

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Jonah: Arise & Go

PART

1

TITLE

Arise And Go

SCRIPTURE

Jonah 1:1-6



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Well, on this really special day, it also falls on a very special weekend. For those in this room who have sacrificed and perhaps you have family members who have sacrificed so that we can enjoy this amazing stewardship of freedom that we have, we say thank you to you as well. You know, you think about the fact that a lot of people throughout the world, some two billion people, live in countries that are opposed to the gospel. They don't have the freedom to do exactly what we have done this morning to gather in a public place in order to worship the Lord. And the fact that we get to do that is not only grace, but it also comes on the back of tremendous sacrifice. So we acknowledge that today and if that has been your sacrifice, we are grateful for your service.

We're also incredibly grateful, most grateful, to the only perfect man who's ever walked the face of the earth, Jesus Christ, and his sacrifice that has really provided each one of us not only freedom, but liberty. Not only from sin, but also from death. Not only in this life, but the one to come. And so we always love to gather in this place to acknowledge Him.

If you're new here to Providence and you're sort of wondering who are we and what are these people, you know, we're Jesus people is who we are. We love Jesus Christ. We love the Bible because we love Jesus. This Bible we don't worship but it teaches us about Jesus. And it shows us that what He has accomplished has provided for us everything that we need for life and godliness and eternal life. And so we are really glad that you have joined us.

I want to ask you to turn with me to Jonah chapter one. Jonah chapter one. Over the next five Sundays, this Sunday and then four in June, we will be in this book of Jonah. It's at the end of the Old Testament so if you need a page number, I don't have it for you but don't be ashamed to look in the front. There's a little content page and you can find the actual page number. If you don't have one with you, there should be one in a seat near you. If you don't have one at home, take that Bible home as a gift. We love God's word and we want you to have your own copy of it if you don't have one.

Why Jonah? Well, over the last three weeks if you've been here, of course we've walked through the plant vision, this vision for three years of what God has told us to really put our hands to. It's to plant our lives in the church. It's to plant the gospel in the city. And it's to plant churches in the world. And so why Jonah? Why follow that up with a book about a prophet who is struggling to obey the Lord? There's really two reasons. Right?

First of all is in Jonah we see God's amazing heart for people, in particular unreached people, people who don't have the gospel. And the fact is until God's heart literally absorbs into our heart and that love for people absorbs into our heart, we're simply not going to plant the gospel in our city and we're not going to plant churches in the world. It begins with the heart of God. We're going to see that in our text today.

But the second thing is that all of us need to experience the wonder of the gospel really every day because that is the fuel, literally, to all obedience, to all righteousness is to see what He's done. And what the gospel says is that there's people who are sinners and there's a God who's gracious. And in the book of Jonah what we see is this really concrete example of sin and grace. Sin in that we see a prophet run away from God and grace in that we see God run towards the prophet. And so this is an amazing book. And it's also true.

Some of you, perhaps you've seen Jonah as a cartoon or maybe in a storybook and you may be tempted to think that because there are supernatural events within the book that you think, "Well, that's just a story. It's a parable. It's an analogy." No, it's actually true. I'm going to show you in the weeks to come that if Jonah was not a real man who was swallowed by a real fish that you cannot be saved by Jesus Christ. The reason is because Jesus said that he was a real man and the Bible says that Jesus never sinned. So if He knew that he wasn't a real man then He sinned. And if He sinned then He cannot be your Savior. And so Jonah is a real guy just like you and me. So let's pray together and then we'll look at it.

Father, thank you so much for grace. Thank you for mercy. Thank you that you caused Jonah to be born and to grow up, that you came to Jonah. You confronted Jonah. You called Jonah. He became one of your prophets. And then even in a story that really speaks a tremendous amount about his failures and your grace in those failures, I thank you Father for recording this for us. And I pray that as we study it that you would help us to see how we're similar to Jonah and that you would help us to repent. And God, I pray that you would give us hope for this book is full of hope. So would you please help us to believe? Would you speak through weakness in glorified Christ? We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

Well, you know it wasn't long ago that if you wanted to watch a movie you had to rent a movie. And if you wanted to rent a movie, if you had to actually go to a store. They had these things called movie rental stores, okay? And they look like this. And when you went in there what they sort of did was they sectioned off various movies by category. So you'd go in and over here there would be all the ones for kids or for family and there'd be a section for all kinds of action, adventure, comedy, all these sorts of things. And there was always one section kind of over in the back. And for those people who wanted to find some measure of entertainment in watching violent crimes, there was a section for them as well. And it's the horror section. For whatever reason, it's the craziest thing that we actually spend time producing movies that talk about, and not just talk about but portray violent and dark crimes against people. It's really an amazing thing. But that section was always over in the corner. It was always that dark, ominous place where if you had kids you didn't take your kids over there because there's people dying on the front covers of all of these movies.

