

It's Not About a Fish VI !

Overview

Have you spoken to somebody that you didn't know today? We have a couple or three visitors. Make sure we greet one another with a holy kiss. Make sure it's holy. Please be seated and please be blessed. Yeah, I need some room up here, even some more. Yeah, I need a football field here. Just these. Yeah, you've seen me do this, haven't you? For years I've wanted to always be the chairman. It's working out. Just beside it there. I'll move them again. Thank you. Thank you, thank you.

He's sitting on his stool. He's weakening, Marge. Yeah, but he's still breathing. So those of you who are new or have missed a Sunday or two, I've been taking you through a journey through the book of Jonah. Not the one that we learned about in Sunday school, Jonah and the Whale. The title of my message all the way through has been, it's not about a man and a whale. It's about a man that was a prophet. A man, I suppose at times, mightily used of God. But he was a very feeble fellow in so many ways. And I'll just throw this your way this morning. He was very shallow. He was a very shallow man. But God was using his mouth to proclaim God's truth. He was called to go to another country, leave his own culture, leave his own language, and go to this. It was the most powerful empire in the world at the time.

It was called Syria. And it took in what's now Syria, but also Iraq and Iran. And it was a ruthless, it was a ruthless people. Bloodthirsty. And when they went to war with another country, they always won. But what they did to the spoiled people of those countries is just unmentionable. It's just, they were just rotten to the core. Kind of like what we experienced, what we saw happen October the 7th there in Israel. That ugly, and maybe worse. And so Jonah, the man of God, was told by the Lord, you go to Nineveh, which at the time was the capital city of this empire. You go to that city, and you proclaim to them, you got 30 days, and God is going to crush this country. And it's amazing. The people responded, even to the king, and right down to the peasants. They responded. They believed the words of this prophet.

Our country is going to be destroyed. We're all going to die. So they repented. They stopped all their evil deeds. And so the Lord backed off from carrying out what he was going to do to that country. And how did the prophet feel about that? Jonah's fourth chapter. It displeased Jonah exceedingly. The revival went far too well for him. He became angry. And this is how he prays. It would have been helpful if we'd seen this little statement. If we'd been aware of this conversation between the Lord and Jonah, it would have been helpful if it had come out in the first chapter. You don't know about this conversation till the fourth chapter. Until Jonah's gone, got swallowed by a goldfish, chucked up, and gets turned around, makes the journey 2,500 miles from Spain, is where he had run to, all the way back past Israel and up into Syria.

Would have been helpful if we'd known this ahead. Because this is what Jonah says to the Lord. He dares to speak to God this way. Oh Lord, don't you remember? Was not this what I said when I was in my country? When I was in Israel, when I was living very comfortably, not very far from Nazareth in fact. Isn't this what I told you back then when you said, go to Nineveh? I talked to you about this. And therefore I fled to Spain. Why? Because I know you are gracious. I know you're merciful. I know you're slow to anger. He's saying this in anger. I know you're slow to anger.

And you're abundant in your loving kindness. You're one who relents. That's not a word we use these days. You're a person who backs off. You're a person who changes his mind. You're one who relents from doing harm. I knew you would do this. I knew it. I knew it. I knew it. You told me to go there and say, you're all going to die. And they don't die. You made me to be a false prophet now. You'd kill them all. He's such a gracious fellow.

He's so unlike the Lord God. God's gracious, slow to anger. This guy's not gracious. This guy's a stick of dynamite. You're one who relates from doing harm. Therefore now, O Lord, kill me. He's not saying that casually. He says, you know what? I'm so angry, I want to die. And he meant it. He was saying, I can't live with this. And why? He was judging God. You have no right to do this. It's better for me to die than to live.

So what did he do? He left the city. Now, you and I do know how the story goes on. How at that time, the people did not backslide. You know that word, right? Sliding backwards. They did not back up from their commitment. Okay, I'll leave my neighbor's wife alone. I'll stop raiding the till in the grocery store. I'll stop being so miserable a husband. I'll stop. Okay, I'll do it. Jonah doesn't even stay in the city to see how this turns out. He leaves the city and goes out and builds himself some kind of a shack, because it's hot there. He builds himself a nice shady spot, sits in, folds his arms, and is waiting for these people to backslide.

And he's looking forward to it. These people are ignorant. They're rotten to the core. They're liars from the beginning to the end. Have we got a deal now? You won't fire on Hormuz. You won't attack those ships. You'll let all these Christian people in your country live. You've been murdering them by the hundreds of thousands. You're going to stop. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Let's let's have a drink to it or whatever. And while everybody's getting sourced on, it'd be Canadian whiskey because we're not allowing American whiskey. We'll be all having a sudden they start firing missiles again.

