

The Sailors Call | Jonah 1:4-6

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we gathered before you today in this time and in this place. You are in control, God. You have the power over all creation.

Today, as we go further into the story of Jonah, we ask that you remind us that you are in control. You control the mountains, the sky, the sun, the winds and the waves.

As we learn about the sailors fear in the midst of the storm, may we understand our own tendencies. When we're afraid, may we come to you.

Lord, make us a people who turn to you in every season of life, not just the bad, but the good as well. Just like the captain called for Jonah to wake up, remind us of your divine calling for our lives.

May we hear your word. May we listen to you and may we act. May we trust in you and build you as the foundation of our lives.

[0 : 5 7] May we have the desire to follow you in your way. Let your word be with us. May it shape us. May it mold us. May it guide us on our walk with you.

Help us to better know who you are so that we can come to know you and grow in faith. May we listen, learn and love like you.

It is in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen. Amen. Well, I want to say good morning, Ontario. It's good to see all of you. My name is Patrick Daly and I have the privilege to serve as pastor here at Ontario Community Church.

Over the past two weeks, we have been exploring the book of Jonah. We've been going over this well-known story, but it's an amazing book in the Bible. And like any book in Scripture, there is wisdom to it.

There are many parallels. There's a lot of interconnected woveness that happens in Scripture. And although Jonah is a small, it's a four-chapter book of the Bible that doesn't mean that it's insignificant.

[1 : 5 8] Every page, every word, every book in the Bible is important and it's good and healthy for us to read. Each book in the Bible, we should read it, study it and apply the teachings and see how the Word of God points to Jesus Christ.

And today we're going to continue our journey. We're going through Jonah. We've been going through for the past two weeks. This is the second part of our story known as the Tempest Sea.

The first part was known as God Calls Jonah Flees. But before we go into our verse, I want to kind of give us a recap of what we've had so far.

So we know that God calls Jonah to get up and to go to the city of Nineveh, to preach to the city, proclaiming against Nineveh, to change from their evil ways and to get right with God.

Instead, Jonah flees Nineveh. He chooses to flee or attempts to flee to Tarshish. He gets on a ship. He's intending to escape from God's reach and God's call and to head to a 2,500-mile journey on a boat away from God's call, the complete opposite of God's will.

[3 : 13] And so this brings us to our focus today on page 920 in your Pew Bibles. Or if you're not using a Pew Bible, where it's the Book of Jonah, it's chapter one, and we're going to go, I want us to read together these verses from four to six.

I'll give you a moment. It's page 920. So it says here, 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.

So the captain came to him and said, 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.

So it's one of the interesting parts of this story. Doesn't this story sound similar to a story in the New Testament where there's a storm that's coming around and the people on the boat are afraid?

[4 : 33] Gosh, that sounds awfully familiar, right? There's a parallel that we see in Scripture, and I want us to go to page 998. You'll see it in here.

And for all of us, we're all students of Scripture. In page 998, it's going to be in Mark chapter 4 verses 35 through 41.

Jesus calming the storm. There's a parallel here and you'll see what I mean here. Page 998, Mark 4, 35 through 41.

On that day when evening had come, he said to them, This is Jesus speaking to his disciples. Let us go to the other side and leaving the crowd. They took him with them in the boat just as he was.

And the other boats were with him. And a great, what? Windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat. Doesn't that sound very almost identical to what we're reading here?

[5 : 37] Breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling. It's filling with water, right? He was in the stern asleep on the cushion.

And they woke up and they said to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? And he awoke and he rebuked what? The wind. Interesting. The captain rebukes Jonah, but Jesus rebukes the wind.

You'll see a lot of similarities here. So Christ says, peace be still and the wind cease and there was a great calm. And he said to them, Why are you so afraid?

Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? And as I prepared for this sermon in Jonah, I noticed there's a parallel in the New Testament with the Gospel of Mark.

And I have some, I called this Sea Stories and it's we're comparing Jonah and Jesus. And I want us to go to that next slide here. It's very interesting how all of this works.

