

PART 2

JONAH

*The Scandal
of Grace*

FOX VALLEY

Seventh-day Adventist
Community Church





Introduction - Jonah 1:4-16

But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. 5 Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship.

But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold. 6 So the captain went down after him. "How can you sleep at a time like this?" he shouted. "Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to us and spare our lives."

7 Then the crew cast lots to see which of them had offended the gods and caused the terrible storm. When they did this, the lots identified Jonah as the culprit. 8 "Why has this awful storm come down on us?" they demanded. "Who are you? What is your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?"

9 Jonah answered, "I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."

10 The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already told them he was running away from the Lord. "Oh, why did you do it?" they groaned. 11 And since the storm was getting worse all the time, they asked him, "What should we do to you to stop this storm?"

12 "Throw me into the sea," Jonah said, "and it will become calm again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault."

13 Instead, the sailors rowed even harder to get the ship to the land. But the stormy sea was too violent for them, and they couldn't make it.

14 Then they cried out to the Lord, Jonah's God. "O Lord," they pleaded, "don't make us die for this man's sin. And don't hold us responsible for his death. O Lord, you have sent this storm upon him for your own good reasons."

15 Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea, and the storm stopped at once! 16 The sailors were awestruck by the Lord's great power, and they offered him a sacrifice and vowed to serve him. up to the series Jonah - the scandal of grace. Use it throughout the week for your own growth and reflection on the God almighty



Day One

In the book of Jonah, he finds himself twice in close encounter with people who are racially and religiously different to him. In both cases he is dismissive and unhelpful. This weeks passage is the first instance in which Jonah interacts with a group of people who are different to him.

Many look at the book of Jonah and observe that the gospel is to be taken to foreign lands. Whilst this is true, there is certainly a fuller and deeper meaning in this book. God wants his followers to treat people of different races and religions with respect, love fairness.

The contrast between Jonah and the sailors is a constant throughout this weeks passage. The sailors actions are the type of behaviour expected from a faithful prophet.

Questions

Have you ever had a situation where a non-believer called you out on sinful actions?

Jonah runs away from God's call and it feels as though creation itself is sabotaging his escape. Have you ever felt as though the world is conspiring against you?

How do you deal with that situation? Do you escape your issues like Jonah?



Day Two

When the storm began the mariners were terrified, yet Jonah slept. Many of us know about that desire to sleep, to escape the reality we are facing. Jonah was exhausted and drained by the emotions he would have experienced when he decided to disobey God. Whilst asleep he wasn't aware of the danger he was in, ironically the pagan sailors were well aware of what was going on and realised that there was something spiritual going on. Jonah does not pray, whilst the sailors pray to their gods. They also are open to calling on Jonah's God which shows that they aren't narrow-minded or bigoted.

Read Mark 4:35-41.

Questions

Are we sometimes unaware of what is going on in the world? How can we change our mentality from self centred to being aware of the perils of others?

How did Jonah react in the storm compared to how Jesus reacted?

How can you increase your spiritual awareness so that you aren't caught sleeping in the storm?



Day Three

God calls Jonah to arise and go to Nineveh (a pagan city) to tell them about God. Yet on the ship in the middle of the storm it is the Pagans who are directing Jonah towards God. The captain of the ship uses the same word God used in his call to Jonah, to awaken Jonah from his slumber. I can just imagine the scene of Jonah in his slumber hearing the call to arise. The captain urges Jonah to turn to his God.

There is extreme irony here: a "heathen sea captain" pleaded with a Hebrew prophet to pray to his God. It is sobering to see one who might be termed an "unbeliever" pleading for spiritual action on the part of a "believer." The "unbeliever" saw the gravity of the situation while the prophet slept. It is a sad commentary when those who are committed to the truth of God's word have to be prodded by a lost world into spiritual activity.

Questions

Who are the "captains" and "sailors" in your life today? How can we as a church respond to these people?

Jonah's disobedience put the lives of others in danger. When has your disobedience had an impact on those around you?



Day Four

The sailors on board the ship along with the captain had every right to judge Jonah in his commitment to the common good. The whole ship is in danger and after exhausting all their resources into trying to save everyone on board the captain and the sailors realise that it is not enough. The captain's frustration at Jonah to arise and pray indicated that they sense that everyone on board needs help from Jonah, but he is sleeping.

At the time of writing this the world is in the middle of the COVID-19 storm. Both Christians and non-Christians are in danger of that storm. The bible tells us that we are co-humans with all people made in his image.

Tim Keller in his book about Jonah puts it like this:

“Jonah is not bringing the resources of his faith to bear on the suffering of his fellow citizens. He is not telling them how to get a relationship with the God of the universe. Nor is he, relying on his own spiritual resources in God, simply loving and serving the practical needs of his neighbours. God commands all believers to do both things, but he is doing neither. His private faith is of no public good.”

Questions

What is God teaching Jonah in this part of the story, which in turn is teaching us?

What resources do we have that could benefit the world right now?

JONAH 1:4-16 - WEEK TWO



Read Matthew 5:16 - The world will not see who Jesus is if we don't live as we ought too. Do we deserve to be criticised if we do not show God's love in practical ways?



Day Five

It is obvious that the sailors and the captain are using God's wisdom in the middle of this storm. When non believers display this type of wisdom it is called 'common grace'. The ship was in grave danger yet the sailors never cried 'its not fair', even when they discover that they are in danger because of Jonah they dig in and try to save him. They never follow in self pity or seek vengeance on Jonah.

James 1:17 - Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

When we see something good in the world it is an undeserved gift of God's grace. What this means is that we should be humble and respectful towards those who do not share our faith, yet are doing good in the world.

Questions

How did God use Jonah's disobedience to save the sailors? What hope does this give you concerning your past disobediences?

What does it take for you to acknowledge your disobedience?
