

Jonah 1-4

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[0:00] Go ahead and open to the book of Jonah, if you will. Book of Jonah. Before we get into our text this morning, there is something that I felt needed to be addressed.

! It might be a little awkward, but I just thought this can't go without being spoken about. So I just want you all to know, because many of you have asked me, many of you have come to me throughout this past couple weeks since the last time I preached and have asked me, did you actually say sweet Moses in the middle of your sermon?

And I just want to clear the air and say that that did come out of my mouth. That just kind of happened. So there was that. I don't know what's going to fly out today, but if you think I said it, I probably said it.

So there you go. But yeah, Jonah, we're going to be going through the whole book this morning, which might sound like a lot, but it's actually not that much. We're going to be starting verse one. And before we get into the text, I just wanted to set a little bit of the historical backdrop to Jonah, because it's important to understanding what is going on in this book.

[1:07] So Jonah lived during the prosperous reign of King Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom. So Israel during this time was split in two.

There was the northern kingdom, which was called Israel, made up of ten tribes. And in the south, you had the southern kingdom, the kingdom of Judah, made up of two tribes. So Jonah's in the north.

And for the northern kingdom, this was a time of material, earthly blessing. They were really rich, really affluent, doing really well. They boasted in their tall walls and their security, which you can read a lot about that in Amos.

But their sin was rampant. And if you recall, we went through Daniel recently. So this is pre-Daniel. This is pre-exile, pre-punishment for their sin.

And the book of Amos, the prophet Amos, he's preaching in this time, around the time that Jonah would have lived in the northern kingdom. And Amos is calling out Israel for its sin.

[2:07] Amos 4.1 records the word of the Lord, and God says of Israel during this time, he says, Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, bring that we may drink.

The Lord God has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, Israel, when they, the Babylonians, shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fish hooks.

And you shall go out through the breaches, each one straight ahead, and you shall be cast out into Harmon, declares the Lord. So between Amos and many of the other prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and so on, we know that Israel during this time could be described as a time of false worship, a time of debauchery, a time of licentiousness, false worship, adultery, drunkenness, pride, and so on.

And recall as well that God's constant threat to punish Israel was initially going to be by the hands of the Assyrians, not the Babylonians.

And this sets the stage for the book of Jonah so we can read together, starting in verse 1, chapter 1. And I'm going to read this text and kind of explain it as we go through the entire book.

[3:24] So lock in with me here. But starting in verse 1, Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.

But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence.

of the Lord. So now the word of the Lord came, and when did it come? It came to Jonah during this time of sin in Israel. All the pre-exilic prophets preached to Israel and Judah, appealing to them to repent of their sin except Jonah.

Jonah was called to go to Nineveh, which was the crown jewel city of the Assyrian Empire, the very empire which Jonah's contemporaries were prophesying would destroy Israel.

And what was Jonah's response? Well, he fled, and not only did he flee, but he fled in the opposite direction of Nineveh by choosing Tarshish of all places.

[4 : 40] And this is especially interesting because throughout the Old Testament, it's well-documented that Israelites were afraid of the sea. So Jonah is choosing a route that he'd have to cross the sea to get to his destination.

And the reason they feared the sea was multifaceted. One was the sea creature Leviathan mentioned in the book of Job. Another was that the Philistines likely attacked Israel from the sea when they first made contact.

More importantly, though, the sea was viewed as a symbol of hell, a symbol of chaos. And this is likely due to the flood in Genesis. And this is why throughout the Old Testament, you'll constantly see writers refer to the sea as the abyss.

And the significance of this is that Jonah chooses to go through this chaos, this hell, this place of taboo, the abyss, before he was willing to obey God.

Now, some have interpreted this by explaining what a cruel city Nineveh was and that Jonah was afraid of what the Assyrians might do to him because they were just the worst.

[5 : 49] But that is not supported by the text. Rather, it seems that Jonah was willing to go through all this trouble to avoid the will of the Lord.

Already, we have seen the author mention twice that Jonah fled, not Nineveh, but he fled from the presence of the Lord in verse 3. He's fleeing God.

