

# Rebelling Against the King's Command

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[ 0 : 00 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Well, we come to the book of the Bible that everybody knows a whole lot about and heard all the stories all their lives and probably never really understood. I always liked the story of Jonah, but I didn't like it too much because it seemed to me that I heard all my life that the book of Jonah was about you better obey God or else.

And I always heard preachers when I was a boy say, you know, I ran from the call to preach and I didn't want to preach and God made me preach and he forced me to preach and they always had horrible stories and it always sounded a lot like the book of Jonah.

So I want to take you through the wildest story in the world. But I want you to know Jonah is not about God being mean enough to preachers that they preach.

No, that's going to happen in the story and you'll hear that. Most people believe you better obey God or you'll end up being vomited out by a whale. But the whole book of the point of this book is not to obey God or else.

[ 1 : 17 ] The point of this book, and I want you to turn there with me right now, is Jonah chapter four and verse two. I used to read this book and think how mean God was. I used to read this book and think about how hard God was.

I used to think, you know, if I'm not careful, God's going to do that to me. And one day, years later, as I read Jonah, Jonah chapter four and verse two, and I had already been preaching and teaching and being a missionary and doing all these things and it just really hit me.

And I promise you, as emotional as I can get, I got emotional in Jonah chapter four and verse two. So I want you to read it with me if you would. The Bible said, he prayed unto the Lord and he said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my country?

So before Jonah one, before he ever gets swallowed by a whale, before he's ever in a boat that's about to turn over and before the men ever throw him out into the ocean and before he ever runs to the presence of the Lord, he said something.

He's about to tell us what it was. Therefore, that's why I fled to Tarshish. He said, this is the reason I ran. I'll tell you why I ran. I hated the Ninevites. And I know about you.

[ 2 : 31 ] I know what kind of gods you are. So look what he says. I knew that. You have your Bible open? Underline. I knew that thou art. You ought to underline that.

He said, God, I'll tell you why I ran. I ran because I know you and I know about your character and I know who you are and I know how you are. He said, I know you are a gracious God, merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and you don't do like doing bad stuff to people.

And repentance out of the evil. Look at that verse. Now, all my life, I grew up thinking, if God calls you, you better do what you're told or some whale's going to swallow you.

And then he's going to hold you in his belly for three days. He's going to vomit you out. I don't know how many times I've been threatened by preachers that way. I don't know how many times in the youth department I got threatened with the book of Jonah.

I don't know how many times I heard that story. And it wasn't until I read Jonah 4.2 and it jumped off the page of me that I learned something. Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh and preach because he hated the Ninevites and he knew that though his message was a message of you'll be dead.

[ 3 : 43 ] He said, God, you don't mean that. I already know you don't. He said, if them people repent, you're going to be nice because you're such a nice guy. God, you're a very nice God. And I just don't want to go tell them because I'm afraid they might repent.

That's basically the story. But if you could just look at Jonah 4.2 with me just for a second before we get into the Jonah chapter one message, I want you to just look at this. I knew that thou art.

Would you underline that? I knew that thou art. And let's think about that. A gracious God. You know what he said, I know about God. He said, God, I know you're a God of grace. I know you're a God who gives men what they don't deserve.

I know you're a God who gives men what they don't deserve. They deserve to go to hell. They do not deserve the gospel. They do not deserve a chance. But you're a good God. I know that.

He's really mad at God. He's mad. You're good. That's what's wrong. That's why I didn't want to go to. You know why I didn't want to go to Tarsus? Because I know you. I know you're a good God. That's a funny story, isn't it?

[ 4 : 43 ] I mean, you think about it like that. Then he goes, and merciful, which means you are full of mercy. That means you don't give God people what they do deserve. They do deserve to go to hell.

They do deserve to be punished. And none of it deserves to be destroyed. They're the enemies of my people, and I wish they were dead. But I know you. I'll tell you. Isn't that what I told you? Hey, before we ever went to the whale belly ride, before I ever even got on the boat, you know what I said.

