

Title: A Whale of a Story

Text: Jonah (Dove)

Target: God's providence will always get you to His purpose.

- I. **A Call to Go:** *"Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go..." (1:1-2)*
 - A. **To a Place:** *"to Nineveh, that great city," (1:2) *Mosul, Iraq*
 - B. **To a People:** *"and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." (1:2)*
- II. **A Place to Run:** *"But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish" (1:3)*
 - A. **Far from God's Presence:** *"from the presence of the LORD" (2x) (1:3)*
 - B. **Far from a Nivevite People:** *"He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish," (1:3)*
*Southern Spain 2500 miles away
- III. **A Storm that Blows:** *"But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea," (1:4)*
 - A. **Causing Fear:** *Then the mariners were afraid (1:5)*
 - B. **Creating Faith:** *each cried out to his god (1:5)*
- IV. **A Crew that Knows:**
 - A. **Roll of the Dice:** *Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us. (1:7)*
 - B. **Revelation of Defiance:** *For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. (1:10)*
- V. **A Fish to Catch:** *And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah (1:17)*
 - A. **Prayer of Distress:** *I called out to the LORD, out of my distress (2:2)*
 - B. **Purpose to Deliver:** *And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land. (2:10)*
- VI. **A City that Repents:** *And the people of Nineveh believed God. (3:5)*
 - A. **A Second Chance:** *Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time (3:1)*
 - B. **A Sermon that's Concise:** *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (3:4)*
 - C. **A Scene of Compassion:** *God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. (3:10)*
- VII. **A Preacher that Quits:**
 - A. **His Complaint:** *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry (4:1)*
 - B. **God's Comfort:** *God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort (4:6)*
 - C. **His Criticism:** *Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die (4:9)*
- VIII. **A God who Cares:** *And should not I pity Nineveh, ...more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle (4:11)*

Take Away: God is a God of second chances that turns what we think are mistakes into defining moments.

Discussion Questions/Thoughts: Most of us are very familiar with the story of Jonah and the whale. However, most of us also view the story solely from the perspective of Jonah. While there is plenty to learn from that perspective, perhaps we should step back a little further and gain a different perspective. Go back and read Jonah 1:1. Who is at the very beginning of the story? The verse reads that "the word of The LORD came to Jonah." God initiated the mission. Now go back and read Jonah 4:11. Who is at the end of the story?

The story of Jonah, while certainly about obedience, choices, and consequences, highlights the grace, love, and mercy of our God.

God pursued the Assyrians even though they were far from Him. Doesn't this sound like Romans 5:8 to you? God wants that none should perish and all come to repentance (see 2 Peter 3:9-10). But this was not pleasing to Jonah. He hated the Assyrians for what they had done to Israel. Jonah did not want them to be saved or redeemed. He wanted God's wrath and judgement poured out over them. Does this resonate with you? Does it sound familiar? Think about today's social and political climates. When you hear of people that stand in vehement, vulgar opposition to what we believe as Christians, is your first inclination to minister to them and share God's word? What about when they want to destroy and tear apart every traditional Biblical value we hold dear? Do you ask God to forgive them and show mercy or is it for God to exact righteous judgement upon them? Who or what is your Nineveh?

Fortunately, the story of Jonah isn't just about Jonah. Jonah got to play a part in it, but it's all about God. It's all about God's grace, mercy, and love for us. His desire to redeem and restore mankind. So it is with our lives as well. God is moving and calling people all around us to repentance. Will we join Him or will we run from Him?