Now, some of you might be wondering, doesn't Jonah know that God is omnipresent, meaning that God is everywhere at all times? You would think as a prophet he would have this one down.

But apparently, Jonah has forgotten. And this is not surprising during his time. In his day, every pagan nation had this concept of their gods being restrained to their territory.

This is why they always make reference to battle. Our gods prevailed this day because the gods wanted to gain a new territory. And Jonah's time, Israel was infested with pagan religion, so it's not a far stretch to assume that he probably confused himself, to say the least, that he probably thought in some sense God was restrained to physical Israel.

[7 : 04] But God does not let Jonah go and God is not constrained by some border. Picking back up in verse 4 of chapter 1, so Jonah's on his way, he's fleeing the Lord, and verse 4, but the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea.

And there was a mighty tempest on the sea so that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid and each cried out to his God. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them.

But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had laid down and was fast asleep. So the captain came and said to him, What do you mean, you sleeper?

Arise, call out to your God. Perhaps the God will give us a thought that we may not perish. And they said to one another, Come, let us cast lots that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.

And so they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation and where do you come from?

[8 : 14] What is your country? And of what people are you? And he said to them, I am a Hebrew. I fear the Lord, the God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.

Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, What is this that you have done? For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord because he had told them.

Again, he's not fleeing Nineveh, he's fleeing God. In verse 11, Then they said to him, What shall we do to you that the sea may quiet down for us? For the sea grew more and more tempestuous.

And he said to them, Pick me up and hurl me into the sea. Then the sea will quiet down for you. For I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.

Nevertheless, the men rode hard to get back to dry land, but they could not. For the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. Therefore, they called out to the Lord, O Lord, let us not

perish for this man's life and lay not on us innocent blood for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.

[9 : 18] So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.

And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Now this section is chock full of irony.

So we have these pagan Gentile sailors who were much afraid of the storm of God's working while the Hebrew Israelite in the midst of the storm chooses to hide in the inner part of the ship.

Verse 5, Jonah is still ignoring God. Ironically, the prophet Jonah whose job it is to encourage people to call out to God in repentance is being commanded by pagans to call out to his God.

Even these pagans recognize that this storm is divine judgment and that they will perish. Verse 6, Proverbs 16, 33 says, The lot is cast into the lap but its every decision is from the Lord.

[10 : 32] And we saw that these pagan men who did not know God, who did not worship God, it would seem that these pagans were familiar with Proverbs or other Old Testament passages that speak on casting lots.

In verse 7, we see them cast lots to determine on whose account the storm has come upon them. And the lot fell on Jonah and the pagans knew that Jonah was guilty and that Jonah was the reason for the storm.

So they question him and his response is such garbage. What does he say? He says, you know, they want to know who are you, what's your occupation? He says, I'm a Hebrew.

That's his first response. I'm a Hebrew. He's very proud of his national heritage, his identity as one who fears the Lord. And which Lord? The Lord that is better than the pagan's God because this Lord is the creator of land and sea and the God of heaven.

Verse 9. So that's kind of smack talk. We might not catch that in English but, you know, pagans had no problem accepting that Yahweh was real. What they had a problem with was that he was the only God and that he was superior to their God.

[11 : 40] So by saying God of heaven, Jonah's saying, my God is greater than your God. But his response is garbage. I mean, it's theologically sound, it's theologically true, it's biblical.

Jonah clearly has this understanding in his head but not in his heart. Otherwise, he would be obeying the Lord and not trying to run from him.

To truly fear the Lord is to have wisdom, Proverbs 1.7. And if Jonah was wise, he would obey God. And here's more irony. After it becomes plain who Jonah is, the pagans become exceedingly afraid because they recognize that Jonah is fleeing the presence of the Lord.

Verse 10. And they fear the Lord more so than the prophet Jonah. They have more wisdom than Jonah. And in verse 11, the pagans ask a question.

