

Arise! Go! | Jonah 1:1-2

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Preacher: Pastor Patrick Dailey

[0:00] I want to start off by saying I was grateful for the opportunity to share from the word about this morning. This is going to be my first sermon here here at Ontario.

And I want to say that I am truly honored and quite honestly I'm truly excited to be here this morning. This church family has been so loving, has been so kind and generous and welcoming to myself, to my wife and to my children. I just want to thank each and every one of you for your kindness and your love and your support. I just can't help but thank you for all of that.

So today we are going to start, we're going to embark on a new series. We're going to delve into the book of Jonah. You know this book has been, it's really been sticking out, it's been resonating with me. I felt like God has placed this story on my heart and I felt the Lord leading me to preach from it. Over the next few weeks we will be exploring this classic. Many of you know this story as Jonah and the Whale or Jonah and the Great Fish.

Before we go into our passages today what I'd like to do is to introduce the book of Jonah to you. It's always good to brush up on the basics before we even start a study in any book in Scripture. We should look at every book in the Bible with openness to our Lord and our God speaking to us. We should look at every book with intentionality. We should look at every book reading it, studying the Word of God and recognizing that every book in the Bible is significance.

[1:49] So who is Jonah? In your notes here you can write, Jonah is one of the 12 minor prophets and through God Jonah saved the city of Nineveh. I realize it's a little small read up there but through because of God Jonah saved Nineveh, a city of 120,000 people. Now I don't know about you, that's a lot of people. That's definitely the one. It's an intriguing fact that, did you know that the word the name Jonah it translates to dove? That's an interesting one. You know in biblical times we find that dove has been used as a symbol of peace. In fact in Genesis chapter 8 verses 8 through 12 you don't have to turn there just at this time. That's the time when Noah releases the dove if you remember. So dove has been used as a symbol of peace and also is used as a sacrificial offering during the Old Testament times. So in our series we're going to learn that Jonah he is playing a role of a symbolic offering. This story of Jonah is going to pre-figure Christ. It's going to foreshadow

Christ. There's a lot of parallels with Jesus Christ, with his death, his burial and resurrection and the story of Jonah. So we'll learn more about that. And in your notes I want you to write that the meaning of Jonah is dove. You can put in there peace.

This dove is a symbol of peace and you can also put sacrifice. So traditionally we think of dove as a sacrifice that was used in the temple. So many of us know about the story of Jonah and the whale. How many of you have heard of Jonah and the whale as a kid? Maybe in Sunday school, maybe in the EDS. We hear about Jonah and the whale. You know when I think of Jonah and the whale just right off the bat, I think of a poor guy who gets swallowed by a whale, then he has to pray to the Lord and he ends up saving city. What we find is that there's much more to the story than just that. You know we learn the story of Jonah as children, but what about when we learn the story of Jonah as adults and we're a little bit older and able to understand scripture better? Did you know that in the story of Jonah there's actually no mention of the whale? You know that? I found that very interesting when I was studying it. Jonah speaks of a great fish which is traditionally used as it's interpreted as a large creature. So it can mean a whale, but it doesn't specifically say a whale. It just says a great fish, which when I think of a great fish I'm going to think of something like a whale. So it's perfectly acceptable. It's perfectly fine to call it a whale or the great fish. In our journey through Jonah we're going to see many things like I was mentioning.

We're going to see a lot of parallel with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the story of Jonah. So Jonah is mentioned in a few passages outside of the book of Jonah. So it comes with the question then, okay, where is Jonah? I'd like us to turn to page 377. It's the 17th Kings passage.

We'll find here. Let me go ahead and feel free to take a moment to turn page 377 in your view Bible. And it's going to be 2nd Kings chapter 14 verse 25. It says here, he restored the border of Israel from Levo Hamad as far as the sea of Arama according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah, the son of Matai, the prophet who was from Gathop. That's the first time we see

Jonah in 2nd Kings. We also see that in Matthew, it's going to be in Matthew chapter 12 verse 39 through 41. That is going to be on page 974.

[7 : 00] Page 972. This is when Jesus Christ is talking to the Pharisees, the scribes and the Pharisees.