I said, if I go down there and preach a message, he's asking me to preach. Are people going to repent? He's going to save them? Because that's how he is. I told you. I knew that about you. Well, if you had that feeling about your God, you'd know what a wonderful God he is.

Say amen right there. He's a amen-ers. You're supposed to say amen right there. Thank you. I got four amen-ers on the front row over here. Now watch. He is a gracious God. He is merciful.

Now look at this. What's next? He is slow to anger. Some of you got this idea that God's up in heaven with lightning bolts in his hands, and at any split second, he's going to just let you have it.

[ 5 : 42 ] Well, that's not what it says here. Jonah said, God, you know why I ran. You know why I went to Tarshish? You know why I tried to get out of your presence? Because you are just too nice.

That's just it. You're just too nice. And then he said, and of great kindness. Of great kindness. This is not an independent Baptist message. It's a Bible message. It's right in the Bible.

And it says you are of great kindness. Man, you are so nice. I mean, the fact is, whenever I think about God, I always want to know what God looks like, acts like, does. I just look at Jesus, and if it doesn't fit him, I don't know what does.

Everywhere he went, he went about doing good. He is the sweetest, kindest. And then it says, and you don't like doing bad stuff. It repenteth thee of the evil.

That means he doesn't enjoy seeing people hurt. He doesn't enjoy seeing people hurt. So he said, I told you to go and tell Nineveh in 40 days I'd destroy him.

[ 6 : 41 ] And Jonah said, I knew you weren't going to do it when you first told me. I already knew you weren't going to do it. So I want you to go with me now to Jonah chapter 1. The main point of the story of Jonah is that God loves all people, even the Ninevites, that Jonah hates.

This is the missionary book of the Old Testament. God's heart is broken for an entire people group that is separated from him. So our hearts should be broken as well.

The God of heaven is up there saying, these Ninevites, they're wicked. They need a preacher. And God's heart is broken about that. And Jonah is like, I hate them. I think sometimes it's kind of like the way we might feel about illegal aliens.

If you watch enough news channels, you know you're supposed to hate them people. But God in heaven would be like, I got them right there where y'all could get the gospel to me if you just would.

And we're acting like Jonah. We're acting like, we don't like you. And God's up in heaven saying, I brought them to you. You wouldn't go as mysterious, so I put them in your back door. Go witness to them. Amen. Y'all didn't like that, did you?

[ 7 : 49 ] Go ahead, Jonah. Say, I'm Jonah. Amen. Don't say amen. Say, I'm Jonah. Look at how we feel about Muslims. You know, most of us would say, if God destroyed all the Muslims in the world, that'd be a wonderful thing.

We could sign our name Jonah. God is unhappy in the story when Jonah doesn't care for a city full of people that are far from God. It should break our heart that there are people far from God and no preacher, no one to tell them.

It should break our heart and make us want to tell them about Jesus. Because that's what the story of Jonah is about. We are to be a soul winning church. We're to be a missionary church.

We're to be inviting people and sharing the gospel with people. By the way, if anybody's going to love the Jewish people, it ought to be Vision Baptist Church. If anybody's going to love those Russian people, it ought to be Vision Baptist Church.

If anybody's going to love those illegal aliens, it ought to be Vision Baptist Church. Because we know how our God is. And he doesn't subscribe to our political agenda. He subscribes to, I love people.

[ 8 : 55 ] I am a good God. I'm full of grace. I'm full of mercy. I'm full of kindness. I'm just like the nicest guy you ever know. But I'm God. That's the story here.

So I want to talk to you about rebelling against the king's command. Jonah chapter 1 if we could. So let's start in verse 1. First thing happens is he is commanded to go. The Bible said, now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah.

Now you need to underline in verse 1, the word of the Lord came to Jonah. You got to remember, we have talked about this plenty of times. But when these prophets speak, they're not saying their words.

