

JONAH

Ticket to Tarshish

In Jonah, God calls a man to go to the Assyrian city of Nineveh and invite them to repent and receive the mercy of God. This city was a brutal place, rife with torture and execution. The call of Christ is neither safe nor comfortable. It's easy to be like Jonah and run far away from where God tells us to go. This week, we're looking at God's call on us to share the good news of Jesus with everyone, even "those people."

Day 1: Read Jonah 1:1-2

As Christians, our call to love others and share the good news of Jesus is clear and unmistakable. Think of a time when you felt God's clear, distinct direction or calling for your mission. What was that like? Did you initially know it was God? How so? What was your response?

Day 2: Read Jonah 1:3

Jonah's call to go to Nineveh was clear and unmistakable. He knew it was from the Lord, but his response is telling. Jonah attempted to flee the presence of the Lord. When have you abandoned a clear direction from God or rejected His intervention in and around your life? What did you do? How did you attempt to flee from God's work? What happened?

Day 3: Read Jonah 1:4-6

In this passage, the pagans showed more concern for the lives of others than Jonah, the one man appointed by God to go and call the horrific, oppressive city of Nineveh to repentance so that they might experience the Lord's compassion. In verse 6, ironically, Jonah has to be woken and summoned to prayer by a pagan sailor. Reflect on your daily behavior. What areas of your life fail to reflect the transformative works of Jesus? In your life, how do the pagans, people who don't yet know Jesus, show more righteous behavior or concern for others than you?



Day 4: Re-Read Jonah 1:4-6

The pagan sailors are terrified, crying out to their gods, looking for rescue and divine intervention. Jonah was taking it easy, sleeping heavily down inside the ship. Reflect on your own behavior. In what ways are we like Jonah, asleep at the wheel while a lost world panics and desperately searches for hope and truth? As Christians, we know the one source of salvation. Too often, we disregard the dire need of people to know Jesus; instead of speaking up and getting involved, we often expect someone else to minister. In what ways are you currently deferring responsibility to tell people about Jesus? What needs to change?

Day 5: Read Jonah 1:7-16

The situation for everyone in this story is dire. The sailors, now knowing Jonah was fleeing the Almighty God who made the sea and land, desperately asked Jonah for a solution. Jonah told them to throw him into the sea, ensuring his death. Think about this in the context of sin. When have you had a Jonah moment of realization - a time when you experienced the consequences of sinful behavior or disobeying God's calling/purpose/mission for your life?

Day 6: Re-Read Jonah 1:11-16

When the men threw Jonah overboard, the storm calmed and the men feared, or reverently worshipped, this God they just came to know. When have you experienced peace after obeying God's call? What confirmation did you encounter from God after you made the hard decision? Has it strengthened your trust in God? Explain.

Day 7: Read Psalm 146

Think about this psalm in the context of everything we just read about Jonah. We see a very clear picture of God's character: maker of heaven and earth, freeing prisoners, perfect judge, healer, compassionate and protector. As a Hebrew, Jonah knows (and is the result of) God's unfailing goodness to His creation. In the passages we read, Jonah doesn't share what he knows about the goodness of God with the people who were desperate to know. Reflect on God's character, authority and glory. Tell Him what you've seen, felt and heard. Now go tell others!