And what's happening here is the Pharisees are asking Jesus for a sign. And Jesus is replying to them and says he answered them, and evil and adulterous nations seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah, listen to this, just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will what? The son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. He's referencing the resurrection. So his death burial and resurrection, Christ himself is pointing that out. The men of Minavut will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it for they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And behold, I like this part, something greater than Jonah is here.

Well, who is greater than Jonah, my friends? It's Jesus Christ. So in this section, although we're not going under the Matthew passage, it's very interesting that Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees saying, you guys are looking for a sign. But don't you realize that Jesus, I, Jesus Christ, I'm greater than Jonah? That's a very interesting section that we find from that.

Now going, that's where we see the parallel. The New Testament has a parallel with the book of Jonah. Jesus refers to Jonah by using this metaphor with his death, burial, and resurrection.

So what about the man Jonah? Well, Jonah is not your ordinary prophet. He is imperfect. And his humanity is shown clearly in this book. This is one of the reasons that this book in the Bible sticks out so much to me and I hope it sticks out to you.

[9 : 14] Jonah is unique from the other prophets because here's the thing. When you look at the prophet Moses, or you look at the prophet Jeremiah, they had hesitation. They had doubt when God called them to do great things.

Jonah, on the other hand, he ran. He made the conscious decision to say, you know what, I'm not here, God, I really don't know what you're talking about. I'm gone. And that's what we find in Scripture.

He runs from God and what we learn in this, what we're going to learn in the study here is that consequence will follow by a storm that will take place. It's one thing to struggle, my friends. It's one thing to have your doubts for God's call in your life. But it's another to completely reject to run away or to turn your back on God.

In the case of Jonah, well, you tried to run away from God as far as possible. Does this remind you of another story in Scripture?

I found a very interesting parallel when Adam and Eve, they tried to hide from God. They tried to flee from the presence of the Lord. It's interesting that you see Jonah hiding from God. And Adam and Eve, they tried to hide from God. And we know that God will work. We know that.

[10 : 48] Now, as I mentioned, Moses and Jeremiah, they showed hesitation. This is not in your notes, but in Exodus 4-10, that's where Moses is showing hesitation about fear not being a good speaker.

He's saying, well, God, I'm not eloquent in speech. I'm not really a good speaker. Why are you going to send me? God responds to that. In the book of Jeremiah, the same thing, except Jeremiah was saying, hey, I'm young and I'm not really good at speaking.

Why are you going to send me? And God responds to Jeremiah. And so that's very interesting, is that when we have doubts, God responds to the prophets.

I'll mic Jonah to Renzel. So they went out, so Moses and Jeremiah, they went out to fulfill what God called them to be. I bring this up because at times, like, I cannot emphasize this enough.

I think it's okay to have doubts sometimes. But it's very different to run away from God. There's an opportunity for God to comfort us in our times when we're vulnerable or in times when we are afraid or in times where we're hesitant.

[12 : 04] We have a choice whether to get up and go or to get up and flee anymore to learn more about what that means. We'll learn about both decisions because Jonah is going to make both of

them.

We also learned that Jonah was unhappy after the fact the city was saved. Now, this is something that's very unique about the story of Jonah compared to other prophets.

You know, I don't know about you. If a city repents from their wicked ways, their sin, the evil that they do, wouldn't you be happy?

I would quote so, right? But Jonah, on the other hand, when Nineveh gets saved, when 120,000 people turn from their evil ways and they un-mengre-pent, he's angry.

That's the unique thing about Jonah is that he has that anger in his heart towards the people in Nineveh. Most prophets, and I would say most people will be happy if the city turned from their evil ways, Jonah wanted Nineveh to be judged like Sodom and Gomorrah, for the evil that was happening.

[13:16] Jonah is the only prophet also to speak out or to proclaim to the city of Nineveh. What's interesting about Nineveh? It's a Gentile city.

Most of the times, the prophets are speaking to the Israelites, speaking to God's people. But in this specific case, you're seeing that Jonah is speaking to a Gentile city, which is part of a representation of Jesus Christ when he dies, when he is buried.

And he rises again for salvation for everyone. Do you see the parallel there? It's very interesting that Jonah is the one prophet that would save the Gentile city.

