



new life fellowship

**Sermon Title: Jonah: Running from God**

**Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor**

**Scripture: Jonah 1:1-17**

<sup>1</sup> The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry out against it, because their wickedness has come up before Me.” <sup>3</sup> But Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship that was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and <sup>4</sup> boarded it to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> However, the LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea, so that the ship was about to <sup>5</sup> break up. <sup>5</sup> Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried out to his <sup>6</sup> god, and they hurled the <sup>7</sup> cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten <sup>8</sup> it for them. But Jonah had gone below into the stern of the ship, had lain down, and fallen sound asleep. <sup>6</sup> So the captain approached him and said, “How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps *your* god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.”

<sup>7</sup> And each man said to his mate, “Come, let’s cast lots so that we may <sup>8</sup> find out on whose account this catastrophe *has struck* us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. <sup>8</sup> Then they said to him, “Tell us, now! On whose account *has* this catastrophe *struck* us? What is your occupation, and where do you come from? What is your country, and from what people are you?” <sup>9</sup> So he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.”

<sup>10</sup> Then the men became extremely afraid, and they said to him, “<sup>11</sup> How could you do this?” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. <sup>11</sup> So they said to him, “What should we do to you so that the sea will become calm <sup>12</sup> for us?”—for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy. <sup>12</sup> And he said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm <sup>13</sup> for you, because I know that on account of me this great storm *has come* upon you.” <sup>13</sup> However, the men <sup>14</sup> rowed *desperately* to return to land, but they could not, because the sea was becoming *even* stormier against them. <sup>14</sup> Then they cried out to the LORD and said, “We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life, and do not put innocent blood on us; for You, LORD, have done as You pleased.”

<sup>15</sup> So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. <sup>16</sup> Then the men became extremely afraid of the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

<sup>17</sup> <sup>17</sup> And the LORD designated a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish for three days and three nights. (NASB)

### **Sermon Outline:**

The book of Jonah offers us incredible truths about our lives with one another and with God. Jonah’s story is our story. God calls us, but like Jonah we have a way of running. The Spiritual Life is one where we need to run long distances when it comes to answer the call of God. God calls us to do hard things and it is often through these difficult things that God brings healing to our lives and glory to his name.

Jonah is a prophet who was asked to go preach to the people of Ninevah. Instead, he tried to flee to Tarshish away from the presence of the Lord. The Hebrews reading this at this time would have been laughing, as they knew that you could not run from the presence of the Lord. There is no where that God is not present in our lives.

Two reasons why Jonah goes the other way:

- Fear. Jonah was afraid of the leadership of Ninevah.
- Despises the people of Ninevah. Jonah was afraid that God would forgive the people of Ninevah.

Instead of Jonah answering the call of God, he would rather die than do what God had instructed him to do. Jonah ends up being rebuked by the sailors when he should have been preaching to them instead. Even though Jonah did everything wrong, God still used Jonah to bring those he encountered to become believers and followers of God.

Three lessons we are to learn from the beginning of Jonah:

- Running from God's call is a universal struggle
- Our private decisions tend to have a larger impact on others
- God works for good despite our failures

Jonah sleeps // Jesus Sleeps  
Captain wakes up Jonah // Disciples wake up Jesus  
The Sailors ask Jonah Questions // The Disciples ask Jesus a question  
The sea was rough // The sea was rough  
The Sailors row hard // The Disciples row hard  
Jonah is thrown off and the wind is calmed // Jesus stands up and calms the wind  
The Sailors are in awe // The Disciples are in awe

Jesus is an anti-Jonah. Jonah runs away from the will of God seeking to preserve himself. Jesus walks toward the will of God sacrificing his life for us.

The question for us to answer is: "Is it my will, or is it God's will?"

### **Sermon Summary:**

This Sunday, Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor, begins our Lenten sermon series through the book of Jonah, one of the most familiar books in all the Bible. Pastor Rich kicks off our series focusing on the ways Jonah tries to flee from the Lord, and the ways we do the same.

### **Sermon Questions:**

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, were you the type to run away from uncomfortable or difficult situations? Or were you able to step into those situations and have those hard conversations to work through the difficulty? Do you see how this could inform the way you run from God today? Set aside some time this week to journal your answers to these questions, offering them up to God.
3. What or who are you running from? Are you running from using the gifts, talents, and passions that God has given you instead of using them for his glory and in the service of others? Share your answers to these questions in your small group or with a trusted brother/sister in Christ.
4. Do you need to pay more attention to the decisions you are making, knowing that your decisions have implications for those around you as well as yourself? Offer this up to the Lord, asking for forgiveness where you might need it regarding your past decisions which have impacted others.
5. Where do you feel the Holy Spirit guiding you? Are you going to live doing your will or God's will? Can you have those hard conversations that might be challenging or difficult, are you be more vulnerable with your family or a trusted friend, or maybe you need to speak out against the injustice you see taking place in our world?