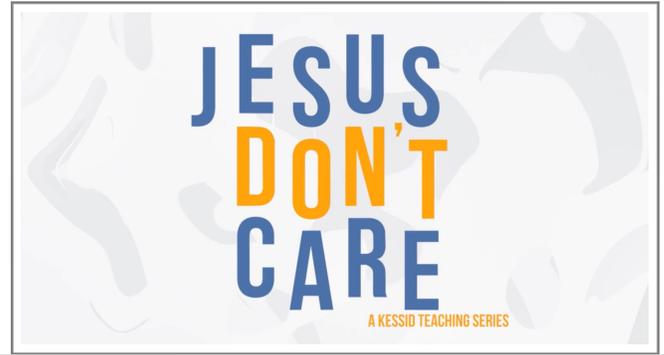


# "JESUS DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE RIGHT"

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**Jonah was the earliest of the prophets, and close behind Elisha in his place in the Old Testament.**

- Jonah's story is told in the short, 48 verse book of Jonah.
- It starts when God calls Jonah to warn the violent and godless Ninevites of their impending doom.
- But, all his pride in being a Hebrew—and therefore uniquely favored by the Almighty – rose in rebellion.
- Pagans like these, to him, were the worst kind of human garbage... These are the, "People who lived opposed to the ways of God" and have no cares for Him or His deserved worship.
- ... And HE WAS RIGHT!

**Therefore, he refused and fled to Joppa on to a ship bound for Tarshish, which was in the opposite direction from Nineveh.**

*(Vs) Jonah 1:4-6 – 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 lain down and was fast asleep. <sup>6</sup> 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 a thought to us, that we may not perish."*

- I feel like this might be the most edited passage in the Bible... Like when there's the clean version of a song and then the original.
- Let me tell you about my time in New Zealand...

**"I found so much quiet; all the noise I was avoiding got even louder."**

- You see... **If God has a purpose for someone, then He will fulfill His purpose... no matter the obstacle.**

*(Vs) Isaiah 46:9-10 – "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'"*

**When God rolled over Jonah with the storm, Jonah was finally awakened to the fact that he was being "Followed by the Almighty."**

- ... And HE WAS RIGHT!
- **Scary Question:** Anyone here currently being followed by The Almighty?

**There was nothing left to do but confess what he had been up to and tell the sailors that only by dumping him overboard could they be saved.**

- ... And HE WAS RIGHT!
- They did this, and a huge fish sent by God (not a whale as commonly supposed) promptly swallowed him up...
- **Note:** Allegory / Literal – Makes little difference to me!
- This stilling of the storm brought the ship's crew to faith and salvation as a result...The Lord is not one to miss out on His opportunities!

**At this point, Jonah has now found himself in a situation worse than anything he could have imagined...**

- BUT it's right here in this dark place that he realizes... **Quote:** "God is with him wherever he ends up, in obedience or disobedience."
- This to me is one of the earliest markers of Christian maturity!
- The final realization that disobedience and darkness aren't places God isn't!

**Light:** (Vs) 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:5 – *"This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."*

**Darkness:** (Vs) Gen. 1:1-3 – *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light."*

**God being without darkness doesn't mean darkness is without God.**

- When you sense around you nothing but darkness, God's there too.

**For Jonah, the result is a beautiful prayer of faith rising from the belly of the great fish, but still with a hint of spiritual pride:**

- Jonah's a punk! This is a Punk's prayer!

(Vs) Jonah 2:8,9 – *"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!"*

- Yeah! You're in a fish, bro!
- But... HE WAS RIGHT AGAIN! – Salvation is the Lords!

- In response to this prayer of contrition and faith, the fish then vomits up Jonah... Yum! "You did it!"
- Maybe next time try it without the vomit! Hmmm? Some of us are just never going to cease being Vomit followers of the Lord!

*(Vs) Jonah 3:1-2 – Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you."*

**This time there is no arguing from Jonah, who, although he may be complying on the outside, is still stubbornly disobeying on the inside.**

- **Question:** Anybody been there?
- He finally arrives at Nineveh and strides vengefully through the city announcing doom and destruction on the people in forty days because of their wickedness and their ignorance of the Lord and His ways!