And so I said all that in order to say this, that the Bible in some ways is full of a bunch of sections much like a movie store. You have some sections like the Gospels and you just kind of read through and it's just the life of Jesus. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The stories of Christ, his teachings, what he did, his miracles, his parables and it's pretty kid friendly, you know? And then there's other sections where there's maybe a little bit more high adventure like the book of Revelation. If you really look at it as if it's going to happen, that's a lot of action that's going to take place at the end of time.

But then even in my own life for years and years growing up, even as my dad was a pastor and so I sort of understood something about the Bible, there was always this dark ominous place in the Bible that I just didn't really like to open up very much and it was the prophets. It was a place where God spoke a lot about wrath and judgment and smiting people. And so I thought if I ever want to read a good smiting then I'll go to the prophets. But because I really didn't want to read one, I just really didn't spend a lot of time in the prophets. Much like a horror section of a movie store.

What's interesting is the older that I've gotten ... I'm 43 years old now. I've been walking with the Lord now for a number of years. It's really an amazing thing how my perspective about the prophets has changed because now today if I want to read something that emphasizes the most clear and extreme portraits of God's patience and kindness towards people I turn to the prophets. Because there what we find is God exercising tremendous patience and mercy and kindness towards real people who were trying to work out the brokenness all around in the mission of God. And so Jonah was one of these prophets. He's a little different than all of the other prophets in that most of the other prophets their book talks about what they said and what they did but here in Jonah all we really find is how he sinned. And so it's really pertinent to us because you're going to find a lot of yourself in this guy named Jonah.

So let's read it here together. It says, "Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah." And so God came to Jonah and what did he say to him? Well, in verse two he says, "Arise. Go to Nineveh, that great city and call out against it for their evil has come up before me. But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fair and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea and there was a mighty tempest on the sea so that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid and each cried out to his God and they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. So the captain came and said to him, 'What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise. Call out to your God. Perhaps the God will give a thought to us that we may not perish.'"

Now let's just talk just a little bit about this guy named Jonah. And then I want to show you from what we just read four different things that are true about God. The first thing you need to know is that Jonah was a real man, an actual real man. He had parents. He had a mom. He had a dad. He was also a prophet. II Kings chapter 14 we actually find that he was a prophet in Israel during a really, really dark, sinful time in the nation. And what's interesting is if you understand what it meant to be a prophet, he was a pretty big deal. You see, a prophet was one who actually heard from God, at least I can only imagine, in ways different than you and I can hear from God. You see, Jonah as a prophet, what that meant was that God would literally speak to him, not only words but complete words. And not only complete words, but even pictures into what was going to happen into the future. And then He would call Jonah to go and take what He had said to him and word by word relay that to the people in order to tell them what would take place.

And here's the thing, it had to come to pass. And with Jonah, it did. So he would go out and he'd say, "This is what God says. This is what's going to happen." And it would happen. So as you can imagine, I mean if this happened today ... You know, if there was a guy that was on TV and would say, "Hey, this is what God said. This is what's going to happen next month," and everything happened, we would probably consider that man pretty influential. We would probably fear him, respect him. And that's exactly what Jonah was. He was a pretty big deal in Israel. But what we find here is that he was also a broken man. And fortunately, God doesn't throw broken men away.

And so let's look at some of these truths about God. The first is this, is that God has a really big heart for lost people. And you see this in verse one where it says, "Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah." This is really important because it says here that God is the one that started the process. Not Jonah, not the people in the city, not his friends, but God. There was a burden that arose in God's heart and that spilled out God's mouth. And so He went to Jonah and He says, "Arise. Go to Nineveh." Now where's Nineveh? Nineveh is currently in modern-day Iraq. It was the capital city of Assyria. It was a brutal people. It was a violent people. And they were sinful people. They didn't care about God. They weren't thinking about God. But God was thinking about them.

