wait 6 months. If it take 2 years, he'll wait 2 years. If it takes 8 years, he'll wait 8 years and I know that's true because I've seen it played out in the life of a really close friend.

About 6 years ago the life and ministry of a really good friend of mine came crashing down when he made the choice of an extra-marital affair, and when it was all said and done, this is what he told me... He said, "David, about 8 years ago the devil put a seed in my heart for a particular person. Little did I know that he had also put a seed in her heart for me. It took him 8 years, but the devil finally got us and now look what's happened. Two families have been torn apart."

In a sinful and fallen world, sin and disobedience will almost always be easy. (Pastor David Whitten)

Jonah's Wrong Attitude

Jonah got into trouble because his attitudes were wrong. To begin with, he had a wrong attitude towards the will of God. Obeying the will of God is as important to God's servant as it is to the people His servants minister to. It's in obeying the will of God that we find our spiritual nourishment (John 4:34), enlightenment (7:17), and enablement (Heb. 13:21). To Jesus, the will of God was food that satisfied Him; to Jonah, the will of God was medicine that choked him...

Jonah has a wrong attitude toward circumstances; he thought they were working for him when they were really working against him. He fled to Joppa and found just the right ship waiting for him! He had enough money to pay the fare for his long trip, and he was even able to go down into the ship and fall into a sleep so deep that the storm didn't wake him up. It's possible to be out of the will of God and still have circumstances appear to be working on your behalf. You can be rebelling against God and still have a false sense of security that includes a good night's sleep. God in His providence was preparing Jonah for a great fall. (*Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Amazed, OT Commentary Minor Prophets [Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook Publishers, 1996]*)

DIGGING DEEPER:

Jonah's Disobedience

Jonah was ruling his own life; the Lord wasn't his King. It is a sad day in our lives when our stubbornness makes us deaf to the loving voice of God, and He has to send a storm to wake us up and start us thinking. Jonah had been cheapened. He was no longer a man of God; he was only another passenger on a ship. He had lost God's voice, his power in prayer, and his witness for the Lord.

But it grew worse. Being a Jew, Jonah was supposed to be a source of blessing, because that was part of God's covenant with Abraham: "I will bless you... and you will be a blessing" (Gen. 12:1-3). But instead of bringing blessing, Jonah caused a storm that nearly drowned the crew. This is what usually happens when people rebel against God's will. Think of Abraham in Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20), Achan on the battlefield (Josh. 7), and David's family after he sinned with Bathsheba and arranged for her husband's death (2 Sam. 11-18). The name of Jonah means "dove," but Jonah certainly wasn't a harbinger of peace. (*Warren W. Wiersbe, Life Sentences, Key Themes of 63 Bible Characters [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2007]*)

KIDS' DISCUSSION:

Is there something you're afraid to do? Have you ever been asked to do something that you really did not want to do? Did you do it or run the other way? (Parents could share a personal story.)

For the next several weeks, we are learning about the prophet, Jonah. A prophet is a messenger who says what God tells him to say. God wanted Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh to repent. God wanted them to turn from their sins and obey Him, or God would destroy them. But Jonah did not want to go. Jonah made a choice to disobey God. Jonah's disobedience sure did cause a lot of trouble for himself. We're not that different from Jonah. We may never run away and hide at the bottom of a ship and get swallowed by a huge fish, but sometimes we do try to hide from God when we are scared, ashamed, embarrassed, or just don't want to do what He says.

Pastor David said in his message, "Sin and disobedience do not separate us from God's compassion." What has God been asking you to do? Is there someone you need to give a second chance?

God is full of grace and compassion. Even though He does not always take away the consequences of our disobedience, He always gives us another chance. Even though Jonah disobeyed, God gave Jonah another chance. Our God is so awesome!

KIDS' ACTIVITY: DON'T LOSE YOUR MARBLES

Place a marble on a large plate and slowly rotate the plate in a circular motion. Increase the speed but still try to keep the marble on the plate. This will become increasingly hard (and might take some practice) but eventually the marble will fly off the plate. Next put the marble in a bowl with high sides and rotate it in a circular motion. Unlike the plate, the bowl should allow you to get the marble moving fairly fast without the marble flying out. After you have demonstrated, let your child have a turn with both the plate and the bowl.

Afterwards ask your child why they think the marble didn't fly out of the bowl, but it did the plate. Point out that the plate did not have boundaries and that without boundaries the marble spun out of control. Talk about how God and our parents give us rules and boundaries because they love us. We can put on the full armor of God (Read Ephesians 6:10-18.) Remind your child that we can stand firm against the devil and choose obedience instead of disobedience. At first, instructions from God's Word might seem to be barriers, but just like the walls on the bowl, they actually keep us safe.