So there's a parallel there. Other prophets, as I said, they spoke to the Israelites, not the Gentiles. Now the book of Jonah is going to be broken down into five sections if you want to go ahead and go to that slide.

So the outline here, part one is God calls and Jonah flees. He runs away. And because Jonah runs away, a storm comes around the tempest seat.

[14:28] And what happens during this time is that because Jonah is trying to flee, he's trying to go completely away from Nineveh, there's a whole part where you learn about the sailors.

They cry out to their own God, but nothing works. They learn and they discover who Jonah is and that Jonah worships the Lord. And because of the storm that's so, it's such a wild storm that's going on, you actually learn about the sailors turning to the Lord. They are converted.

How very interesting that despite the fact that Jonah is running away, God is still using Jonah by having these sailors come to know the Lord.

So it ends up that Jonah gets swallowed by the great fish, our three Jonah and the great fish. This is where Jonah is praying. Because when we run away from God, when we sin, there must be repentance.

There must be a ask you God saying, Hey Lord, I'm sorry for my sins. And there's a whole section where Jonah is repenting for his sin.

[15:43] And at the very end of part three, that's when you learn the fish skits out or ballants out. Jonah, Jonah is restored and sent back where he needs to go to the city of Nineveh.

And we learn in part four the prodigal city. It's interesting that sounds very similar to the prodigal son, right? You know the story of the prodigal son as someone who ran off with his inheritance. He squandered all his money, he used it on frivolous things and he comes back to his father.

Well, very similarly is the story of the prodigal city where the city of Nineveh turned away from the Lord, right? There's a lot of bad things that are not good, but turns back to God.

Very interesting. And then finally part five, the most interesting part, at least that what I found in Jonah is, despite the fact that Nineveh is sin, Jonah still has anger.

And we learn about God, God's race towards the city. So over the scripture today, we are now ready to go ahead and go to our verse in page 920, my friends.

[16:57] We can go to page 920 where I want us to read together. I want us to read the first few verses here.

So it says in the title, Jonah needs the presence of the Lord. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amitya, saying, saying what?

Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city and call out against it for their evil has come up before you. We can stop right there.

We know the third verse is he runs away, but I want us to focus on the first two verses here. So let's begin. It starts off with the word of the Lord coming to Jonah.

Well that's an interesting word. You see that a lot in the prophets. You see that in Jeremiah 1.4. You see that in Ezekiel 1.3. You don't have to write this down. You see this in Hosea chapter 1 verse 1 or Zechariah 1.1.

[18:02] You also see it in 1 Kings chapter 16 verse 1. You see this pattern of in Scripture where the word of the Lord is coming to the prophets.

And in this case, Jonah 1.1, the word of the Lord came to Jonah. You know throughout Scripture, you find that God speaks to his people. He speaks to the prophets, the people in the Old Testament in different ways.

And let's write this in our notes. How did God communicate to the prophets? How did he communicate with his people in the Bible? We find that God spoke to the prophets with dreams, visions.

You can put voice, right? The voice of the Lord. And also through angels. Now there's a couple other ways that doesn't have any names.

Through dreams, voices, or visions, excuse me, and direct revelation of the voice of God and through angels.

[19:08] It should be noted while I'm speaking about this is that there's the question that comes up. Does God communicate to us today? And the answer is yes.

So the question comes up then, well then how does God speak to us today? Well we find that God speaks to us through number one. First and foremost, God speaks to us through the Lord of God. That's such a powerful way that the Lord speaks to us today. Secondly, I would say through conviction. Sometimes you're making a decision and it just doesn't feel right.

The Lord is complying on your heart that maybe you shouldn't make this decision. So the second is through conviction and the third is through people. What's very interesting about people is sometimes Christians, God will speak to us through other believers.

And sometimes we'll actually learn in Jonah of a time where someone who doesn't believe in the Lord speaks to Jonah. So sometimes a non-Christian, sometimes an unbeliever, or an unchurched person will speak to us.

[20:21] We don't know exactly how Jonah received the divine message, but we know that the instructions were clear to him. Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.

There's a sense of urgency in this message, isn't there? He doesn't say take your time and get up. He says arise and go. So that word arise, it has pretty significant meaning.

To literally get up, to rise, right? It can mean to stand up or stand, and it can also literally mean to arise, why I chose to stand without.