They want to know how can they appease God? They want to know how to end the storm and God's wrath. And Jonah provides the answer. He offers himself up to be thrown into the sea.

[12 : 50] Now, many have interpreted this as a typology of Christ, a symbol of Christ. You know, that he came and died for many so that we might be spared. And this kind of sounds like what Jonah is doing. But I do not think this is the case.

So just note that for now. We're going to come back to that in chapter 4. But for now, notice even more irony in this passage. Jonah did not travel to Nineveh to preach a message of repentance as God had instructed.

Clearly, Jonah did not care about the Ninevites enough. as a Hebrew, he's supposed to be a blessing to the nations and he's not doing that. He's not fulfilling that.

He doesn't care about them. Yet in verse 13, even though Jonah confessed his guiltiness, the pagans rode hard to try to save him before throwing him into the sea.

He offered himself up and they still, nonetheless, tried to save him. They rode hard. And the sailors called Jonah innocent in verse 14, even though he clearly is not.

[13 : 55] And after praying to the God of the Hebrews, the pagans wisely discern that the will of the Lord is for Jonah to be cast into the sea. They say, For you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.

They know who is in control, unlike Jonah. They have more mercy for a foreigner than Jonah does. And the pagans, not Jonah, continue to fear the Lord, verse 16.

They sacrificed to him and they made vows to him. And Jonah was swallowed up by a great fish for three days and three nights before anything else happened.

So notice that up to this point in the narrative, Jonah has done not one single thing that is righteous, that is commendable, that is God-honoring or obedient. Everything he has said and done has been done in disobedience.

And yet, here are Gentiles who progressively recognize God more and more throughout the narrative. These Gentiles seem far more useful to God and honoring to God than this disobedient prophet named Jonah.

[15:07] So let's continue reading chapter 2, verse 1. Then Jonah prayed. So after three days, after three nights, Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying, I call out to the Lord out of my distress and he answered me.

Out of the belly of Sheol I cried and you heard my voice. For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas and the flood, that's judgment language, the flood surrounded me.

All your waves and your billows passed over me. Then I said, I am driven away from your sight, yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.

The waters closed in over me to take my life. The deep surrounded me. Weeds were wrapped about my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever, yet you brought up my life from the pit.

O Lord, my God. When my life was fainting, I remembered the Lord. So he had forgotten the Lord. I remembered the Lord and my prayer came to you into your holy temple.

[16:20] Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. But I, with the voice of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you what I have vowed I will pay.

Salvation belongs to the Lord. And the Lord spoke to the fish and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land. So finally, after three days and three nights of Jonah sitting and doing nothing inside the belly of the great fish, he finally prays.

He's stubborn. In verses one through three, we see Jonah recognize that he is the object of God's judgment. Jonah hates his circumstance.

Again, more irony. Jonah wanted to flee from the presence of the Lord and so the Lord's punishment for Jonah was that Jonah was, verse four, driven away from God's sight. He got what he wanted.

Now this might be new to you, but I want to suggest that this prayer is not an actual prayer of true repentance. Jonah expresses lament over his circumstances in verses two through six, not his sin.

[17:32] There is no mention of his wrongdoing and disobeying God. There is no mention of his sin for not going to Nineveh. There is no mention of him expressing a need for heart change regarding the Ninevites.

He doesn't say, God, soft in my heart so that I might love my enemies. He doesn't even acknowledge it. In fact, there is no mention of Jonah wishing things were different whatsoever except for his circumstances.

Jonah's prayer reveals that he is eager to return to Israel. Twice he mentions the temple, verse four and verse seven. Nowhere does he express a desire to go to Nineveh.

Rather, he simply asserts that he will keep a vow in verse nine, which he likely gave to save his own skin. In many ways, this entire prayer can be summarized by saying this.

Jonah recognized God's sovereignty and realized it was foolish for him to go against it. And two, Jonah recognized that whether he liked it or not, he will submit to it voluntarily or involuntarily.

[18:38] And Jonah's prayer reminds me of Esau. Hebrews 12, 16 through 17 sheds light on Esau. The author of Hebrews says, like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal, for you know that afterward when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent.