They're saying God's words. So when they stand up to speak, they say, God told me. By the way, every preacher that stands to talk to you should say, I am giving you the word of God.

And I can tell you God told me stuff. Because he told it to me right here in this book. And that's what we're going to preach. Because though he doesn't give me new messages, he gave us a message. And that's why you're a Bible church.

[ 9 : 53 ] That's why you got the Bible open. That's why you're looking up Bible verses. That's why you're underlining things. Because you know God speaks to us. Say amen right there. The word of the Lord came to him. He was commanded to go. Verse 2. Arise.

Go to Nineveh. That really big city. And preach against it. Cry against it. For their wickedness has come up before me. Now you would think here, as you read this verse, you'd think, oh man, God is really mad about all the wicked people.

But if you've read the whole story, you know that before the end of the story, God's not going to destroy them. He's going to save them. He's going to rescue them. He's going to be really kind. He's going to be really gracious. And Jonah's going to be really upset because he really thinks God ought to be mean to him.

But see, here's what happens. God has a personal will for the life of Jonah. He's got something he wanted Jonah to do. He told Jonah to go and cry against the city. The command was simple and straightforward.

The command was clear. That's what God wants Jonah to do. Now if you read this book, would you listen to me just a second? There is a hell. If you understand that, if you believe that, say amen.

[ 10 : 58 ] And everybody's going to die and go to heaven or to hell. That's just a fact. That's the way it is. Everybody's going to be somewhere for all of eternity. Nobody's staying here. And nobody's just quitting existing.

Nobody's just going to go out of existence. You're not going to be obliterated. You're going to be somewhere forever. And everybody you know is going to be somewhere forever. Your family members are going to be somewhere forever. Your parents, your neighbors, everybody you know.

And he said, arise, Jonah, and go. We've got a clear command, too, to share the gospel, haven't we? Church isn't about us learning more Bible. It's not about us filling our heads up. It's not about us knowing all the stories.

You can say, man, I go to a church where we even study them little books nobody ever studies. We're going through Hosea and Joel and Amos and nobody. And now we're in the book of Jonah. Man, we're a heady bunch of people. We're not about head. We're about telling people about Jesus.

That's what the whole thing is, is I'm going to go tell them. And so he was a clear command. But Jonah disobeys God's clear command. So look with me at verses 3 and following.

[ 11 : 58 ] Verse 3. But Jonah, but Jonah, knowing clearly what God wanted him to do. But Jonah, knowing clearly what God wanted him to do. You know, does that sense you?

Put a circle around that word, but. Because I'm pretty sure that more than one of us in this room, we know what God wants us to do. We know where he'd send us. We know what he has planned for us. We know he wants us praying.

We know he wants us giving. We know he wants us going. We know he wants us serving. We know we're not there. And here's what we do. We say, but Austin, but Jonah, but Tom, but Sally.

Look at this. Rose to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. I wish you'd underline from the presence of the Lord, if you would. Now listen to this.

You know, you can't get out of the presence of the Lord. So if you're a Bible student, you can write beside this verse the word omnipresent. So you can't get out of the presence of God. He's all present.

[ 12 : 54 ] He's present everywhere. In fact, as in the Psalms, it says, if I went to the highest mountain, he's already there. And if I went to the lowest hill, he's already there. You can't get away from him, but you can get out of his presence in the sense of where he's blessing and what his will is.

In other words, you know, if you go to the bar tomorrow, he's already there, too, because there's not a place he's not. But that's not where he wants you to be. And that's not what his will is for you. And so he fled from the presence of the Lord.

And he went down to Joppa, and he found a ship going to Tarshish, and he paid the fare thereof. And he went down into it to go with him under the Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. Here's all Jonah said was, I know what God wants me to do, and I don't want to do it.

I know what God wants me to do, and I don't want to do it. Is that you this morning? You know what God wants, but you just don't want to do it. You know what God wants, but you just don't want to do it.

