

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- **Giving Away My Faith**

“I give away my faith to fulfill God’s purposes.”

- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

Jonah- the name conjures images of a man in a whale and often stirs debates about fact or fiction in the Bible. Even though I am convinced that this account is true and credible, a man in a fish is really not the main point of this book. I pray that as you dig into this new study, you’ll come to see that the main character in this story isn’t a man named Jonah, nor is it a big fish, or even a city called Ninevah. As you enter in, keep this question in mind: Just who is this book primarily about? As you wrestle with that, I believe that the message will come into clearer focus.

In Him,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Monday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to give you insight into His Word and its application in your life.

We will spend the next four weeks looking at Jonah.

Read Jonah 1-4.

Jonah is not just a fairy tale told to illustrate a truth. The validity of the events is affirmed elsewhere in scripture. Read the following passages. Next to each reference note how the passage validates the accuracy of the events of Jonah.

- 2 Kings 14:25-
- Matthew 12:39-41-
- Luke 11:29-30, 32-

Location: Spend a few moments studying this map:

<http://www.keyway.ca/htm2002/ancassy.htm> of the Assyrian Empire. God called Jonah to leave Samaria and go to Nineveh. Instead Jonah headed for Joppa, a nearby seaport and boarded a ship bound for Tarshish, a port on the coast of Spain. Tarshish was approximately two thousand miles in the opposite direction of where God had called him to go!

Nineveh: “Archaeology confirms the biblical reference to the wickedness of the Assyrians. They were well known in the ancient world for brutality and cruelty. Ashurbanipal, the grandson of the Assyrian leader Sennacherib, was accustomed to tearing off the lips and hands of his victims. Tiglath-Pleser flayed victims alive and made great piles of their skulls. Jonah’s reluctance to travel to Nineveh may have been due to its infamous violence.” (Taken from: Smith, B.K. & Page, F.S. (2001) *The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to make you sensitive to His call and willing to be obedient even in the face of opposition.

Tuesday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to speak to you and prompt you to action through the truth of His Word.

Read Jonah 1:1-3.

Where does God call Jonah to go and what does He call him to do?

What was Jonah’s response to the Lord?

The phrase “the word of the Lord” is used seven times in these four short chapters. To what does this phrase refer?

What does Jonah’s response seem to reveal about his attitude toward God or understanding of His ways?

Think of a time when you have been prompted by God to share about Christ. What was your response? What did your response demonstrate about the way you view God?

God has given each of us explicit direction through scripture to share Christ with those around us. We have received the Word of the Lord. Ask God to speak to you today and make you sensitive to this calling in your life to give away your faith.

Wednesday

Who did you notice yesterday in your life as someone who needs Christ? How did God prompt you in sharing about Christ through words, actions and your prayers for this person? How did you respond?

Read Jonah 1:1-6; reread verses 4-6.

Who sent the storm? What does this show us about God's character?

What were the sailors' responses to the storm; Jonah's response?

God had called Jonah and given him a mission. When Jonah acted in absolute disobedience, God responded by sending a storm. Even then the sailors recognized the need for spiritual intervention while Jonah slept.

"There is extreme irony here: a "heathen sea captain" pleaded with a Hebrew prophet to pray to his God. It is sobering to see someone who might be termed as an "unbeliever" pleading for spiritual action on the part of a "believer." It is a sad commentary when those who are committed to the truth of Gods Word have to be prodded by a lost world into spiritual activity." (Taken from: Smith, B.K. & Page, F.S. (2001) The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

Are there ways that you are being lulled to sleep towards disobedience to God? How is God inviting you to be actively involved in God's mission to spread His truth to the world around you?

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to search your heart to root out any apathy and awaken you to the reality of the storm around you and unbelievers who need spiritual intervention.

Thursday

How have you become more aware to the spiritual need around you? Ask God to deepen your heart for His mission.

Read Jonah 1:1-10; reread verses 7-10.

"The casting of lots was a widely used method in the ancient Near East. Most commonly lots were either stones or pebbles that were painted or colored. When the stones were thrown, if two dark sides landed up the answer was no, if two light sides landed up the answer was yes and one dark and one light meant the stones had to be thrown again. This specific means of discerning the Lord's will is found many times in scripture (Joshua 7:14-18; Joshua 18:10, 1 Samuel 10:20-22). As Proverbs 16:33 says, the lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord." (Taken from: Smith, B.K. & Page, F.S. (2001) The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

- What did casting lots reveal to the sailors?
- Jonah identifies himself in two ways, what are they?
- Why did Jonah describe the Lord to the sailors the way he did? What impact did this description have on the sailors?

Jonah acknowledges to the sailors that he worships the Lord that is the supreme creator of all the earth; however, his actions have betrayed this knowledge. Spend a few moments asking God to examine your life. How are your actions confirming or hiding your knowledge of God?

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to reveal to you any areas of disobedience as well as faithfulness. Where you have hidden who God is, confess this as sin to God and ask Him to change you. Praise Him for where you have been faithful.

Friday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to reveal any sin in your heart that keeps you from being used for His purposes.

Read Jonah 1:1-16; reread verses 11-16.

What actions do the sailors take in this passage? What insight do these actions give us into their belief in God?

What does Jonah acknowledge in these verses?

When Jonah is thrown overboard, the raging sea grows calm. Spend a few moments meditating on this truth: God is powerful enough to start a storm and stop it whenever He desires. What responses are stirred in you when you think about this truth?

God brings a storm into Jonah's life to thwart his disobedience. God may not bring a storm into our lives, but we must not be fooled into thinking that this demonstrates ignorance on God's part. He knows of our disobedience. God has called every one of us to a mission of sharing His name with the lost. How are you fully engaged in this mission? Are you hiding your disobedience to this call, hoping that God won't notice?

Close your time in honest repentance before God, asking Him to give you a renewed perspective and purpose fully engaged in His mission.