They'll tell you anything to get some more time to do what they want to do. And Jonah was sure that these Ninevites are going to do just that. But they didn't. They didn't. In fact, they held back on attacking Israel. They wanted to attack Israel so bad because they saw it being as low-hanging fruit. We can whip them. In three days, we'll have them completely. We'll behead the bunch of them. They waited for about 400 years and then they did go in and they did exactly what Jonah was afraid that they would do. So what motivates this guy to act like this? Well, I thought long and hard about this. These people were pagans. They didn't believe in Jonah's God. And it's so interesting that we see it coming together just a little bit for us when the ship is about to be destroyed.

Here's Jonah hiding in a special room, I suppose, down in the belly of the ship. And suddenly a storm comes up. It says that the Lord sent the storm. That's what the Scripture says. God sent a horrendous storm. And the sailors are used to traveling this route. It was kind of like a regular bus route. Just constantly from Joppa to Spain to who knows whatever. They sailed on the Mediterranean all the time. They knew every shoal. They knew that body of water. And this was weird. Frankly weird. And it was the decision among them. Some God is upset.

And we don't know which one. So each one took his time to call upon his little God. Is it you God? Are you doing this? And they ran out of Gods. Until somebody says to the captain. What about that snowflake that's in the belly of this ship? What kind of a God does he have? So the captain goes down himself. Shakes Jonah out of his sleep and says, Are you nuts? This ship's going down. And as a committee we decided, we've concluded, that there's a God behind it. There's a supernatural power. We've never seen a storm like this. And we're old sailors.

There's got to be a God behind this. Is this your God? Why are you on this ship? Why are you going to Spain? What are you all about? And he answers, I'm a Hebrew. That's as much as saying, I have a God. You've talked to your Gods and that didn't work. And I know the solution to your problem. Don't get upset when I say this is God's chair. This is just my own little personal drama. So don't get upset. I'm going to be referring to this as God. And we'll say, this is Jonah. And we'll say, this is the crew on this ship.

Or we'll say, this is the Ninevites. However you want. These are the pagans. This is Jonah. And they say, what are you all about? He says, I'm a Hebrew. In other words, I'm wealthy. This is my God. I believe in the Hebrew God. This is our God, the people of Israel. We're the descendants of Abraham. We didn't choose him. He chose us. And he told us he was going to honor us. He told us he was going to use us.

So that's who I am. Well, just in fact, who were these people? Who were these people? They're known as the chosen people. By the way, the terminology, the chosen people, you'll not find in this book. The chosen people is a comfortable description of how we like to speak of them. The Lord did choose the Jewish people. But the headline, God's chosen people, is not in the book. But they are people chosen by God. Because as soon as we focus on the chosen people, that eliminates absolutely everyone else. That eliminates everybody completely. These are the people that God has chosen to bless. But what about you and I this morning? As far as I know, there's no Jewish people here. Is God willing to bless us?

Yes. So do we come up to any kind of a standard like the chosen people? They are a people that God chose to reveal to us. They are God. God chose them to reveal to us, the pagans, who he is. Deuteronomy 6, Deuteronomy 7 verse 6. For you are a holy people to the Lord your God. The Lord has chosen you to be a people for himself. A special treasure. You're a treasure. Of all the peoples of the face of the earth. There's no question God chose them. No question he chose to use them, inspire them. To do what though? Just to live, you know, as four and no more?

No, they were chosen to reveal to the Ninevites. They were to be the people that God chose to walk rightly. And to display in their life, in their conversation, in their dealings with each other, to display for these people what God is like. There's Jonah being called to go to them as a prophet, as a missionary. To go to them and say, my God, chosen people, our God is upset with you. But you have a fire escape. You can be like us. You can pick up from all your stupidity. From your lifestyle. And you can choose like us to live for God. I believe that Jonah's calling to be a prophet to these horrible people. I believe that he got carried away with the fact that we are the chosen. So sorry about you. He got carried away with what I think was a sense of superiority. They deserve to die.

Not I. You remember Jesus saying, do you see those two people at the altar in the temple? Do you hear what this guy over here is praying? Oh God. Oh God. You must be so proud of me. I'm not like that person over there. I'm so blessed and rich and increased with good things. And Jesus said, listen in to this guy. Oh Lord, I'm a sinner. I don't deserve your kindness. Please be merciful to me. Jesus said, he's my kind of guy. He's my kind of guy. The calling of the Jewish people was to teach the pagans how to serve God.