Though he sought it with tears. The author of Hebrews is not saying that Esau genuinely sought to repent of his sin. Rather, the author of Hebrews is saying that Esau wanted to repent of his circumstance.

Esau wished he had not given up his birthright and he cried over his inability to regain it, to change his circumstance. repentance. And this is just like Jonah's prayer which is lacking many of the elements of a true repentant prayer.

In Psalm 51, we don't have time to go there, but that is a great example of what genuine repentance looks like. Now, after praying the prayer, there is no clear acknowledgement that God viewed this as genuine repentance.

The closest thing we get to that acknowledgement is verse 10 where God spares Jonah from dying in the belly of the fish. And I know that some of you may not be convinced of my interpretation just yet, that Jonah did not actually repent in his prayer.

[19 : 59] But we'll continue with that theme as we read, picking back up in chapter 3, verse 1. And I think you'll see more clearly why I'm convinced of this. So picking back up in chapter 3, verse 1.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.

So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. And Jonah began to go into the city going a day's journey, and he called out, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them. And the word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, by the decree of the king and his nobles. By the decree of the king and his nobles, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God.

[21 : 22] And let everyone turn from his evil way. Repent is what he's calling for. Let everyone repent. And from the violence that is in his hands, repent. Verse 9, Who knows?

God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger so that we may not perish. And when God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Now this is the happiest moment in the book of Jonah by far. The city legitimately and sincerely repented of their sin. Verse 5, they believed God and fasted.

The repentance in the city was so great, so widespread, it even had legal and governing implications as the king called from mourning and fasting. Verses 7 through 8.

And I love verse 9, The king does not even know with certainty if God would forgive Nineveh and relent of their coming doom. But by faith he and his city repented.

[22 : 27] Now why wouldn't the king know that God would forgive them of their sins? Hadn't Jonah preached a gospel message of hope to Nineveh? But looking back at verse 4, it seems the only thing Jonah wanted to say, the only thing he could bear to say to these pagan Gentiles was, yet 40 days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

He probably had a little smirk on his face when he said it. It strongly indicated that these were the only words in Jonah's entire message. He never calls for repentance. He never explains that God is a forgiving God, slow to anger, abounding, steadfast love.

He never explains any of that. He just lets them know that they're all going to be destroyed soon. And this is why the king asks, who knows? Jonah knows, but Jonah hasn't said a word.

Isaiah 55, verses 10 through 11 says, for as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there, but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater.

This is God speaking. He says, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth. It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

[23 : 48] The word of the Lord is powerful and it can save despite even the worst of messengers. God's word is so powerful in this city that its authority triumphs over the hearts of individuals, the decrees of kings and even rebellious message carriers.

Truly nothing can stop the will of the Lord and so far in the story we have seen miracle after miracle of God working to bring about his will.

In chapter 1, verse 4, God hurled a great wind upon the sea to stop Jonah's travels. In chapter 1, verse 7, God made the lot fall on Jonah to get him overboard.

In chapter 1, verse 15, God stopped the storm. In verse 17, he appointed and controlled a great fish to swallow Jonah yet kept him alive. In chapter 2, verse 10, God made the fish vomit Jonah out.

In chapter 3, verse 10, God made the hearts of Nineveh repent and made them weep over their sin and mourn. We will see even more of God's rule over nature, man, and beast in chapter 4, but already we have ample evidence to say and to see clearly that God is sovereign over all his

creation.

[25 : 10] Jonah was right in verse 9 when he said salvation belongs to the Lord. Verse 9 of chapter 2, sorry. And the Lord will deliver his people even in the most unlikely places with the most unlikely people despite the most disobedient and hypocritical messengers.

Now, I've said that Jonah's prayer was not a prayer of true repentance and we have seen hints of that throughout the text thus far. But this final chapter I think is going to really expose the full ugliness of Jonah's sin and also his motive.

Some of you have probably been wondering if Jonah isn't afraid of the Ninevites then why is he resistant to preaching in Nineveh? What makes him so bent on avoiding Nineveh?