And this is what we see throughout Scripture. Passages such as II Peter 3:9 where it says that "The Lord is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance." He loves the people of the world. And you see, God has this big heart for people, and particularly lost people. And he also has an enormous heart for the city centers where these lost people live, where they go to school, where they eat, where they dine and where they entertain themselves. He loves cities. He has a thing for cities. He always has. And this is exactly what we see here, is that God cares about people.

You see, when God looks at a slide like this and he looks down upon the world and he sees masses of people who do not know Christ and have no access to the gospel, it moves God to move his people to go and tell them. Acts 1:8 Jesus rises from the dead. The burden for the Nations is on Jesus's brow so what does he do? It leads him to move his disciples to move to go tell them and he says guys, listen. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you. And you will be my witnesses. In Jerusalem, where you're at right here, in all of Judea and Samaria, meaning your region, your country, your state, but also to the ends of the Earth.

And so if it's true that God has a big heart for lost people then let's examine our heart to see if we share God's heart. I want you to think about this for a second. I realize that most of us have heard the gospel many, many times. So sometimes we're unimpressed when it says the Word of the Lord came. But did you know that you didn't take a step toward God until he took a step towards you? You see, the Bible tells us that He's different than every other God that's ever been invented by man and that is that man has always invented a God who sits high up on a mountain waiting for us to impress him enough, for us to scale that mountain to be near him. Man has never invented a pursuing kind of God. He's never invented a missionary kind of God. And yet that's exactly the God who is. He loves people. He cares for people. Nineveh wasn't thinking about God. Jonah wasn't thinking about Nineveh. God was thinking of both. Some of you, you may not even know the Lord. And I want you to know that before you even thought about coming here today, He was thinking about you. He cares about you.

Years ago, now it's been over 20 years ago, right out of college, I went to southern Africa and I was there for about six months. And for about three of those weeks while I was there, I went over and actually crossed the border into Botswana. And there was a family there that I just fell in love with, Ron Langston, Ron and Jan Langston. And they were just an amazing couple. Their family was amazing. And I just kind of hung out with him and did work with him. So what we would do every day is we'd hop in his Jeep and we'd go to these villages that had very little access to the gospel and we would tell them. Of course, I didn't really tell them. He would tell them because he knew their language. And it was just an amazing thing.

Well, there was one village that he really wanted to get to that he had never been to and he had heard that not many people had ever been there. And it had been forever since anyone had actually been there. So one day we said we're just going to go. We're just going to keep driving in this direction. We went from village to village and we kept asking and they said keep going, keep going, keep going. About three and a half hours in the Jeep we finally get there and there's this village. And they're terrified when they first see us because we're white and they had never seen a white man before. It was an amazing thing. We shared the gospel with them and they say, "We're not ready but we want you to come back." And we're like, "Well, will come back tomorrow."

We came back three days and on the third day the chief of this village trusts Christ. He believes in Jesus. He confesses his sins and God forgives him. And all of a sudden they begin this conversation because it looks like the chief isn't so happy. And I'm like, "What's going on?" And he says, "Well, he's burdened about something and I'm not quite sure what it is yet." And so they keep talking and he goes, "Oh, he has a question." And I said, "Well, what's the question?" And he says, "His question is, why didn't anyone come sooner? You mean to tell me you've known all this and you are just now coming to tell us?" This is where the people are all around the world. We take it for granted that we get it all the time and they don't know.

And so the question is this, does compassion stir within your heart when you think about those who've never heard? You see, God is a missionary kind of God. His heart has missionary inclinations that flow out of it. And those who share his heart will also share his missionary inclinations that will lead us across the street, across town, across the pond. It should be really encouraging to all of us if Jonah had one verse and it was just, "And the word of the Lord came to Jonah," that there is a God who pursues us.

The second thing I want you to see is this, though, is that God feels real hurt over sinning people. He not only has a big heart for lost people, He feels real pain and angst over sinning people. That includes you and me. You see, God tells Jonah not just to rise, but He tells him to go and call out their sin. Now, this would be sort of like God telling you or me to go over to an ISIS bunker in Assyria with a Bible and a sermon and tell them to repent for all of their evil. Why would God tell Jonah to do this to a people ... Literally, to a man who He cared about to go to a people that were so brutal and so evil and so violent? And then He tells him why.