And it may be because you have fairly good reasoning in your mind. You know what God's will is. That's what's going on. Jonah says that. Like us, Jonah has his reasons for not obeying God. In Jonah's mind, it's like a guy who God's dealing with about being a missionary.

[ 13 : 57 ] He would say, they're foreigners, and I'm a nationalist. I love America. They speak a different language. They got different customs. They're wicked people. They're enemies of God's people.

It'd be dangerous to go there. Hard to reach them. He didn't know them, and he didn't really have any reason to care except the command. Let me just stop here and say, some of you in this room, God really wants you to be a missionary.

And you've come up with a hundred reasons not to carry the gospel. And you've come up and said, well, I love America, and I love my family, and I can't do this. I can't. You've come up with all your reasons.

But this book of Jonah is pretty clear. You know, when you know what God wants you to do, you ought not rebel against that. You ought not rebel against that. By the way, God wants us to witness and to share the gospel, and God wants us to be prayers and givers and goers and teachers and disciplers.

Somehow we believe that some way we can run far enough away that God won't know where we are. Isn't that the craziest thing in this story? Jonah's like, I know you want me to go that way, so I'm going to go that way.

[ 15 : 03 ] I know you want me to go preach there, so I'm going to hide from you, and you won't find me. But you can't run that far, and Jonah, you're not going to get away. So he paid the fare, and he ran from God, but he ran into God.

Jonah thought that by just doing what he wanted, he could avoid God's will in his life. The real story doesn't start until we see God step in and begin to work in Jonah's life.

So the story in Jonah chapter 1 is God intervening. God told him to go. Jonah doesn't want to go. And Jonah's going to do his own thing. And God's going to step in and do something big in Jonah's life in Jonah chapter 1 and verse 4.

And if you notice in verse 3, in Jonah chapter 1 and verse 3, the verse started off, but Jonah. And in verse 4, it starts off, but the Lord. You might circle that but and underline Jonah, and then circle that word but and underline the Lord.

God wants you to do this. And Jonah goes, well, I ain't doing it. God said, okay, well, I'm going to step in and I'm going to do something now. But the Lord. The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so the ship was like to be broken.

[ 16 : 14 ] Jonah apparently thinks he's effectively gotten away from the presence of God. He's in a boat in the wrong place, down in the bottom of the boat, taking a nap, and God shows up in the storm.

And Jonah's rebellion causes others to suffer. If you read Jonah chapter 1 and verse 5, and I just want you to think about that this morning. The Bible says that the mariners, the sailors, were afraid, and they cried every man unto his God, and cast forth the wires that were in the sea, into the sea, to lighten it.

But Jonah was fast asleep, down below in the ship. He laid down, he went to sleep. It's like Jonah thinks, I'm not doing God's will. And all I've got to do is get as far away from him as I can, and everything's going to be all right.

And he feels pretty comfortable about it. He's down there taking a nap, and a storm comes in the boat, and it's shaking the boat. And here's what's really funny in the story, is everybody but Jonah's like, man, one of our gods is upset here, and they're all praying.

And Jonah's just snoring away. Jonah's down to sleep, just fast asleep, the Bible said. Everybody else is afraid. Look at chapter 1 and verse 6. So the shipmaster came to him and said to him, what are you doing sleeping?

[ 17 : 22 ] Call on your God. Call on your God. And if so be that God will think upon us and we perish not. And they said every one to his fellow, come, let's cast lots.

Let's flip a coin. Let's draw straws. Let's figure out why God's doing this. And when they did, everybody figured out it was Jonah. The interesting, there's lots of stuff that's interesting, and we don't have time to go through every detail.

But Jonah doesn't want to do what God wants him to do. And you might think, when I do wrong, it only hurts me. But in the story, everybody on the boat's about to die, and they're all scared to death.

I mean, so he's out of God's will. He's not doing what God wants him to do. He steps out of God's will. The boat starts shaking like crazy. It's about to sink. You notice what they've done first. They've gone down below, and they've gotten all the stuff they could, and they've thrown it out of the ship.