[6 : 43] You see, in Jonah, we see that the sailors turn to their gods for help.

We see in the Gospel of Mark that the disciples turn to Jesus for help. Okay, so if you have that in your notes, you can write that down. So what's interesting about that, we know in the book of Jonah that the sailors, it was customary when they're sailing out into the sea that they would pray to their gods.

In the case of Mark, the disciples, well, they obviously know who Jesus Christ is. And so they're turning to Jesus for help. Let's go to that next slide. In Jonah, the captain rebukes Jonah.

And in Mark, the disciples are expressing fear to Jesus. They're afraid that they're going to perish. And it's just like what's happening in Jonah is that they are afraid that they will perish.

Let's go to that next slide. So in Jonah, there's a difference in the type of storm that happens with these two stories in Scripture. We find that in Jonah, the storm comes to stop Jonah.

[7 : 56] As opposed to the Gospel of Mark, the storm comes to show the disciples God's power. The storm is coming and the disciples are afraid and Jesus showing his power is saying, peace be still, as opposed to what's happening to Jonah where he is running away from God and God is hurling a storm saying, I'm going to stop you from what you're doing.

Let's go to that next slide. Jonah and Jesus are asleep during the storm. So there's similarities and there's certainly differences, right?

Jonah and Jesus are asleep while the others on board are afraid. And it's very what we see from both of these stories in the Bible.

Like I said, there's similarities and differences. I tend to think we can learn from the book of Jonah that there are parallels that are pointing to Christ.

That is the wonderful thing about the Word of God is that you see connectedness. Something is mentioned in Psalms that will be mentioned by Christ or something that's mentioned in Proverbs.

[9 : 06] What is it doing in Habakkuk? You find things like that that happen. So it's foreshadowing Christ. The story is not exactly the same, but the main idea is still there. In both of the stories, we see that there it is to show the power of God, the sovereignty of God, that God is in charge, that God is powerful and mighty, and that we should trust, submit, and follow Him.

And that is the thing that I want to encourage you. Find that connectedness in the Word of God. This is just one of many, many examples that we find. You see, each and every one of us here this morning, some of us have been a Christian our entire life.

Some of us are new to the faith. Some of us may be on a different part of the journey that called discipleship. Every single one of us were on a different part of our spiritual journey that should be leading us to Jesus Christ, my friends.

And where I'm at, or where you're at, or where you're at, it's all different. But we should all be heading spiritually towards Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

We are meant to learn and to grow in our faith in Christ, in love and in knowledge of Him, and we should be encouraged to continue and stay the course to towards God.

[10 : 27] So returning to our passage, we see that the Lord God hurled a great wind upon the sea in page 920, and if you want to go back there, it's saying that I just find it very, very interesting here.

The Lord did what? He hurled the storm, right? That's an interesting choice of word. He's casting, he's throwing the storm onto the sea.

That's a very interesting word choice, right? It's going to show that there is a consequence from Jonah's action from running away from God. Last week, we were talking about how Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord, right?

We were talking about how sin separates us from God. The more that we sin, the more we are separated from God. And so what happens, okay, Jonah's getting on a boat and he's trying to go to Tarshish, and what's happened is God is seeing to it that Jonah will be stopped here.

That goes to show you the power of our God who controls the wind and the waves and the storms. Sometimes in our lives, God will see to it that we're stopped from doing evil things.

[11 : 41] That is a lesson that we can learn here. There's always a consequence for sin. This is not just in regards to sin. It's the idea that when we do something wrong, there's a consequence.

Even if we do the right thing, there is a consequence to that. Because you see, in our lives, there's many choices we have to make day to day. The scripture talks about the idea that as we sow, so shall we reap.

There are many verses that speak of the consequences of our actions. Some consequences are immediate and others are delayed. In Christianity, one of the things that I have learned as a Christian, and I hope that all of you have learned, is that sometimes there are consequences that happen in this life.

But certainly, the choices that we make here on earth in our life also have eternal consequences. Are you going to go towards the Lord, or are you going to go away from the Lord?