Now, if you're one who circles things in your Bible so that you can help see them later on, then I would encourage you to circle the word "for." And this is why. It says, "Now the word of the Lord came saying, 'Arise. Go to Nineveh, that great city and call out against them.'" Now why do you want me to do this? And he answers the question, for. This is why. Because of this reason this is all happening. It says, "For their evil has come up before me."

Now I want you just to envision this possibility. I know it wouldn't happen but just imagine if it did. Let's just say you have some neighbors on your right and on your left at your home and you have a back porch. And on your back porch there's a great big glass sliding door and you have no curtains over it. There's no blinds, you just get to see. And every time your neighbors choose to sin, they first come over and they get on your deck and then they do it. Okay? So if they want to lie to somebody, they lie to somebody on your back deck. If they want to watch something that's not appropriate, they bring a TV over, ask for some power support and they watch it on your back deck. Whatever their sin is, whether it sexual, whether it's idolatry, whether it's physical abuse, whatever it is, they choose to do it on your back deck. Now if you can imagine the angst of having to live inside the house and every time your neighbors want to sin they do it in front of you then you can understand the angst that flows out of these words. You see, this is the angst that holds up the words from God saying, "Their evil has come up before me." I have to see all of it. All of it.

And then things get worse. You see, in the whole book of Jonah there's only one person that claims to fear God. And he's the one that's going to run from God the whole book. It's Jonah. Jonah, he chooses to flee to Tarshish. Now, a little map helps you see just how amazing this is, okay? Jonah is near Joppa. He goes down to Joppa. Now God told him to go to Nineveh, which is 550 miles away. Instead, he gets on a boat and he goes to Tarshish, which is in Spain 2500 miles away. 2500 miles away from God's revealed will for Jonah. Why would he do this? Well, in Jonah 4:2, will get there in a few weeks, but in verse two of chapter four this is what it says. Jonah prays to God and he says, "O Lord, is this not what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish. For I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster." I knew that you wouldn't kill them is what he said. I knew that if I went and called out and told them that there's hope that some of them would believe and repent and you would forgive them. And I didn't want that.

You see, Nineveh, the capital of Assyria was not only a brutal people and an evil people, they were also a different racial people. They were from the other side. Those people. Your people. And self-righteousness was so absorbed within Jonah's heart and he hated them so much that he could allow no mercy to enter into his own life. He knew that God would forgive them if they repented and so Jonah ran. Now I want you to see that God took Jonah's sin personal as well. Did you see that he didn't say, "Because you rebelled and didn't go to the city that I asked you to"? Notice the words that God uses to translate Jonah's sin. He says he rose to flee to Tarshish from where? From the presence of the Lord. From the presence of the Lord.

You see, sometimes you and I, we think of God like this impersonal idea. He's sort of a system. He is a religion. No, He's a person. You can walk to Him. You can walk away from Him. You can hurt Him. You can cause Him to emote. You can make Him happy. You can make Him sad. He's a person. Not like us. We're like Him. We're made in His image. But you have to understand, you see, sin comes up all before Him. And so if God feels real hurt over sinning people then let's remember that our sin as a personal affront to God. Listen, our sin comes up before Him. Our rebellion is running from Him. This is why God translated all of their actions and He is the one they are leaving or He is the one that they are shoving their sin in front of. It's a personal thing.

Some of us ... I hear this frequently. I hear people justify their sin by saying, "You know, it's not that bad because no one else is being affected." Listen. God is always being affected. There is always a victim beyond yourself. Always. Every time. And it hurts Him personally when we sin against Him. This is why Psalm 51:4 says, "Against you and you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." Now David has sinned against Bathsheba, getting her pregnant. She's another man's wife. And then to sort of cover it all up, David kills her husband who was one of his bodyguards, Uriah. This was a terrible thing that took place. Finally, God sends a prophet, Nathan, to David and he says, "You've sinned." David confesses his sins. He acknowledges it. And then he writes Psalm 51 and he's explaining his prayer, how he asked God to forgive him. And inside that prayer is these words where he says, "Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight."

Now at first look you think, “Wait a minute. There’s more than just him. You’ve killed Uriah. He probably cares about the whole deal as well. I think what he’s saying here is this, that even if there was no such thing as Bathsheba and Uriah, even if they were impersonal ... I know they’re not, but even if they are, that I sinned against you. I recognize that even if there was no other victim that could be quantified on the earth, there was a victim. There was a victim. There’s always a victim.