They've thrown all the cargo out. If they live, they're going to have to answer for that. If they live, they're going to have to explain why they emptied the boat. If they live, they're going to have to explain to Walmart why all the packages are at the bottom of the sea.

[ 18 : 29 ] This is a UPS truck driver going down the interstate and finds out he's about to wreck and starts dumping all the packages out the back of the door. I hope he crashes, because if he don't, they're going to say, what happened to the packages? He's going to say, I thought it was going to crash, so I dumped them all.

And they're all scared to death. And then they come, and they say, wake up, Jonah. What are you doing, buddy? And then they figure out it's Jonah. Look at verse 10. Look at verse 10. Jonah had already told the men what was going on.

That is so funny to me. It's like when you run from God, you still run your big mouth about God. So in Jonah 1 and verse 10, Then were the men exceedingly afraid and said unto him, Why hast thou done this?

For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. That blows my mind. If I were running from God, I just wouldn't tell anybody.

I'd just go incognito. 007, James Bond. I mean, I would just hide out and not tell him. Jonah gets on the boat and says, How far is this boat going? Because God wants me that way.

[ 19 : 32 ] Can we go that way a long way? Why do you want to know where we're going? Hey, I've got to get away from God. He wants me to do something. I don't want to do it. And I don't want to go. And he's running for his life.

And he's announced to him that he's a Hebrew. And he's announced to him that his God's already talked to him. He's already given his testimony. I wonder what would have happened if he had a right attitude. If he had been doing right, people might have gotten saved.

Because by the end of the story, or in this chapter, things are going to be happening. He'd already told them what was going on in his life. He'd already told them. Jonah, in his rebellion, still says that he worships God.

In Jonah chapter 1 and verse 9. And he said unto them, I'm a Hebrew. And I fear the Lord. Now, underline, I fear the Lord. In the Bible terms, I fear the Lord is a word that means I worship God.

The fact is, if you had been around earlier, and I don't think it's used much now, but it used to be they'd talk about those are God-fearing people. That means they knew there was a God.

[ 20 : 30 ] And they knew he was real. And they knew he had power. And they knew he should be revered. And they knew he should be respected. And they knew you didn't just treat God like nothing. Because God is big.

And so they were God-fearing people. And Jonah says, I'm a Hebrew. I'm a Jew. I'm a Israelite. And I fear the Lord. And then he even tells them who the Lord is.

You've got to understand. You've got to go back with me to Old Testament and realize everybody on the boat's got a God. And they all brought their God with them. Probably they got little Buddhas with them.

It wasn't Buddha then. But they got their little Buddha with them. They got their little elephant with them. They got their little whatever God with them. And they've all got their little gods. And they all worship their gods. But they're gods they made.

They're gods they made. That's any God but the God of heaven is the God you made. And so they got their little gods with them. And Jonah looks at them and says, I may be running from God. But I know he is the real God.

[ 21 : 27 ] And I didn't make him. He made the heaven. Look at it. He made the sea and the dry land. Can I just stop here? There's a lot of people right now that are kind of doubting the creation.

Bible scholars are saying maybe God didn't really mean that in Genesis 1 and 2. Jonah didn't know that. Jonah thought God did make the sea and the dry land. Can I get an amen there? Hey guys, can I get an amen right there? See, God did make the sea and God did make the dry land.

That's what it says in that verse. Jonah says, I worship him. I fear the Lord God of heaven who did that. Look at verse 12. Jonah chapter 1 and verse 12.

He said, take me up. Cast me out into the sea. And so shall the sea be calm. For I know that it's my fault. Underline that. I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

Now we would probably say it was a coincidence. We would probably say it's a meteorological event. We would probably say it's a hurricane named with a he name or a her name coming our way.

[ 22 : 27 ] It's going to destroy us. We'd probably think up a good reason for this happening. But Jonah's like, guys, I full well know what's going on here. I left home running from God.