Because how you answer that question will determine if you're going to heaven or if you're going to hell. You have to think about that. Those are important choices.

[12 : 49] What we're witnessing here is divine intervention. God is actively working to prevent Jonah and the sailors from reaching Tarshish.

I want to ask all of you a question here. Have you ever experienced a situation where you were doing something wrong and you felt like something was stopping you?

Have you ever, you were planning to do the wrong thing and just something came up and stopped you in your tracks? Look, I'm a sinner just like every single one. We're all sinners here, right?

I know when I was a teenager, I did a lot of stupid things. And God stopped me in my tracks so many times. And that's the thing. When we do wrong, sometimes we can think we get away from it.

But other times, God's going to stop you right in your tracks here. Divine intervention. Could it be that in the process of sin, God seeing what you're doing and is going to put a stop to it?

[13 : 54] Is it possible that God loves you so much he's going to stop before you get yourself into real trouble? I tend to think so. Sometimes God intervenes in our life.

Sometimes there may be storms in our life to prevent us from doing something. You know, very often when we think of storms in our lives, we think of bad things are happening in our life and what am I going to do, right? There's that kind of storm, right?

A bad thing just happens, right? We live in a fallen world, an imperfect world with imperfect people. Bad things happen. Other times there are storms that happen because of the sin that we do.

The decisions that we make that are not leading us towards God but away from God. So, you know, just like, you know, I'm a dad, I have my five children in the room over there, right?

I think of my kids and I encourage them to do the right thing and I discourage them from doing the wrong thing. Can I fully 100% stop my kids from doing the wrong thing?

[14 : 59] If you know how to do that, I'd like to talk to you after the service here. I got to admit here. But the reality is, look, there are times they're going to run off or they throw their food around, right?

Or I don't know where their shoe is because they hid it from me. But the thing is, none of us are perfect. And so too, we think of God like that, right?

We may not always see what's clear with the storms that are happening in life. And I want to propose to you, I want you to consider that sometimes storms just happen, like in the case of the Gospel of Mark, where a storm was just happening.

And at other times, that was a direct response from God to stop Jonah from his sin, from his disobedience. We are indeed blessed with the Bible that we have in our hands.

Nowadays, we have our mobile apps, we have the printing press. We have so many different translations in the Word of God that we can read and study stories like this.

[16 : 05] And we learn that God intervenes to his people, not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament. And I dare say that God intervenes in our lives at times, doesn't he?

In the story of Noah's Ark, God intervened by sending a flood to the earth, and he saves Noah and his family and a pair of each animal.

Consider the Exodus, where it is described in Scripture where God displayed his power through the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea. We would call that a supernatural occurrence, something that is unexplained.

And see, that's the thing about supernatural occurrences or events that happen. They cannot be explained in the normal framework and understanding of how our world works, because God can reach his hand in and change things up.

That goes to show you the power of our God. Consider our current sermon series, the book of Jonah, where God unleashes a storm, right? He's throwing a storm. It's just such a weird language to me, right?

[17 : 08] He's just, you know, throwing the storm over there to stop Jonah. And later how God is orchestrating Jonah to be eaten by the great fish to be swallowed by the great fish.

Of course, there's many of the miracles that Jesus Christ performed, healing the sick, making the blind see, raising people from the dead.

These are part of God's intervention, and of course, in the case of Jesus, by Christ performing miracles to show who he is. Many, many stories are recorded in the Bible. We can go on and on about the wonderful stories that happen, but we have the Bible to help us learn about God's power.

We know that our God is powerful, and his act of hurling a great wind upon the sea in this story is showing how powerful he is. In Jonah, look, the storm is so fierce that the structural integrity of the ship is at risk, right?

Doesn't it say there? The ship threatened to break up. That is a powerful storm. And how many of you have ever been on a boat before? Okay, have you ever been in a storm where the structural integrity of the boat can break up?

[18 : 22] I mean, some of us may have, right? Most of us probably not. I cannot even imagine how strong the winds and the waves are where you are afraid for your life.