God didn't put everybody here on the earth to beat them up and throw them all into the corridors of hell. He's not willing that any should perish. And Jonah would have added, well, all except them. They deserve to die. These people had a very special task. It means that God gave them a specific duty and a responsibility. Yes, they're chosen to represent him. Not to have fizzy parties on their own and not invite anybody else in. They were to do service for God. They were to reach out as a family. And hopefully cause everyone else to see all God is good. Other passages, Exodus 19, verse 5 and 6. God tells the people that if they keep his covenant. If, if, if, that word is so frequent. If God's people keep his covenant, they will be his special treasure.

In a kingdom of priests. Do you know what a priest does? A priest is one who mediates like a lawyer. Between fallen man and the holy God. So these people were called to be a kingdom of priests. To pray for these pagans. To pray that God would be merciful and careful. That God would consider helping these people as he helps us. That was their calling. Here's the very verse. Now therefore if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant. Then you shall be a very special treasure to me above all the people. For all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the Lord.

These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. Isaiah 49, verse 6. God states it is too small a thing for his servant just to restore the tribes of Jacob. Listen to this. You're too important the Lord says. It is too small a matter. It's far too limited. That you people continue to restore each other. And pray about each other. And expect God to bless you. That's the beginning. That's the starting point. Because I want you to not only be blessed as the children the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But I will also give you as a light to those wicked Gentiles. That you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth.

Deuteronomy 7. God explains that he chose them because of his love and his promise to their ancestors. Noting they were actually the smallest of all the nations. The versing. The very verses. The Lord did not set his love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people. For you are the least of all the peoples. But because the Lord loves you and because he would keep the oath which he swore to your fathers. The Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand. And redeemed you from the house of bondage from the land of the Pharaoh king of Egypt. So the core responsibilities of these Jewish people was to preserve the word of God. They were to take care that it didn't get messed with. That nobody would go in there with an eraser or a correct all. They were to be the keeper of the word and they were responsible to all of their tribes. All their children.

All the citizens. We don't just keep the word and ensure that it's taught. But we ensure that we live the word. That's your responsibility. Living by God's laws. They were meant to show the rest of the world. God is good. They were to be a witness throughout their history. That's their calling even to this day. There they were down in Egypt. That wasn't their first choice. They had to run to Egypt because the promised land that was owned by the chosen people was experiencing a famine. God sent a famine. And they ran to Egypt there to be restored. And how could God save them from the horrendous treatment by the Egyptians?

Because the pharaoh that welcomed them in the first place, 400 years later it says the new pharaoh knew nothing of the old pharaoh. He only had these people to help him build his big pyramids. He didn't care about anything else and he was horrendous. Let my people go. Pharaoh says. Not today I don't. And so you see these people had a beautiful story about how God redeemed them by the shedding of the blood of lambs. Jesus the lamb of God. His blood being shed to release us from our Egyptian bondage. It's a great story. It has to be told and retold. You'll discover when you read all through the Pentateuch. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. As you read in there the Lord will say. Every year I want you people to celebrate the fact that God got you released from Egypt.

And took you out into the wilderness. And the way that you'll do it. And it's being celebrated today. There's a certain time of the year when you go into Toronto. When you go into the Jewish sector. You'll see little tents that are set up on the balconies of their apartments. And they will go up there supposedly and sleep in the tents overnight. They do this once a year. Why? To remember how the Lord saved us. And how the Lord brought us out. They're supposed to do the tenting as a message. As a message to all of you. How is your God treating you? He protected us.

They have these celebrations and these festivals all year round. The Jewish people are completely committed to celebrating and celebrating. Every time that God honored them. They are to be a message to the whole world. God is good. But Jonah was more. He was more consumed with the sense of patriotism. He was more consumed with this idea. We are the chosen people. We are the best country. So when God said go and save these guys from the horrendous things. Jonah is convinced that it will just be a short time that they will do that. And eventually these bad people can kill all these people. So instead of the Lord being in charge of the nations. And instead of being the Lord and going to them.

And stopping their attack here. Jonah was trying to save the people of Israel. Because somehow he could not conceive that God would stop these people. That God over time. By the time you came up to this year 2026 in Canada. There would still be a nation of Israel. Jonah was convinced. God is going to slip up. And these people are going to destroy my country. And so on and so forth. That we hear about this conversation. But Jonah says hey God. Have you forgotten. Excuse me Jonah. God forgot.

Have you forgotten Lord. I warned you. I warned you. But you wouldn't have it. Why did I run away. I was justified. These people are liars. They are horrible. But me. Attacking you. Accusing you of this. Accusing you of that. I am a man of righteousness. I am a chosen people. Who are you sailor.

