

Day #4: God Uses Crisis to Move People – Changing Minds

Read: Jonah 1; Jonah 3:1-3

No discussion of God's using crisis to move people is complete without dealing with the uncomfortable subject of how He uses crisis to change rebellious minds. Sadly, there are way too many Bible examples from which we can draw! Pharaoh. The Israelites in the desert. The Israelites in exile....

But the best example of God's using crisis to change someone's mind is this one.

GOD'S COMPASSION FOR MOSUL

God's heart was broken because of the wickedness of the people of Mosul (Iraq), the modern name for Nineveh. God called the prophet Jonah of Galilee to go preach to the Ninevites; perhaps they would repent and be spared God's judgment!

What a privilege to be chosen from among all people to be God's envoy! But we all know that's not how Jonah saw it. From Galilee, an obedient Jonah would go **north and east** to Nineveh, but instead our disobedient Jonah went **south and west**.

Oh, what misery he could have been spared if only.... But Jonah's mind was made up.

Running to Joppa, he boards a ship going *anywhere but Nineveh*. In exhaustion he falls asleep in the bottom of the vessel – running from God is hard work! We all know the story – big storm, thrown into the sea, God sends a big fish, Jonah swallowed alive....

How miserable it must have been in the belly of that fish! Stench. Half-eaten fish floating. Seaweed tangling. Ears pain in the deep. Fear... Think of it! It had to be terrifying!

Still, even in all that nastiness, it took three whole days of agony – of *crisis* – for Jonah to change his mind.

Finally Jonah prayed: "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you...I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good." (Jonah 2:7,9)

The fish vomited Jonah onto land, and the soggy, smelly prophet wobbled toward Nineveh, shakily at first, but strength grew with each step of obedience. The Ninevites repented and God had "compassion on the Ninevites [by not bringing] on them the destruction he had threatened" (Jonah 3:10).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Think of a time when you suffered because you were slow to obey something God wanted you to do (forgive someone, say something to someone, do something, etc.)

- What did that situation teach you and what advice would you give to others based on what you learned?
- What might be at the core of a believers obstinance in accepting and obeying the path God has indicated?