And I thought I could get away from God. And I was pretty confident I was getting away from God. But now the storm's here. And here's what we need to do. Y'all just got to grab me and throw me out of the boat.

And when you throw me out of the boat, we've thrown everything out. We've thrown the cotton out. We've thrown the tobacco out. We've thrown, not really. We've thrown all the Walmart supplies out. Everything's out in the ocean. The boat's still about to sink.

We got to do something. I'll tell you who to throw out. Throw me out and God will stop the storm. It's all going to be okay. I think maybe you know that some of the storms in your life and the storms in your family and the storms and what's going on are because you're not walking with God.

And I think sometimes when all this happens, we don't want to admit that a lot of junk's happening in my life because God does discipline his people. And he lets you suffer the consequences of your sin.

[ 23 : 30 ] But God had prepared a large fish to swallow up Jonah in verse 17. Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

I think that's a wild story. I imagine Jonah thought, well, if I'm dead, everything will be okay. And Jonah's like, I won't have to do what God wants me to do. I'll get out of it. I'll be dead.

Everything will be over. Everything will be fine. And when they throw him out of the boat, a big fish grabs him and swallows him. And all of a sudden, he's in a new apartment building inside a fish.

And he's going to be there for three days and three nights. And he's still going to end up doing God's will. I'd just like to say real quickly that I grew up all my life here and there's always a second chance.

God's a God of second chances. But I could prove to you from the scriptures he's not always a God of second chances. If I were you, I wouldn't mess around waiting on a whale belly ride. I wouldn't mess around waiting on God to shake me more.

[ 24 : 27 ] I would just go ahead and say, I do fear you and I will obey you. And I'm tired of playing games with you. I'm going to respect you like I should. Well, here's some lessons from this chapter if I could share them with you.

First lesson. God is going to accomplish his purposes. You see, God wants Nineveh to hear the gospel. And that's the story of the book of Jonah. Jonah, God is in heaven saying, there's a wicked city.

Their wickedness has come up before me. I want them to hear the gospel. Jonah, I want you to take the gospel. I want you to go to Nineveh. I want you to talk to Nineveh. And because I'm a good God and I love him.

And Jonah's like, I know that. That's why I'm not going because I'm afraid you'll save them. And so Jonah says, I'm not going to go. Well, here's what I want you to catch on to. Nobody stops God. You won't stop God from doing his will.

God will get his Bible preached. God will get his church buildings built. And God will get the money he needs to do, the work he wants to do. God won't be stopped. He is God Almighty. And so sometimes he does the Jonah thing.

[ 25 : 28 ] And he takes a guy that's doing wrong and running. And he wakes him up. And he saves him. And he carries him in a whale belly ride. And he later lets his life count. But sometimes he does it another way.

The way it's found in the story of Esther. Turn in your Bibles, if you would, with me to Esther. Esther needs to save the nation of Israel.

And Mordecai has talked to her and told her. And there's a crazy verse here in the book of Esther. What's happened is there's a wicked man named Haman. And Haman is going to see to it that all the Jews die in one day.



And when they hear about that story and they find out about it, Mordecai tells Esther, God could use you to save our people. And you need to go in and you need to talk to the king and you need to bring about liberty.

And before the story is over, God will save the nation of Israel and he will use the hand of Esther. But Mordecai shares just a tad into the things of God. He says in Esther 4.13, he says, Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews.

[ 26 : 37 ] Esther, don't think because you're the king's wife. You're still a Jewish lady and you're going to die like everybody else. But look at verse 14. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace, I want you to underline this, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.

God will still take care of his people. You know, if you don't do what you're supposed to do, God will still get the job done. You can't stop God from getting his job done.

Look at this. But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. And who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Esther, it appears to me that God has put you in the right place at the right time to make a big difference for his kingdom.

Now listen, but if you don't do what God wants you to do, don't think God's going to be up in heaven wringing his hands and saying, man, I didn't expect that. They caught me off guard. That's not what's going to happen. He said, Esther, if you don't do it, God will raise somebody else up to do it.