Of the ship. You are no sailor. Who are you. I am one of these. I am one of the good guys. Then why. Is your God upset with you. Well he and I have been having an argument. And it looks like he is winning the argument. I am the problem. Well how do we get your God settled down. Well I am doomed. Because God is not. God. Think about it.

God wants to spare him. If he will repent. What are we to do with you Jonah. He doesn't mention repenting. He says. I have no future. I am dead. I am a dead man. So you might as well go ahead and kill me anyhow. He is literally saying. Throw me into the ocean. And he doesn't believe he is going to survive. Because what God is offering these people. Jonah says. He will never offer it to me.

Do you see how this whole story is so mixed up. It's a true story. And sometimes. We live it out. If anybody reads the book of Jonah. As a solitary book. Not taking into account. All the rest. Of these scriptures. You are missing. A major point. You have to read the book of Jonah. In light of Jesus. Jonah was thrown into the sea. Three days and three nights.

Jesus. Body. Put in a cave. Three days. Three nights. And by the power of God. Jonah is spit out of the whale. By the power of God. The earth had the yield of Jesus. Death could not hold its prey. Great was your victory. Soon you were destroyed. So you see. We have to read Jonah. In light of the whole beautiful message.

Now. This is where I might lose you. Not because. You are not capable of catching on. It's that I might not be good at trying to explain this. This is my God. And if you respect me at all. You will refer. To him as. He is your God. He is your God. And Jonah was content with that. Here's the unique thing. He's not just the God of the Jews. He's the God of the Gentiles.

He's the God of the Japanese. He's the God of all. He's my God. It's good that you have a relationship with him. That you can say. You have a relationship. He is my God. He's my God. He's my keeper. He's my God. He's my God. He's not your God. He's my God. What Jonah was saying. To these people.

I'm going to destroy you. We have. Mr. Carney. I'm going to be a famous guy now. He has declared. The fellow before him. You know the failed school teacher. Who became the black face guy. You know who I'm talking about. You don't say his name. They'll come and arrest you. That fellow. Not this one. The fellow before him said.

I do not have confidence. In black people. We are a country. I believe in nationalism. Canada should not be known. A national entity. A national entity. This man is repeating. The very same words. The concepts. He wants to destroy. Nationality. the Italians. The Chinese would not speak with the Filipinos. These were God's chosen people.

These were God's chosen people. We're going to be one big happy world family. The Filipinos are not going to celebrate the birth of children and weddings and all the rest. You should see how they do things. We would be invited to these incredible gatherings. They look for reasons to have a party. You're going to ask them to close down their parties. We're going to be one big happy family. You're going to tell them they're not even alone. You can't speak Tagalog. It doesn't work. I watched it. That's been my experience in a few churches. I won't go on any farther. Somebody's going to think I'm a racist.

We pastored in another church where I said to a lady, you're going to let these lady help you in the kitchen? They had a crew and the lady actually had the audacity to say she's not welcome to work with us in the kitchen. She's not one of us. She meant the color of her skin. She's not one of us. That was the feelings of Duna. He was a patriot. He believed in his country more than he believed in his God. There was a big gap between the commandments of the Lord and the performance of his people. The pagans had their gods and Jonah had his. Jonah had his God. I was on my way to a very big country on the other side of the world. I did it a lot. My whole life was spent overseas. I'll say the country.

I was on my way to India. As I'm going, somebody handed me a pamphlet and said, you might want to use this. Read it over. Here's what I found out. I found out, just put yourself with me on that airplane. I'm going over the Atlantic. It's an overnight flight. I'm reading this pamphlet and it says, basically this is what it said to me. Hey Dave, these people already have six million gods. Congratulations. You're going to introduce them to another one. I felt this small. I had a wonderful time and many, many, many, many, many thousands gave their hearts to Christ. It was a miraculous thing. But to bring the whole world together and declare them, you're not a nation anymore.

You give up all your. That was really, that's what Jonah was all about. He was a nationalist. He believed in his country. And he was willing to do whatever it took to save his country from God, allowing those pagans and today and backslide tomorrow. As a prophet, he's a mission. He's a messenger of God. And as a preacher, he should have been a missionary. I'm not going to be labor this anymore. Jonah goes out and he sits and he's in the shade trying to get away from the sun. And he's sitting there and he's angry and he's ticked off. And he believes that the pagans are going to get away with this and they're going to kill his people. They're going to raid. And 400 years later, they did. But he didn't trust God to take care of his chosen people.