I think of how the boat could just snap in half. That's how powerful the storm. This indicates that's how much God is going to stop Jonah.

Like I said, he's going to see to it that Jonah is going to be stopped. And so during this time, we see that the sailors normally, they would call out to their gods for help for any storm that happens when they're going from Jopah to Tarshish, right?

They're crying out. And the crying out that these sailors are doing, they're crying out for help. That's different than the crying out or the calling out that we were learning earlier in Jonah, where God was telling Jonah to call out to the city of Nineveh.

The crying out is they're crying out to their God for help in times of trouble. Where do we turn to? Do we turn to God in times of need, right?

[19 : 36] So these sailors, although they don't know Yahweh, they don't know the Lord, they're turning to their own gods. They're crying out. But I think that reminds us of we know who the true God is.

We know who Jesus Christ is. At least I hope every single one of us knows. Do we cry out to God in times of trouble? Do we thank God for the lives that we have?

Whether you are a sailor in need or whether you are Jonah, whoever you are, may we turn to the one true God in need of help.

So the sailors are crying out, right? They're crying out to their God and we see they're not preaching or prophesizing. Similar to Mark, we find that Jonah is fast asleep. I love this picture that we have on the screen, right?

It's not Jonah's boat, okay? It's just a visual representation of a boat, right? We find that Jonah is fast asleep amidst the chaos. So, I mean, I don't know about you. I mean, I'm going to be honest here.

[20 : 42] If I was in a boat and the storm was so big that it's shaking everybody up and that the boat is literally, or could potentially snap into two, I just don't find the situation where I would be asleep. I mean, how many of you are heavy sleepers here?

So, could you, if everything was rocking around, would you still be asleep? I just don't know. I just can't find the scenario where I would be asleep if everything's rocking around and the sailors are throwing their cargo out and they're like, you know, they're crying out to their God.

I just, if you picture that scenario, I can't figure out how you could be asleep during that time. But just like Christ, right, Christ too was asleep. Same thing. I don't know how Jesus was asleep during such a storm, right?

I would, logically, I don't like using that word all the time, but I would logically think you'd be awake during a storm, right? But hey, they must have been some real heavy sleepers though. So, anyways, it's good to mention that these sailors, they are, it is said by some scholars that these were professional sailors. It was common for them to pray to their God or to hurl out cargo during a storm.

So if this happens, you know, the storm is severe, right? Why are they throwing out the cargo? Well, they need to lighten the boat so they can survive, right?

[22 : 10] This image is just, I think about this. How easy could it be to fall over, to fall off the boat, right?

I'm sure, you know, just hang on to all your stuff. You don't want to lose your wallet or something, right, when you're up there. I just can't imagine something like that. And as this is happening, like I'm saying, Jonah is asleep.

We don't know why Jonah was asleep, literally asleep. We don't know why Jesus was asleep during the storm. But I really believe that this story is foreshadowing Jesus calming the scene. There's just too many similarities and commonalities.

And this brings us to the critical moment in the story where as the storm is raging, the sailors, they're pleading to their God for help, and yet Jonah is remaining asleep. So then, my friends, page 920, the captain enters the scene.

I love this part where it says here, right? In verse 6, 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 this thought too that we may not perish.

[23 : 25] I do not imagine a scenario where God's going, hey Jonah, wakey wake. Can you get up? I need some help here. There's kind of a storm going on. Do you just picture that? I mean, maybe that's what happened.

But what I tend to think, I think if a storm is raging so much and things are getting shaken up, the guy is pounding on the door and he's saying, Jonah, wake up. What are you doing? Get up and pray to your God. We might die here.

That's the urgency in his message. That's the urgency in what he's speaking here. There's so much to take away in this passage. I really don't believe, I don't know, I just think of the idea that he's knocking on the door. I don't know if there was a door there or not, but in any ways, I'm thinking he's barging in to Jonah who's asleep. I have this visual image just as an idea.

It's not completely accurate. It's just an idea here. The captain's like, he's standing here and he's like, Jonah, what are you doing?