Get up is another appropriate word. The word arise, it appears frequently in Scripture, just as when Abram is directed to explore the promised land in Genesis 13 and 17.

It also occurs when Jacob is called to worship that Bethel in Genesis 35 when John was raised. It also occurs that Moses is calling for God for protection for the Israelites in Numbers 1035 during the wilderness journey.

[21:40] We see this word as even when God is promising to give a successor to David Song. So I'm just mentioning here that there's quite a few times that that word arise shows up.

And God commands John, okay, so you're saying, God is telling Jonah to get up, to arise. Well, get up and what? Get up and go. It's the second word in our nose, and you can put in there, to walk, to go, or to leave.

The specific word go is the same word that is used when God is directing Abraham to go from his cold land to the promised land. It is the same go that when God has instructed Moses to go back to Egypt and to liberate the Israelites from slavery.

God has commanded his people to go and to do great things. Okay, so Jonah has commanded to get up and go, to arise and go. What's his mission here?

God calls Jonah to rise, right, to go and to call out against Nineveh. This is very interesting because what I've learned in studying this is that we see in Scripture so often that we are to call out to the Lord, right, cry out to the Lord.

[23:10] This is the one time in Scripture where it says call out against. This is where God is saying to proclaim against.

So when we hear the word before, let's set aside call out against for a second here. You hear the words calling out. That has a certain meaning for us nowadays, doesn't it?

When you hear someone say, I'm going to call out the CEO for something bad that they're doing, right, or someone is calling out someone, it has a very different meaning than what it does biblically. When we think of the modern meaning of the word calling out, it typically means criticism. When we think of the biblical meaning of calling out, it means to proclaim.

It means to preach. It means to use your words. Now there's going to be a difference. We won't go in that slant just yet.

[24 : 08] Today's culture uses the word calling out people for their wrongdoing. It does echo the idea of calling out against, where it's like, hey, you need to change from your ways, right?

So certainly there's a component of calling out, but we'll find that there's another aspect in there. So the next slide. We have here a guy pointing the finger, right?

When we think of calling out, we think of somebody who's pointing the finger. The modern definition of calling out is, like I said, there's criticism. Is there the opportunity for forgiveness though?

When we think of the modern game, not necessarily, right? I'm talking specifically for modern calling out. So there's no forgiveness, there's no repentance, and there's no restoration. But when we're thinking out calling out against, right, or to proclaim against the city, it is the opportunity for forgiveness.

It is calling upon the city to make that you turn, right? To turn it around. It's giving the city, it is allowing for forgiveness. It is allowing for repentance, and it's allowing for restoration.

[25 : 17] Do you see the difference? There's a huge difference between the two when we're thinking of what the scriptures say.

So again, calling out in the modern day, that criticism, you're doing wrong. Calling out in the sense of calling out against, turn your ways, turn it around, allow for them.

So in your notes, I put here the Bible verses of calling out. While if we're talking out specifically the words calling out as opposed to calling out against, calling out against shows up once, in the case of Jonah reaching against interval.

But when we use the word calling out, and we see that over 500 times in scripture, the word proclaim. God using that word to create the heavens and the earth, that word is being used there. So you can put over 500 times in your notes. So we see that Jonah is receiving these instructions to get up, to go, and to call out against Nineveh.

[26 : 37] He is to appeal, he's to plead, he's to preach, he's to proclaim to Nineveh to change their ways. So Jonah has chosen for this mission, why?

Let's look back at the verse, right? Call out against for it, for their evil has come up before me. So what does that mean?

Well, that's a pretty easy one, right? It means that when people are doing bad things, right? There's sin that's happening in Nineveh. God's attention is on Nineveh.

And I think that's something that is important to note. Nineveh has not reached the point of no return or of judgment. If they do not repent, that would be a very different outcome.

But in this specific case, I put a generic term which is up there, right? Bad things are happening to Nineveh, but it's not to the point of no return.

[27 : 41] And when I think of this country, when I think of America, I pray that we're like Nineveh and we can turn things around and that we're not like Sodom and Gomorrah, where it was passed to a point of no return.

I certainly pray that we can turn things around and repent of our sins. So bad things are happening. There remains an opportunity for Nineveh to repent.