And we'll read the rest of our text picking back up in chapter 4 verse 1. So Jonah's responding to the repentance that just occurred in Nineveh. So verse 1 chapter 4 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was angry and he prayed to the Lord and said O Lord is not this what I said when I was yet in my country?

That is why I made haste to flee for Tarshish for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster.

[26 : 34] Therefore now O Lord please take my life from me for it is better for me to die than to live. And the Lord said Do you do well to be angry? Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there.

He sat under it in the shade till he should see what would become of the city. And the Lord God had appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah that it might be a shade over his head to save him from his discomfort.

So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant but when dawn came up the next day God appointed a worm that attacked the plant so that it withered.

When the sun rose God appointed a scorching east wind and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said it is better for me to die than to live.

But God said to Jonah do you do well to be angry for the plant? And he said yes I do well to be angry angry enough to die. And the Lord said you pity the plant for which you did not labor nor did you make it grow which came into being in a night and perished in a night.

[27 : 47] And should not I pity Nineveh that great city in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also much cattle.

Jonah has got to be the worst missionary and yet most successful missionary of all time. He witnessed to a city of what some think was actually six hundred thousand in number that's because they take that hundred and twenty thousand number and say that means children.

Regardless it's a big city and they all repent and yet he was exceedingly displeased and angry. I can't imagine him at like a Baptist mission board meeting where everybody's like oh we had twenty baptisms this week and him you know like to be upset I mean my goodness and this right here this is solid evidence that his heart has not truly been turned he still did not want to see the Ninevites saved notice this Jonah did not flee the Lord because he was afraid of Nineveh but rather he fled the Lord because he knew God would save Nineveh that they would become his brothers and sisters in Christ to borrow from the New Testament verse 2 and he prayed to the Lord and said oh Lord is not this what I said when I was yet in my country this is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish for I knew I knew that you were a gracious God and merciful I've never heard of anybody complain that God's gracious and merciful so we answered the question of why

Jonah fled the presence of the Lord he did not want to go to Nineveh and see them receive grace and so then we get asked the next question why wouldn't Jonah want Nineveh to be saved and many today would interpret this as pure nationalism or some type of racism or some combination of the two that shouldn't surprise us we live in a day where you can't buy syrup without people assuming racial prejudice and background but that's the interpretation many make today but I think Jonah's anger his displeasure is much deeper than these things though they might have played a role possibly but I think ultimately Jonah was questioning God's commitment to keep his covenant with Israel so again recall the historical context and place yourself in Jonah's shoes is the only way I can be sympathetic towards him he lives in a time when Amos and Hosea are condemning Israel and prophesying coming judgment that judgment was prophesied to come by the hands of the Assyrians the Ninevites and now your God has stubbornly says I'm a Hebrew excuse me I misread now your God is commanding you to go and preach a salvific message to your enemies while God

is also sending prophets to condemn your country your people Israel this is why Jonah has a lot of this nationalistic language as some interpret it right this is why he says I'm a Hebrew in chapter one this is why he longs to return to the temple in chapter two this is why he constantly refers to his country in chapter four because Jonah feels as though God is turning his back on Israel for the sake of another people Jonah is jealous and he's consumed with his identity as a son of Abraham a son of Jacob and a son of Isaac his entire identity as a Hebrew is likely losing its foundation in his mind he doesn't like that God is about to judge Israel and he doesn't like that God is about to save [31 : 26] Gentiles and so Jonah expresses four times that he would rather die verse 3 8 and 9 in chapter 4 four times I would rather die it's better for me to die I'd rather die than live and this is why Jonah wanted to be tossed in the sea in chapter one because he thought if he was dead then he would not see Nineveh repent we are literally reading him unravel and God rhetorically asked Jonah in verse four do you do well to be angry and the obvious answer being no he does not do well but Jonah is still not giving up hope he sets a booth up outside Nineveh hoping to see Nineveh fall into sin and as a result experience God's wrath verse 5 he's very hopeful God still shows great mercy and grace to Jonah by trying to teach him something by appointing a worm a plant right this is a little lesson for Jonah and God removes that shade and asks