So God has a big heart for lost people and he has a real hurt over sinning people but I want you to see the third thing. God has unrivaled power to reach people. He has unrivaled power to reach people. You see, one of the things that God wants to do in the book of Jonah in our life is to identify the areas where we’re self-righteous. You say, “Well, I’m not self-righteous.” Well, you’re probably self-righteous about not being self-righteous, okay? The fact is that every single one of us, we look at people and we look at ideas and we conclude that we’re better in some way than somebody. It can happen with race. There’s people who just simply because of the color of their skin, they look and they feel, “I’m better. I’m more righteous.” It doesn’t matter how wrong it is. Self-righteousness doesn’t care about the truth. Self-righteousness is just sin within the heart that says I’m better.

For some people it’s not race. For some people it’s their persuasion in terms of politics. They look at the world. They look at government. They look at how money is spent and their entire life is spent looking at the other side and going, “Look how stupid you are.” You can see it all over social media where people are self-righteous and say, “This is the way to run a government. This is how it should be done.”

You can also look at it in terms of morality. Some of us are just self-righteous with how good we are in comparison to other people. “Look at those people doing those things over there. What a terrible thing. At least I’m not that.”

Now listen to me. The reason God cares so deeply about identifying where we’re self-righteous is not only to help purify our heart, but it also matters for the mission. And this is why. Because wherever we feel self-righteous it becomes a wall that keeps us from seeking to engage those people on the other side of that wall with the gospel. And we start seeing our life purpose as trying to convince people to be Democrat or Republican. We see our whole life and mission as calling out certain behaviors of sin and righteousness. Listen, God wants you to be known as a Jesus person. Period. Now that cascades into other things but literally, wherever we’re self-righteous, that becomes the obstacle to our being on mission with those people.

And so God cares so much about those people ... If you are a diehard Republican, He cares about Democrats. So the only way He's going to get you to move in their life is to pull down your self-righteousness. And so He calls it out. He called out Joan is racism. It was a racial self-righteousness. I'm better than those people. And the reason that He called it out was not only to protect Jonah's heart, but because those people in Nineveh needed to hear the gospel. And so God came to him and He said you got to stop. And what happens is whenever God confronts the area of our self-righteousness, we either repent and agree with God or we run from God. And that's what he did. He ran. And he ran really far.

Now here's the big point for you, okay? If you want to sin, there will always be a boat ready to take you there. Always. Some of you, you base your entire framework of how you identify God's will on the basis of open doors. A ship to Tarshish was an open door. I beg you, open up the Scriptures. You see, there are so many possible ways. There are so many resources on the Earth that the fact is if you want to sin, you can find a way. You can. There's always going to be a boat ready to take you there.

And so how does God respond? Well, God hurls. I love this. I don't know why this is the verb of choice in Jonah but there's just all kinds of stuff being hurled in Jonah. Okay? There's winds that are hurled. There's cargo. There's sailors. Jonah gets hurled. There's just a lot of hurling that takes place in the book. And it says in verse four, "But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea." So the picture here ... I mean, think about it. It's like a baseball pitcher. This is how sovereign ... This is the unrivaled power of God. He holds wind within his hand and he hurls the wind upon the sea. It's so fierce that it threatens to break up the boat.

Some of you could say, "Well, this is the wrath of God." And I would contend this is not the wrath of God. This is the grace of God. And this is why. God's wrath would have just killed him. Grace pursued him. You see, if you want to see God's wrath on the Earth, watch a man sail away in rebellion and God give them smooth seas and good wind. This is why Luther said God's greatest anger is when He's no longer angry with you. When He says, "Fine. Just fine. Fine." And so not all seas and not all storms in our life are caused because of sin, but when we are in sin God frequently causes a storm. And when he causes and brings a storm into our life, it's not meant to pay us back, it's meant to bring us back. It's meant to open up our eyes and say, "I love you too much to allow you to continue to sail away from me without you knowing you're sailing away from me." He loves you.

You see, Jonah had gone down to Joppa, down to the dock, down to the ship's lowest portion. He is as far down as he can get until he hits the water and begins to sink. He is far down. He has run out of places to run. And this is where God reaches him in the most incredible way. And the way that he begins to reach him is through unbelievers, through people who don't know God but have some kind of at least a religious bent so long as they're scared out of their minds. A lot of people have that kind of religious bent, when they're scared out of their mind. God, help! Which God? It doesn't matter, just God. And this is where they're at.