Nineveh is not the same as what happened in Sodom and Gomorrah and what happened in Egypt. Sodom and Gomorrah, the scripture talks about, we don't have to turn there.

They were in grave sin to the point of no return or to the point of judgment. This is why there were two angels who were dispatched to escort Lot and his family out of Sodom and Gomorrah.

There is a distinction that Nineveh hasn't reached this state because God is dispatching Jonah to go speak out to them and say, hey, you'll learn later in Jonah, in 40 days there will be judgment.

[28 : 50] You need to turn it around. You need to repent and come to the Lord. That's a pretty significant difference, isn't it? It's a pretty big difference.

So let's remember, Sodom and Gomorrah passed the point of no return. Nineveh hadn't reached that point. We'll also discover that Nineveh will find, they will repent through Jonah's guidance, through Jonah's word by proclaiming to the city.

The city will repent and they will leave behind their ways. It reminds me of when Christ called the woman at the well in John 8.11. When Christ says, go and sin no more.

We should repent of our sins and certainly go and sin no more. But we always need God, though, because we are going to sin. And I hope that each and every one of us will not pass the point of no return.

We certainly have the opportunity to repent. We certainly have the opportunity to ask for forgiveness from our Lord. God called Jonah to arise, to go, and to cry out against the evil that is rising in the city of Nineveh.

[30 : 08] And similarly, we as Christians are called to rise up and go into the world. God invites us, each and every one of us, to have a relationship with Him.

Let us realize that we are like Nineveh and we are also like Jonah. We have our flaws and our shortcomings. We don't let sin, it's just like what Scripture says, that all falls short of the glory of God.

We have to remember that. We need Christ in our lives. Just as the thief on the cross turned to Jesus, we too must repent of our sins and commit ourselves to Jesus Christ, as the way, the truth, and the life.

You know, God has a purpose for each and every one of us, much like He did for Jonah. Now it's not going to be the exact thing that God called Jonah to do, but God does have a divine plan for each and every one of us.

No one is perfect, but we serve a God that is perfect. We worship a God who saves. We love a God who has done extraordinary things through us as people who are imperfect.

[31 : 30] God will lead and guide us. God will lead us to do incredible things in His name. We just need to choose to follow Him.

We are saved by grace through faith. We are called to go out into the world and do. Let us be doers of the Word and not just hearers by arising and going.

I want us to remember these words as we're getting close to our end. Is that God calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things, to rise and to go.

We should get up and go out in this last slide. We should go and make disciples as Christ has commanded us to do.

We should share the good news of the gospel. We should baptize believers. And on that last point, we should love God and love others.

[32 : 38] It's interesting, we're talking about the Old Testament when getting up and going as a certain meaning. Is there a New Testament passage that urges us to go very similarly?

And the answer is yes. Many of you know, in the Great Commission, Jesus Christ is urging His disciples to go and to baptize people to teach them in the same way God commands us to go and make disciples to teach them.

And let us be sure that God is with us. God is with us. The God who made us, the God who knew us before we were born, the God that called Jonah to get up and go calls us to do the same.

My prayer and my hope for this church for Ontario is that we become a congregation that studies God's Word, that is on fire for Christ, that leads people through example to follow Him and to live for Him.

But first and foremost, how the relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, may we exhibit Christ's love for others.

[33 : 58] I think of that song that my mom used to play a tape. They will know that we are Christians by our love, by our love. Yes, they will know we are Christians by our love.

May we love God and love others. May we pursue a relationship with Christ. And may we respond to God's call for our lives.

May we stand as a beacon of hope, in light of the darkness, doing everything in excellence in the name that is above all names.

Jesus Christ, let's pray. Father God, we thank you for this time and this opportunity to begin our study in the book of Jonah.

Lord, there's a lot to unpack here, a lot for us to learn. May we realize that you call each and every one of us, and get up and go. May our hearts be open to you, may we respond to your Word, may we love you, and may we love others.

[35 : 23] May we pursue that relationship with your Son Jesus Christ, and may we respond to the calling that you have given to us.

Lord, we thank you for everything that you've done for us. We can't do it on our own. You sent your Son. Jesus, pay the help.

We thank you. We say this in Jesus' name.