He's like, I'm going to wake this guy up here. What do you mean, oh sleeper? It's not a monotone or a gentle voice. It's quite the opposite. I just imagine he's barging into the room or he's knocking on the door and he's saying, Jonah, get up and call out to your God.

[24 : 52] So what is he saying here? What's interesting is that in Scripture we're finding that the sailors are crying out to their own God. They're pleading for their gods to save them, to help them.

But when the captain goes in, he's saying, what do you mean, oh sleeper? Call out to your God. It's a different word. It's the same word that was used when we were first learning about Jonah, where God called Jonah to arise, go, and call out to the city of Nineveh for evil was happening.

Remember? Here the captain is saying, arise and call out to your God. How interesting that that's the same wording that we find in the beginning of Jonah. How very interesting.

Call out, meaning preach your proclaim to your God. Maybe the captain is saying, you need to connect with your God here. Maybe he's saying, there needs to be something that's happened.

The captain's instructions are to arise and to call to your God. And there are moments in Scripture, my friends, my friends, my friends. There are times in Scripture where we see that God will speak through others to reach us.

[26 : 13] Sometimes we meet a homeless person. Sometimes we meet a barista at Starbucks. Well, not Starbucks here, but maybe Bordertown or a coffee shop here, or maybe you go to a restaurant and someone says something to you.

And that something is what you've been praying about. Or maybe it's something you've needed to hear and you just, you don't understand why they're saying that. You're like, who are you? Why are you telling me this? But yet this is exactly an answer to God's call.

We find that sometimes God will speak through someone to get through to you. Right? We know that God can speak to us through the word of God, but what about other people? What about when you're running away from God?

Well, in this specific case, I think that God spoke through the captain. And I don't think that the captain is just saying, literally, wake up and go pray to your God.

I think that the captain is saying to wake up and to go back on the path that God had set before him. It's kind of like a double, like two messages in one there.

[27 : 23] I mean, we read that on the surface. It says, get up. You're sleeping. But could it also be you've been spiritually asleep because you've been running away from God? Talk about a wake-up call.

And there will be moments in our lives when God speaks to us through other people. It may not always be a rebuking here, like what the captain's doing. But God can speak to us through other people.

Sometimes we do need a wake-up call. Sometimes when we are spiritually asleep, or sometimes when we are running away from God, or we're disobeying God, or we feel that emptiness, that separation from God, we need a wake-up call, don't we?

I know there have been times when I was disobedient and I was in sin. I needed a wake-up call. And I think sometimes for us, we need a wake-up call to get us up and to get right with God.

Jonah is literally sleeping amidst a storm that is so severe that it's threatening the lives of everyone on board. Could it be possible that this could be a parallel to Nineveh, the city of Nineveh that could perish and that Jonah's still asleep because he's not obeying God?

[28 : 34] Is that a possibility? And this is just a minor reflection here? It's very possible. We see that the captain's call is God working through him, working through the captain to speak to Jonah.

Just as the people on the boat could perish in the storm, so too could the city of Nineveh. Because there's a storm that's so bad these people could die. Well, the city of Nineveh is, they're going in a trajectory towards sin that there could be judgment that will happen and the city will be destroyed.

Could it be possible that there is a storm that can happen? Very possible. God works very interesting with these kind of things. God is urging Jonah to act in the moment of crisis just as he had called Jonah to prophesy to speak, to preach to Nineveh.

This reveals the concept, my friends, of taking responsibility for our actions. God brought forth the storm to stop the man from running from his divine calling.

Jonah needs to get right with God. Jonah needs to turn it around. And similarly, at times we may face storms in our own lives that is a result of our actions.

[29 : 49] We should be reminded that sometimes God will throw forth a storm, or he will bring someone, maybe a Christian, maybe a stranger, to get you back on track towards God instead of away from God.

And perhaps you have been running from God. Perhaps you have been separated from God. You can pray for God's deliverance. It's time for Jonah to turn towards God and not away from him.

And maybe for you. I don't know each and every one of your stories. I don't know where you're at. But maybe it might be time to get right with God and to turn things around. Because you see, when we sin, we can either choose to remain in sin or turn back to God.