And why? His concept that we are God's chosen. Got misplaced in terms of his sense. Of who we really are. We're chosen. To be a light to the world. We're not chosen to wear cute little party hats and celebrate. This is who we are. We are called to be a light to the world. All these cultures all over the world. Everywhere you go. Had to learn this lesson and I, I need to close off. But I had to really adjust in my thinking. God called me to go and do this stuff. So I went to all these countries, 37 of them.

And every time I arrived, it was a whole new culture, new language, new food, everything. And they had their, they had their gods. And I saw their gods. I sat and talked to a man. He said, I used to be a God maker in this town. He would sit and play, make his little God and put cute little blue eyes in this one and green eyes in that one. Then you put them in his oven, cook them, and you'd be driving down the street. Oxen cart. I'm not making this up. Two wheeled oxen cart. As he's going through the streets of this city, he's saying, God's for sale. God's got every kind. These gods will help you. And then people were running out and giving them their money and they were buying gods. I was so tempted to get into a pulpit and say, you know, there's famine.

You know why there's so much trouble in there. You know, that's one of the reasons why this is one of the poorest countries in the world, because you serve ugly gods. You can't do that. You can't look down on people of other cultures and other religions. You're to be a light to the world, not a whip handle. For God so loved all those people, he gave his only begotten son. That whosoever, whosoever believes in him Will not perish, but have everlasting life. For he sent not his son into the world to condemn you wicked sinners. But that they should also enjoy the privilege of singing. There's a new name written down in glory. And it's mine. Oh, my name is written down in his book. Sorry, Jonah, to be so harsh on you, but you deserve it. And God helped me to not be critical. And to get in line.

Now, I have to finish. But this goes beyond international. This goes beyond cultures. This actually lands right on our doorsteps. There are people who will come to your door and want to convince you that there's only going to be 144,000 and blah, blah, blah. For years, I prided myself in giving them a rough time. How'd that work out, Dave? Oh, there was a revival. There's no Mormon churches left. Or was it J. W. 's 144? There's none of them left. I've won them all to the Lord. No.

We have to love every last one of them. And if we'd found out that Hitler was at an altar in a Baptist church, Pentecostal church, in Berlin somewhere, and they were singing, Just As I Am, and he was crying out to God, how would you handle that? I already brought that up before you recently. There are none righteous. No, not one. And boy, are we a blessed people. We are a blessed people. And let us not look down on any other group, but to see them as possible saints. Would to God there be a revival. I will tell you this. I'm convinced with all my heart that if Jesus tarries, and I think he's not going to tarry much longer, I believe we're going to see revivals that will blow your doors off. If ever that Tehran thing can be wrestled to the ground. Do you know how many Christians there are in Iran? And I shudder when I think that I hear people saying, Trump should just load up and bomb that country and kill every one of them. No, no, no, no, no, no.

There are souls there. And what if those soldiers were to come out and say, this is happening, you know, in Ethiopia, I've got it on film. Jesus is going to people who are Islamic. He's speaking, they're coming out of the rooms in the morning and saying, I spent the night with Jesus. I know them personally. So what if Jesus goes into the barracks of the, what do they call them, the IGF? What if he were to visit them? Would our prayer be, dear Jesus? Yes. Or would our call be, Trump, kill them all. Dear Jesus, you're in charge of the world. And he's not your God. Now see, I'm going backwards. A few weeks ago I said, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. At a certain time in my life, he became my God.

That's fine, but I don't own him. So he's not your God. He's the God of all nations. He's the God of all, every which where. And mark this well. He's in charge of every president, every failure. He's in charge of all of them. You can dislike Trump all you like. God will put him there. And God will take him out of there. Maybe sooner than you can think. And as much as I'm troubled with our current leader, who doesn't want us to be known as Canadians, who wants us to give up our whole identity. He wants me to give up the fact that my grandfathers came from Ireland. No, no, don't talk about that stuff. And he wants me to forget about genders.

David, you're not a father. There's no such thing. I can't handle all this garbage. I can't handle all of it. And I don't care what they think about me. So, we walk the walk. And we do what we can. But let your words and let your decor, how you function, let it be a light to the whole world. You are called to be light. You are called to be light. Lord Jesus, I don't know if I did this right this morning. I did what I could. I spoke in this morning. True value is the word of God. That's the value.

Everything else is add-on and open to discussion. But your word is not open to debate. I thank you for your word. I thank you for Jonah. We don't know if he ever really got things right with God. He never answers the Lord. He never truly repents of his attitude. But that's between you and Jonah. But I thank you, Lord, that you have offered us peace.

If we will repent, seek your face, turn from our wicked ways, we can be salvaged.

Thank you, Jesus, for your love and your care over all of us.

Amen and Amen.