

- Background
  - Jonah
    - Means “Dove”
    - Prophet
      - Called to speak out from God to his enemy
      - It’s abnormal for a prophet to be called to go out and speak to a distant land rather than his home
      - It’s even more abnormal to see a prophet rebel from God
  - Nineveh
    - One of the most brutal people
    - Enemy of Israel
    - Capital of Assyrian Empire
    - Huge city
      - Three days journey breadth by foot
  - What’s the point?
    - Jonah is an unconventional prophet, and because of that very relatable
    - Looking at the character of Jonah can give us both examples of what we should and should not do
    - Looking at the way God responds lets us learn about the character of God
- Jonah 1
  - Jonah flees (Jonah 1: 1-17)
    - Jonah is called by the Lord (Jonah 1:2)
      - Remember, Nineveh is a brutal, wicked people
        - They are also enemies of Jonah
        - God told Jonah to warn them of destruction, and give them a chance to be spared
          - When God tells us to do something, there should never be a conflict of interests
            - God’s will should be our priority, and our will should be in line with his
            - Even if we don’t agree with him, we need to look to eternity, knowing that his plan for us is more beneficial for the furtherment of his kingdom (which is of benefit to us) than ours
              - We need not doubt God, he is looking for our best intentions (Jeremiah 29:11)
        - Regardless of what, we have an obligation to answer the call of the Lord (we will look more into this in a bit)
      - Jonah runs away to Tarshish (Jonah 1: 3)
        - Tarshish was in the complete opposite direction
          - Joppa is geographically very close to Nineveh
          - He went out of his way to get as far from God as he can

- You can't outrun God (Joshua 1: 9)
    - We see (as discussed earlier) that this is an opposition to God, as Jonah's will doesn't align
      - It's hard to blame him, we run away from much, much less
        - As stated earlier, Nineveh was a brutish people
          - It isn't a stretch to say going there could be a suicide mission
        - We face much less than this and give in
          - Something as simple as saying "God bless" to a stranger could be felt as awkward and just easier to avoid
          - If we're convicted by the holy spirit to do something, we should do it no matter what it is
        - We have no right to back down from persecution when any sacrifice of our own is nothing compared to that of Christ (Hebrews 12: 3-4)
      - It seems really easy to judge Jonah, but we aren't much better (as seen from above), so we should learn from these mistakes of the past
  - The Lord chases after Jonah (Jonah 1: 4-17)
    - God will chase after those that are lost (Matthew 18: 12)
      - As we see in the case of Jonah, if it takes a storm to get our attention, there will be a storm
    - God will always give a second chance... and a third, fourth, fifth... (Isaiah 43: 25)
      - We will talk much more about this later...
  - Why would God choose someone like Jonah to be a prophet?
    - Large representative of humans as a whole
    - We see Jonah isn't inherently bad, or even as cowardice as you might think
      - He was honest with the sailors of his position (Jonah 1: 9)
      - He gave himself up to save the others on the ship (Jonah 1: 12)
    - It shows us that anyone can be a servant of God, even when you doubt his glory
    - We see examples of the power of God throughout
      - We've already seen his storm (which was a public sign that the whole boat saw)
        - From this, the men reached out to God, asking for mercy (Jonah 1: 14, 16)
- Jonah 2
  - Jonah cries out to God

- God listens to prayers of his people (Jonah 2: 10)
  - Here we see Jonah called out in the name of God to be saved, and God responds
    - God always hears our prayers, nothing that happens to us is surprising to him in the slightest
    - He sees our struggles, and helps us in them
  - Jonah repented from his ways, promising to do the will of God (Jonah 2: 9)
    - Still with selfishness
      - We see him priding himself (Jonah 2: 8)
    - With God's blessings comes sacrifice from ourselves
      - This isn't to undervalue the blessings from God, as even the sacrifices we make aren't our own to make, but from what God has entrusted to us
      - We are called to be servants of God in all we do
      - We can't expect to take the benefits of our relationship with God without taking any of the hardships
        - Remember, we don't even deserve the benefits
        - We aren't entitled to God's grace, it is a gift
          - Jonah realizes this in verse 9, it is not his place to say who is saved, but it is God's
- Jonah 3
  - Nineveh
    - Jonah goes to the city begrudgingly (Jonah 3: 1-5)
      - Nineveh is 3 days in length, but the only mention of Jonah speaking is 1 day inwards (Jonah 3: 3-4)
        - We see here that Jonah is to a certain extent, just doing what he is obligated to do, not serving with a joyful heart
        - He speaks 7 words out to the people in Nineveh, further showing his lack of devotion (Jonah 3: 4)
          - Even then, at least Jonah is fulfilling his promise to God, though not in its entirety, he isn't ignoring his promise
          - We see that even though Jonah says little, God works wonders in what was said (Jonah 3: 5)
            - After hearing this, the people repented from their wrong
            - Jonah was very vague, but the people understood exactly what to do (by the grace of God)

- Notice how short this section is compared to when Jonah fled (chapter 1)
    - 5 verses of service out of this entire thing
    - Resonates with us, it's easy to put God on the backburner
      - Reassuring, because look at all that God does with this little service from Jonah
  - The people repent (Jonah 3: 6-10)
    - The king of Nineveh issues a proclamation to completely reverse their ways (Jonah 3: 7-9)
      - When we do wrong, we shouldn't flirt with temptation
        - We aren't to tread the line between good and evil, we are to run from it
      - Here, we see drastic change, as to be pleasing to God
        - No amount of evil is considered good to God, all evil is sinful, and therefore separates us from God (James 2:10)
    - God sees the people's repentance, and therefore shows mercy on them (Jonah 3: 10)
      - It's never too late to set onto the path of righteousness
      - God will always forgive you if you truly repent from your wrongdoings
- Jonah 4
  - No matter who, no matter what you did, God will always forgive you
    - It seems stupid to think this, but sometimes we can be jealous of God's forgiveness (Jonah 4: 2)
      - It's easy for us to think sometimes that someone doesn't deserve forgiveness
        - We should want everyone to find Christ, there is value in every soul
        - We are called to display pure, selfless love, as this is how God abides in us (1 John 4: 12)
        - Guess what????
          - None of us deserve forgiveness
      - Once we have been forgiven, we don't have the right to keep living in sin (Romans 6: 1-2)
    - The lesson of the plant (Jonah 4: 5-11)
      - Jonah got upset over the death of a plant
        - How much more is the death of a city as large as Nineveh
        - Jonah had no relation to the plant, they simply coexisted
          - God created each and every individual in Nineveh, they are his creation, so he has a right to mourn over them (Jonah 4: 11)
      - God loves each of us

- We are all his creations
- Even if it seems like God turned his back on us, he is there
- Therefore, we should carry the love of God, and put aside our own emotions for the furtherment of his kingdom