Do you want to remain in the storm where things are shaking up? I know I don't. I want things to be a little bit calmer, right? We may not fully understand the storms that are around us. We may not fully comprehend that God is calling us to take action.

Maybe you need to make that decision for Jesus Christ. Maybe you've been facing storms because of your sin. Maybe you need a wake-up call.

[30 : 56] Maybe you need to call out to God. Maybe you need to get right with God. Maybe you need to begin to have that relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, who is the way, the truth, and the life, who is light and not darkness.

Are we asleep in our lives? Are we oblivious to what's going on around us? I encourage us, let us strive to be a church, a community that prays, that acts, that relies on God's strength to speak truth and to have God as the firm foundation.

May we stand firm with God in the foundation of His Word. Let us extend love to each other. Let us love God and love people. Let us find that balance between love and firmness.

Because what happens sometimes is you have places that are all about love, but where's the firmness, right? Other times you have places that's all about firmness and where's the love. There's a balance there.

What's interesting as we're coming to a close here, that last part of this passage from this morning, perhaps the God will give us a thought that we may not perish.

[32 : 10] And I think that's a very interesting statement that the captain is saying. I imagine the captain, you know, he probably knows the sailors pray to these different gods, right?

At least recognizing the existence of them. It seems likely that while the sailors were praying to their gods, right? The captain's like, why isn't the storm stopping? What is going on here?

There was no success and perhaps the captain felt he did feel that it was best to go to Jonah and to ask him to pray for his God. Perhaps God will help us. Well, today we know here in this place that God does give us more than a thought.

Look at this in your Bibles on page 920 here. Perhaps the God will give us a thought that we may not perish. God gave us more than a thought, my friends.

God gave us his son as the sacrificial lamb who was born in the manger, right? He lived, he performed miracles, he turned water into wine.

[33 : 15] He healed the sick, the blind can see, the mute can hear. He taught many great lessons and he was crucified and he died and he was raised on the third day.

Perhaps the God will give us a thought. Well, let me listen here, captain. The God, the one true God, gave us more than a thought that we may not perish.

Huh, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whosoever believes shall not what? Perish.

What an interesting choice of words that the captain uses. Just like when the disciples were saying, don't you care that we may not perish? I think that's a very interesting choice of words.

We know that the captain didn't know the Lord at this time, but he will. And in fact, next week we're going to learn about the sailors discovering who Jonah is and who God is.

[34 : 23] We've learned today that sometimes God brings forth storms in our lives due to our disobedience or the choices that we do that is contrary to God's divine plan.

We learn today that sometimes God communicates with us through other individuals, even those who may not know the Lord. The captain's statement will receive an answer.

We learn that God does indeed save the sailors from perishing. We do not believe in many gods. We worship the one true God.

Perhaps God will save us. Oh, yes, he will. And he will do that by sending Jesus Christ. We know that God sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to save us. He gives us the free gift of salvation.

Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. So let us wake up. Let us get right with God. Let us be saved and let us share the love of God with others.

[35 : 24] Let us grow in Christ and become a beacon of hope through God. So with that, let's pray. Father God, we thank you for this time and this opportunity as we're continuing going through the book of Jonah.

May we remember that you are the sovereign God. You are powerful. You command the wind and the waves even in the greatest of storms. The captain called Jonah to wake up.

Lord, if we need a wake up call, let today be the day that we hear that wake up call. If we've been disobedient to running away or we feel separated for you or we feel that emptiness, only you can feel that void.

May we be fully restored to you. May we come to know you if we don't know you. If we feel distant, may we come closer to you. May we hear your call and not run away like Jonah did.

But instead, may we go towards you and towards your divine plan. And may we learn to rely on you in those storms of life. May we come to know who you are.

[36 : 35] You are a good God. May we go forth this week remembering that no matter what storms are happening, you are there with us calling us to come to you.

The Lord God, you have power over all creation and you are with us. May we seek your guidance. May we feel your love. May we experience your peace in all things.

We say this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.