**He then retires to a flimsy shelter that he builds for himself, probably on a hill overlooking the city, and waits for the fireworks to start...**

*(Vs) Jonah 4:5 – "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."*

- He's thinking... "Got my destruction booth all ready to go... Time for the Results!" What happens??? Absolutely nothing!
- These people... They repent! They get right with the Lord, AND He saves them!

**Jonah is furious!**

- It seems strange that a preacher would be angry that his listeners repented of their sin, but that is exactly Jonah's reaction to the Ninevites' repentance.

*(Vs) Jonah 4:1,2 – But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. <sup>2</sup> 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 to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."*

**Don't miss this!**

- This man is raging that God is exactly who he knew Him to be!
- Jonah knew from the start that God was gracious and merciful...
- He realized that if the people of Nineveh repented, God would spare them.
- JONAH JUST KEEPS BEING RIGHT! How infuriating!!!!

**There are several real-world reasons for Jonah's desire to see Nineveh destroyed. He's not just a jerk!**

- First, he had strong "Political Reasons."

- Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria, a ruthless and warlike people who were enemies of Israel.
- This means, Nineveh's destruction would have been seen as a victory for Israel, God's chosen people. – HE WAS RIGHT!
- Second, Jonah probably wanted to see Nineveh's downfall to satisfy his own sense of justice... "Justice Reasons."
- After all, Nineveh deserved God's judgment. – HE WAS RIGHT!
- Third, God's withholding of judgment from Nineveh could have made Jonah's words appear illegitimate, since he had predicted the city's destruction... "Personal Reasons."
- I'm not sure there's anything more humbling than teaching people through our failures. – HE WAS RIGHT!

**God's answer is to cause a leafy gourd to grow up to help protect Jonah from the blazing sun...**

- ... For which Jonah is somewhat sullenly grateful, and then God promptly removes it the next day! – Like candy on a string!
- Jonah is livid!! "Are you kidding me right now?"
- God's reply to Jonah's bitter complaints about this plant is that if Jonah can have so much compassion on himself for his loss of comfort despite being aware of what a faulty child of God he is, then how much more compassion will Almighty God have on a people who are utterly ignorant of right from wrong.

**This is how the book ends...**

- ... with Jonah seething and God Loving, and us left with things to process out a bit!

**Jesus himself is the one who helps us do this as he refers to Jonah himself...**

Jesus said... (Vs) Matt. 12:40 – *"For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*

**You see, in so many ways we are all the people of Nineveh and Jesus is our vastly new and improved Jonah...**

- Where Jonah disobeys his calling to reach the lost and runs away, Jesus is called to reach the lost and runs toward us.
- Where Jonah is asleep during a storm, awakened, and then thrown overboard, Jesus is asleep during a storm, awakened, and then demonstrates His might over all creation by calming it.
- Where Jonah's disobedience lands him in a fish for three days, Jesus' obedience leads Him to death and to the heart of the earth for three days.

- Where Jonah returned from the edge of death, Jesus, who is greater than Jonah, returned from actual death, defeating it.
- Where Jonah's sudden appearance at Nineveh was for the salvation of a lost city, Jesus' resurrection was for a lost world!

**But none of those beautiful contrasts measure up to the last harder to see one...**

**"Where Jonah was often Right, Jesus was always Good!"**

- Jesus always moves us from the right to the good.
- They ask... "Is it OK to work on the Sabbath?" This question is about whether it's right or wrong. Jesus changes the conversation and says, "Well, is it good?"
- They ask... "Is it right to eat meat that has been offered to idols?" Paul moves the conversation from right and wrong: "Who does it affect?"
- Jonah's story and so many others continue to teach us that...

**"Jesus don't care if you're right."**

- Because, If you live your life only between right and wrong, you might just be avoiding the conversation of the deeper good.
- The deeper good doesn't often call people out on their transgressions, but instead calls them into repentance and relationship.
- The deeper good doesn't hope for people to experience our justifiable justice, but calls on them to receive undeserved grace.