If you don't do God's will, God will raise somebody else up to do it. You and your family will probably be killed and everything will go bad for you. But don't worry, God's plan won't be stopped. God will get the job done.

[ 27 : 53 ] So in the book of Jonah, the first thing I notice is that God's job's going to get done. But a long time ago, I decided I wanted to serve God. I didn't want to mess with playing with God or standing against the things of God.

I wanted to be involved in it. I didn't want to go for a whale's belly ride, but I also didn't want to be set on one side. I wanted God to use my life. And you're here today and you're in the book of Jonah. And you need to know God has a plan for you.

You're not here as an accident. You're not here as a coincidence. You're not here as just somebody sits on a bench. God's got a plan for you. He gave you the money to use for him. He gave you the talents to use for him.

He gave you everything you have to use for him. And you're not just supposed to say, well, he calls out a few and not me. That's not the story of the Bible. Remember he called a herdsman just a couple of books back?

You remember the guys, another one says, hey, I ain't a prophet and I ain't the son of a prophet. I'm just doing my job. God told me to go do something. God's got a plan for you. God wants to use you.

[ 28 : 56 ] Every Christian ought to be saying, I want to serve God. I want to do what God wants me to do. What plan does God have for your life? Where do you fit in? Has he made it clear to you?

I would ask you this question. Are you even asking? I don't know how a Christian doesn't say, I want to know what you want me to do with my life, God. We have become consumer Christians, not servant Christians.

We have become bless me Christians, not I'm here to God to use me to bless others. You can't run far enough away to get out of his presence. And if you do run, you can run, but you can't hide.

God is at work in your life. Before I move on, let me just say this. Not everybody in this room is going to be a preacher. Not everybody in this room is going to be a missionary by any stretch.

So don't feel like that's what I'm trying to tell you. You know, I grew up in a farmer mechanic home. And as a little boy, I surrendered my life at the age of 11 to serve God, to be a missionary.

[ 30 : 04 ] At that time, I thought I'd be a medical missionary. But my daddy was really funny. He was an illiterate man. He'd only gone through the ninth grade. Took a GED so he could get decent jobs.

He was an illiterate man. But my daddy told me this. He said, God don't have a will for preachers. He's got a will for everybody, boy. Just so happens his will for you to preach. But he's got a will for me, too.

I thought that's pretty good theology. He might not have had a college education, but he understood something you might not understand. You are not your own.

You are bought with a price. So flippancy service of God just doesn't fit with who we are. This not tithing, not attending, not praying, not serving, not living a holy life is just not who we are.

Can I get an amen? Or an oh me? Or I'm a Jonah? God does chastise those that are his. Please understand, it is your reasonable service to find out what God wants you to do.

[ 31 : 08 ] Look at what the Bible says in Romans chapter 12 and verse 1. Romans chapter 12 and verse 1, the Bible says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice acceptable unto God.

And that's your reasonable service. So what you're supposed to do is to go to God like this and say, God, here's my life. This Bible represents my life. I come to say to you, I'll do anything you want me to do.

Not what I want to do. Not what I feel good about doing. Not what I enjoy. It's a sacrifice. Sacrifice. Huh? The Bible said sacrifice. Can you see the word sacrifice?

If you can, say amen. So I'm going to go to God and I'm going to say, God, here it is. Whatever you want. My money is your money. My time is your time. My talents are your talents. My life is your life. My children are your children.

Everything I have belongs to you. It's only reasonable that I would do what you want me to do with my life. In this story, we've seen that those around a rebellious Christian suffer as he gets disciplined.

[ 32 : 10 ] If we're his, we have a higher purpose for our lives. We have a higher purpose for our lives. Can I just tell you this? It's an us-them world.

We belong to Jesus and they don't. He has a will for our life. He wants to use us. Look, if you will, with me at 2 Corinthians 5, verses 14 and 15. 2 Corinthians 5, verses 14 and 15.