Jonah do you do well to be angry and this time Jonah responds yes I do well to be angry angry enough to die so Jonah is exceedingly glad over his shade for temporal comfort while being exceedingly distressed angry mad for God sparing Nineveh from eternal torment his mind is so warped his thoughts and feelings so imbalanced his heart so cold that he fails to value things rightly he values the plants so much that he pities it perishing yet has no care whatsoever for Nineveh and this is God's challenge to Jonah he essentially says do you not expect me a gracious and merciful God who created every person including the Ninevites to pity that great city far more than you pity that little planet and after all it is a city of 120,000 people who do not know their right hand from their left and again as I said earlier some think that as children some think that is referring to people who lack moral wisdom one or the other I'm not sure but the point remains people who are in need of help and that is how the book ends so in closing application

I'll explain this ending a little bit God gives his last question to Jonah and we never see the response and the intention of the author I think is to leave us the readers attempting to answer the question do we love our enemies enough that we would want to see God save them and keep in mind Jonah is written for the Israelites the Israelites are the ones reading the book of Jonah this is a rebuke against Israel and I don't know about you but when I read that question I feel personally challenged especially this week like many of you I've watched the news in Afghanistan with disbelief frustration and frankly the temptation to look at the Taliban the way Jonah looked at Nineveh and I had to ask myself do I desire the salvation of my enemies and I could go on and on we could all fill in that blank with various individuals groups other movements that we would consider our enemies but I would exhort you to put on the mind of Christ for all of them without exception

Matthew 11 28 through 29 Jesus says come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls our response when we encounter our Ninevites or enemies should be one of gentleness and compassion Matthew 9 36 records Jesus seeing a crowd of sinners and Matthew writes when Jesus saw the crowds he had compassion for them for the people the individuals because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd or like 120,000 who do not know their right hand from their left and this is the gospel that Jesus Christ came to die and to save his enemies we all at one point were dead in the trespasses and sins in which we once walked following

Satan and yet God showed his love for us and that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us so we should not neglect to share the gospel with anyone regardless of their background here's another simple application dare to not be a Jonah doesn't rhyme it's not easy to memorize but very helpful Jonah sounds like a righteous man who fears the Lord as he put it in chapter 1 verse 9 but clearly his actions display otherwise much like the Pharisees whose self righteousness blinded them from the reality of sin Jonah did not truly deal with his sin by way of repentance we do not want to be like the hypocrites who outwardly wear sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves our words should match our actions so what does that look like well for starters let your yeses be your yeses and your nos be your noses keep your word and do as you will say you will do

according to

[37 : 04] God's word and when you receive a commandment from the Lord which only happens through his written word by the way obey it don't flee as Jonah did and inevitably we will flee again at some point we are sinners that's what fleeing is but it is never too late to repent only repent as God would have you expressing!

turn away from practicing sin and as a final closing remark I want to encourage you all to walk into your places of work tomorrow into your classrooms into your restaurants wherever it is you go wherever your sphere of life would have you on a Monday and a Tuesday and Wednesday Thursday Friday wherever those places are go to them and look at the people around you who you aren't believers and see them as God would have you see them they are image bearers they are helpless and naked before the Lord they do not know their right hand from their left they are sheep without a shepherd they are dead in their sin following Satan and their only hope is the gospel of Jesus Christ and we would be far worse than Jonah to say nothing at all he at least had five words for the Ninevites he at least said something and it would be to our shame to not plead with our neighbors to repent and believe in Jesus Christ and if you find that you struggle to do this regularly struggle to share the word to preach the word to dying souls

I would suggest it's because you're not living in reality you're not looking at them as they are slaves to sin bondage to death already dead but we have great hope we have the gospel we have Christ who's gentle and lowly in heart a great high priest who sympathizes with us and we have every reason to go to them with a word of hope so to that end let's pray