

**The 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, June 26, 2016**  
**“Unsung Heroes: Great Lessons From the Lesser Known ~**  
**Jonah: Returning to God**  
**Jonah 1:1-17**

**THREE IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE BOOK OF JONAH**

- It is a \_\_\_\_\_ story. It is only 4 \_\_\_\_\_; 48 \_\_\_\_\_ and just over \_\_\_\_\_ words. It is a compelling story about the power and \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
- It is a \_\_\_\_\_ story. Contrary to some scholars, critics and skeptics, I believe that this story is \_\_\_\_\_ truth.

“An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Luke 11:29)

- It is a \_\_\_\_\_ story. It is so much more than just a \_\_\_\_\_ and there is a lot that we can learn from it about God and ourselves.

**JONAH’S 5 STAGE RETURN TO GOD**

**Stage #1: God’s \_\_\_\_\_.**

“The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai, saying, ‘Go to the great city of Ninevah and preach against it because its wickedness has come up before Me.’” (Jonah 1:1)

It’s not the message that was strange, but rather the \_\_\_\_\_.

The Assyrians had a reputation for \_\_\_\_\_ and Ninevah was a \_\_\_\_\_ city

In this first stage that we always have a \_\_\_\_\_. God gives us the \_\_\_\_\_ of either accepting His plan or rejecting it.

\_\_\_\_\_ lies at the heart of creation—God’s given us free will to choose right or wrong; good or evil.

Whatever choice we make, there will be \_\_\_\_\_.

So often we blame God for the \_\_\_\_\_ in our lives and for the

tragedies we see in the world, when in reality they’re nothing more than the consequences—the natural outcomes—of our \_\_\_\_\_.

**What is your Nineveh? What is that thing that God wants you to do that you don’t? How well have you embraced God’s will for your life? What has been the consequences of your choices?**

Stage # 2: Jonah’s \_\_\_\_\_.

“But Jonah ran away from the Lord and he headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.” (Jonah 1:3)

Jonah had no desire to go to Ninevah and preach God’s word of repentance to them—He wanted them to \_\_\_\_\_ for their wrong doing—he wanted them to get what they \_\_\_\_\_.

Jonah’s decision not to go to Ninevah may not have been \_\_\_\_\_ rebellion, but it was \_\_\_\_\_ nonetheless

Indifference, lukewarm commitment, and just plain \_\_\_\_\_ can also be rebellion.

Every step out of God’s will is ultimately a \_\_\_\_\_ step. Jonah’s problem wasn’t with Ninevah—it was with \_\_\_\_\_!

**Have you ever run away from God? What has been your Tarshish? Where do you run to when God calls?**

**Stage #3: Jonah’s \_\_\_\_\_.**

“Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.” (Jonah 1:4)

Because when we run from God, we’re only heading for \_\_\_\_\_. It may be immediate or it may be delayed, but you can count on it.

Every time we run from God, there is a \_\_\_\_\_—there is a price tag for \_\_\_\_\_ God’s will and choosing our own way

Verse 12 tells us that the storm got so violent, the ship was about to crash, so Jonah says; “Pick me up and throw me into the sea and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

Whenever we go against God’s plan for our life we’re not the \_\_\_\_\_

who suffers.

**What have been the storms in your life? How have the consequences of your choices hurt you and others?**

**Stage #4: Jonah's** \_\_\_\_\_.

Things were definitely not going as Jonah had \_\_\_\_\_. So, what's the first thing he does when his life falls apart? He \_\_\_\_\_.

"From inside the fish, Jonah prayed." (Jonah 2:1)

After all that running, Jonah realized the \_\_\_\_\_ of his ways and prayed; "In my distress I called to the Lord and He answered me. And from the depths of the grave I called to Him for help." (Jonah 2:2)

Sometimes we have to hit \_\_\_\_\_ before we're willing to ask God for help. That's what happened to Jonah—the bottom had to fall out before God could get his \_\_\_\_\_.

There's nowhere that we can run that God can't \_\_\_\_\_ us.

**What has been the giant fish in your life? What has God used to get through to you?**

**Stage #5: Jonah's** \_\_\_\_\_.

"And the Lord commanded the fish and it vomited Jonah out onto dry land." (Jonah 2:10)

The story of Jonah reminds us that God never \_\_\_\_\_. He is always ready to \_\_\_\_\_ us home when we return to Him

In the raging of the storm, and as he sank to the depths of the sea, Jonah expected \_\_\_\_\_ as a consequence of his sin and disobedience.

However, beneath the surface, while God held the storm of His \_\_\_\_\_ in His left hand, with His right hand He had prepared \_\_\_\_\_ and deliverance.

The great fish was a sign of God's \_\_\_\_\_—the instrument of God's \_\_\_\_\_—a rescue that was nothing less than a \_\_\_\_\_ from the dead for Jonah.

"Then the word of the Lord came unto Jonah a second time. Go to the great city of

Ninevah and proclaim the message I give you." (Jonah 3:1)

The word of God came to Jonah a second time—this is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God in action.

Great things happen when we \_\_\_\_\_ with God and live within His \_\_\_\_\_ and purpose.

**What second chances has God given to you? How have you experienced God's gift of restoration?**

Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wand'ring from the fold of God.  
He to rescue me from danger,  
interposed His precious blood.  
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love.  
O to grace how great a debtor  
daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,  
bind my wandering heart to thee.

This song illustrates how quickly we are prone to \_\_\_\_\_—and how far we can go. I think how easy it is to \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves and others when we've stepped out of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

## TWO REASONS WHY WE WANDER

- \_\_\_\_\_. We think we \_\_\_\_\_ more than God. We think we know what's \_\_\_\_\_ for our life.
- \_\_\_\_\_. We are afraid of what God \_\_\_\_\_.

Real success comes from knowing \_\_\_\_\_ for our lives and being right in the \_\_\_\_\_ of it.

Jonah's story teaches us that \_\_\_\_\_ in the past doesn't release us from \_\_\_\_\_ in the present. God is a God of second \_\_\_\_\_.

**The message of Jonah is simple: If you've been running from God, stop! turn around and run back to Him. Open your life to Him and He promises to fill you with a new purpose, a new plan, and a new peace.**