For the love of Christ constrains us. Because we thus judge that if one died for all, then we're all dead.

You need to underline in verse 14, the love of Christ constrains us. Maybe right in the margin forces us, pushes us, motivates us, causes us to feel the real need.

You see, it's the love of Christ. He loved me. He saved me. He rescued me. He gave me eternal life. He hears and answers my prayers. He's at work in my life.

[ 33 : 12 ] He has a will for my life. It's the love of Christ. I just can't live without him because he loved me. Look at verse 15. And that he died for all.

He died for all. That they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves. Underline it. If you're alive, you're not supposed to. If you're alive and you're born again, you are not to live for yourself.

That's not my opinion. That's the word of God. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 15. That they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.

It is not a strange idea in the Bible that every Christian would be saying, God, not my will but thine be done. Have thine own way. God, work in my life. I surrender.

God, I come to you. And, you know, there's something in our minds like, hey, I give God three services a week or I give God one service a week. Or I at least come to Sunday morning and preach and I give God a few percent, two or three percent of my money or 10 percent.

[ 34 : 14 ] Whatever it is you're saying, but it's like you feel like, hey, I just got to do this minimum amount. That's not it. He died for you. You're supposed to live for him. That's what it says.

He died for you. You're supposed to live for him. It ought not even feel strange to you to say, he died so I could live, so I could live for him. Amen.

God has a message that he wants delivered. What will it take to wake us from the sleep in the middle of the storm caused by a rebellion? I'm afraid American churches and Christians have gone to sleep in the bottom of the ship full well knowing God has a plan for their life but really not caring about that.

I think everybody in this room would be like, also, we already knew all that. Okay. If you know it, live it. Isn't it time you put your will on the altar and said, God, not my will but thine be done?

See, obeying God is not really about the need or the people, the job, but about serving the God. And he's our great God. He is worthy of our love and our devotion and our obedience.

[ 35 : 31 ] If you claim to worship him, how can you not obey him? He is your God. How can you not give and dedicate everything you have to him?

There is a clear teaching in scripture that everything we have belongs to Jesus. But we live in 2016. And in 2016, church is about a prosperity gospel, a feel-good gospel, a make-me-feel-better-about-myself gospel.

It's about, hey, Austin, if you don't make it enjoyable, I ain't coming back. But in the New Testament, it's about take up your cross and follow Jesus. In the New Testament, everybody understands it's your reasonable service.

So where are you today? You came today. You're not saved. You don't know you'd go to heaven if you died. You're not saved. You're not born again. The truth is you're not saved. And if you died right now, you would wake up in an eternity in hell without God, without Christ, and you would be there forever.

But Jesus loves you. He paid your sin to it, and you could be saved. You can be saved. The Bible said you have sinned against the holy God. The Bible says your sin has separated you from God. The Bible says the wages of your sin is death.

[ 36 : 40 ] But Jesus paid your sin debt so you could be saved. Today's the day you should trust Christ. But Christians, the same story's for us. He died to save us, and we're saved, and we're on our way to heaven, and we know that.

So today's the day you should say, Lord, not my will but Thine. Today's the day you should say, God, I don't want to be a Jonah. God, I want to serve you. God, I don't want to run from you.

God, I don't want to try to get out of your presence and your power and all you're doing. I want my life to count for you. Why don't you get on your face and say, God, I'm going to quit penny-pinching you with tithing.

I'm going to quit penny-pinching you with my time. I'm going to quit penny-pinching you with my talents. God, I'm going to quit penny-pinching you by saying you don't need to have anything to say about my life. Come on.

We're not faithful to church. We're not faithful to pray. We're not faithful to serve. Let's be honest. We act like God's supposed to be at our disposal. Don't be a Jonah.

[ 37 : 41 ] Jonah. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information, log on to [www.visionbaptist.com](http://www.visionbaptist.com) where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.

Thanks. See you next time.