



Not THAT! | Not THIS: The Cost of Fleeing Your Call | Week 2 | November 11, 2018

Jonah 1:4-2:10

Opening: Pastor Dan Meyer speaks this week on the consequences of Jonah's response to his call to Nineveh. Jonah, by his action, said "Not THAT!". That decision had consequences.

Context: Last week we tried to get our heads around the "ask" that God had made of Jonah—his call. We learned how repulsive and barbaric the Assyrian reputation was. We began to feel the fear and despair that Jonah may have felt facing such a request from God. This week we will look into Jonah's thoughts as he tries to "flee the Lord".

Jonah's Rationalization: What was he thinking—Jonah, a prophet of Israel, was "Fleeing the Lord".

We all have the experience of turning from something hard toward something pleasant. Usually that's life. But sometimes it's "fleeing". When that voice appears, that inner feeling of conviction, we eventually notice. "Something's not right" or "that was not good" we think. *Describe an experience you have had where you turned away from something difficult and then began to doubt your action. What did you do? How did it turn out?*

Jonah's Reality: Pastor Meyer used this abridged version of Jonah's prayer (Jonah 2:2-6):

"In my distress I called to the LORD.... From the depths of the grave I called for help....{For} You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.... 'I have been banished from your sight..... the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head....To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever.

What emotions does this picture bring up in you?

Pastor Meyer touched on words like: black, darkness, trapped, despondency, acute abandonment, oblivion.... *Have you ever been close to this place?*

"Nineveh's" can turn us inward: Pastor Meyer carefully led us through examples that can turn us inward and away from God: loss of a person or capacity, anger or grief, an untended responsibility hanging out there too long, a deep haunting guilt. We are not meant to bear these alone on the inside. (Read Matt 18: 20). *Do you have a burden that is recurrently weighing on you that you are holding inside? Is it long term and unchanging? Can you talk about it?* Find someone to talk to and with whom you can pray. God does not want us to be alone. Jonah responded to his trial in the sea by first returning his thoughts to God. If you need help contact Pastor Rick Glyman.



What has God done to redeem Jonah? Can we “count it all joy when we encounter various trials” (Ja 1: 2-4)? God used miraculous trials to bring Jonah back to his call to Nineveh.

Read Jonah 2:2—3:3. In his deepest despair what is Jonah’s thought (vs.7)? He ends his prayer with thanksgiving—what is he thankful for (vs. 8-9)?

Jonah’s thoughts from inside the fish start with God (vs.2). He ends with thanksgiving for God’s grace and a sacrifice of praise and promises (vs. 8-9). *Can we turn our trials back to God that quickly? Why or why not?*

Our Nineveh and the impact of Trial: God had no trouble getting the sailors attention, they knew how remarkable a trial the storm was for them and began to look for remarkable reasons. *What trial are you enduring or running from that may have a remarkable source? Is God calling you to respond differently, to stop enduring or running, and shape something new?*

Sometimes we understand what God is doing by the results it is producing in our life. *Is your trial (above) making you new and growing you up or is it trapping you like Jonah in the bottom of the sea? How might God be asking you to respond differently to change that? Talk about your thoughts from “inside the fish”?*

Practice of the Week: Ask God to show you your Nineveh

God wants us to see the opportunities for entering life with Him that are around us every day. Think of the circumstances you face each day that could be a Nineveh call. Are there issues around you that occur frequently and repeatedly that strike something inside of you? Do you question your responses? What different responses could there be? Ask God to show you if He is giving you a call to speak His word of equity or fairness or compassion on behalf of others (or yourself). Go slow and listen well, be sure that you and God are together.

Family Formation: The Waters were Dark and Deep

Revisit last week’s prayers..... This week, read Jonah’s prayer in the **abridged text** shown above. Talk about the “picture” it paints. Then read the full version from the Bible. Ask the kids to say how it’s different and how they feel about each version. What’s the difference?

Additional Resources: *“A Fish Out of Water”* By Ravi Zacharias—a CD or DVD on Jonah
“Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness” By William Styron--for those who wish to understand better the condition of depression.

We’d love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

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