You see, Jonah, you remember is tagging along with a crew of mariners. Now they are all terrified. These experienced sailors, they give up all their maneuvering. They begin tossing the cargo out of the boat. Now what's that? The cargo is what they were bringing to Spain to trade. This is their livelihood. You see, when you know you're going to die, it doesn't matter how rich you are. And they knew that. They said, "Let's part with everything in the hopes that we'll stay alive." And they began calling upon their "little g" gods. That's what it says in the Bible. Little god. Their gods. They were just praying, "God help us right now. We need help." And Jonah is asleep.

So you have these unbelieving pagan sailors praying and you have the prophet of God sleeping. Until the captain comes and wakes him up. I love how he wakes him up. He's incredulous. He's like, "Are you kidding me? What are you doing, you sleeper?" And then notice the verbs that he gives him. What does he say? Arise and what? Call out. And when's the last time Jonah has heard the words arise and call out? It was from God himself. This is supposed to be a reminder of Jonah like, "Wait a minute. I've heard this before. I knew I was supposed to go somewhere else."

And then notice how he finishes. He says, "Perhaps the God that you're going to pray to, Jonah, will give a thought to us." Oh, if they only knew in verse one that he's been thinking about them all along. That he's thinking about exactly who they are and where they are. God was orchestrating all of this. And so Providence if this is true that he has unrivaled power in order to reach us, then let's respond to God's mercy and repent. Don't underestimate your capacity to sin. Jonah knew the voice of God. He was a mature prophet in God and he walked away from God.

So let me ask you a question. Is there any sin in your life that you're providing a hospitable place for it to live and grow? Is there any known sin in your life where you're justifying it and saying, "I want to keep that a part of my life"? Jonah the book is just a plea to say let that go. Acts 3:19 says, "Repent and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out and times of refreshing may come from the Lord."

Well, there's one last thing that I want you to see. But it's really not found in our text. It's just pointed to. And that's that God has a perfect Son to rescue people. He's got a really big heart for lost people. He feels real pain from sinning people. He has unrivaled power to reach people. And He has a perfect Son in order to rescue people. You see, some of you are thinking, "Well, who's going to be the hero in the Book of Jonah?" It's nobody in Jonah. At least, it's nobody that's named. You see, every character in the Bible except one is imperfect. And that one that's perfect is Jesus Christ. And the Bible is actually to be read with us being able to see that Jesus is literally the perfection of every character in the Bible. Jesus did and accomplished what no one else did, what no one else accomplished.

You see, when Jesus was on the earth He was out telling people to believe in Him and some people wouldn't obey. And so Jesus decides to point their attention to Jonah. And this is what he says. In Matthew 12:40 he says, "The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah." We'll see that in Chapter three. "And behold, something greater than Jonah is here." You see, Jesus is the greater and truer and better Jonah. And this is why. You see, Jonah slept during the storm and yet Jesus prayed during his storm. Jonah was all concerned with self but Jesus was concerned with others. Jonah was racially exclusive. Jesus was racially inclusive. Jonah ran from the city. Jesus set his face to the city and ran toward it in order to rescue us. And he did that by going to the cross after living a righteous life where He died for our sin. He was buried and He rose from the dead. And He extended to us an invitation.

If you've never trusted him, this is the invitation. That if you would stop believing in your righteousness and you would believe in His righteousness and His accomplishment, He would take away all of your sin and He would give you his righteousness. What an offer! And this is what we call the gospel. This is what people around the world do not know. And this is what God wants us to go and tell them. And this is also the very message that if you've never trusted Christ, it is the only message given to man by which you can be saved. And so let's trust Jesus and receive eternal life. Let us pray together.

Father in heaven, thank you for your kindness to us. We thank you that you included Jonah in the Scriptures. That you give us hope when we see even a fallen man. We thank you, God, that we see your mercy and your kindness and your patience put on display even in these first six verses. And God, I pray that in each of our lives that you would search us and test us and try us and see if there is any offensive way in us. And God, if there is, would you give us the courage today to repent? I pray, Father, that the things that we see flow out of your heart, that they would begin to flow out of our heart with greater intensity one day at a time. And so, God, as we now give to you not only an offering, but also worship, singing to you, we pray, God, that you would be glorified in our life and that you would take these resources and that you would use those resources to see that your Son's name is known to the ends of the Earth. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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