

Theme: Jonah was called to proclaim God's word to the city of Nineveh, but he rebelled and tried to flee from God and His call, but God relentlessly pursued him and even the sailors whose lives Jonah endangered by his rebellion.

I. Intro – Chronicles of Narnia is Christian?

- A. Coworker - 'Chronicles is Christian?'
- B. They had missed the major point of the series!
- C. Jonah is like that in many ways
- D. It has always had a firm grip on our imagination
- E. One of four most used OT stories in early Christian art
- F. Jesus tied Himself to Jonah (Matthew 12:39-41)
- G. But many today miss the real point of the story
- H. It is about a lot more than a big fish!
- I. It is a story about God's relentless pursuit of rebels
- J. It is broken into four acts, one for each chapter
- K. We will look at one act each week

II. Act One, Scene One - The Rebel Runs From God

- A. Act 1, scene 1 - major characters, plot introduced (1:1-2)
 - 1. Yahweh - 26 times; plus God 12x to refer to Yahweh
 - a. This more than any other word in the book!
 - 2. Jonah - 18 times; prophet of Yahweh in Israel
 - a. Also in 2 Kings 14:25 - true prophet of Yahweh
 - b. But probably fiercely loved Israel!

- 3. Nineveh - 9 times; 'city' several more
 - a. Often 'that great city' (1:1)
 - b. Capital of Assyria; perhaps largest in the world
- 4. The plot - the prophet sent to Nineveh by Yahweh
 - a. 'Arise, go to Nineveh, call out against it' (1:2)
 - 1. Clear command with a note of urgency
 - 2. He must warn Nineveh of judgment
 - 3. He must call them to turn to Yahweh
 - b. 'Their evil has come up before me' (1:2)
 - 1. Importance of רעע - evil, calamity, disaster
 - 2. Jonah 3:10 - evil ways; disaster
 - 3. Nineveh was certainly full of wickedness
 - 4. It was undergoing disasters at this time
 - i) Major famine, solar eclipse, rebellions
 - ii) A city and king in trouble!
 - 5. The wicked city has been struck by disasters
 - 6. God is concerned about both things
- B. Act one, scene one - the plot twist (1:3-17)
 - 1. Jonah arises - and runs in opposite direction (1:3)
 - 2. Trying to avoid Yahweh (1:3)
 - 3. Arise and go - but Jonah goes down, down (1:3, 5)

4. Jonah - the prophet - could not be more rebellious!

III. Act One, Scene Two - God Pursues the Rebel

A. God pursues the rebel Jonah by a storm

1. Yahweh **hurls** a **great** wind to get Jonah (1:4)
2. The sailors are afraid, pray, and hurl cargo (1:4)
3. Jonah is asleep! (1:5-6; utter lack of compassion)

B. God pursues the rebel Jonah through the lots

1. Pagans cast lots - it picks Jonah! (1:7)
2. Their question - and Jonah's ironic answer (1:8-9)
3. "What have you done?" (1:10)
4. Jonah's foolish actions brought trouble to others
5. Contrast this with Paul in Acts 27

C. God pursues the rebel Jonah in the sea

1. What to do? - **Hurl** me into the sea! (1:11-12)
2. He would rather die than go to Nineveh!
3. The *pagans* refuse to do this! (1:13)
4. Eventually they **hurl** Jonah into the sea (1:14-15)
5. The sailors turn to Yahweh! (1:16)
 - a. Specifically mentions Yahweh
 - b. Feared great fear, vowed vows, sacrificed sacrifices
 - c. Hebrew is emphatic throughout the verse

6. Yahweh pursued these rebels despite Jonah!

7. Yahweh appoints and sends a great fish (1:17)

8. Jonah will not escape from Yahweh!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Where have I run from God?

1. Not "if" - we have all rebelled and run from God
2. Some of us are still idolatrous sailors, following our own gods
3. Some live life completely ignoring their Creator
4. He is relentlessly pursuing you right now - respond!
5. Some of us are Christians who have run from God's call
6. Some of us are contemplating disobeying right now
7. Do not run from Him - run to Him!

B. Do I believe that God will still rescue me to serve Him?

1. It does not matter where you are - God can save!
2. Idolatrous sailors - turn to Him and receive mercy
3. Jonah rebelled - but that is not the end of his story!
4. God will redeem you and let you serve Him again!

C. A prayer of repentance, restoration and hope

The Rebel Runs From God

Jonah 1

???

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Prayer

Hebrews 13:20-21

1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. 4 But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. 6 So the captain came and said to him, “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.” 7 And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, “Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” 9 And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” 10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. 11 Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. 12 He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.” 13 Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. 14 Therefore they called out to the LORD, “O LORD, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.” 15 So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. 17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah 1:1–17

He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. Matthew 12:39-41

He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher. 2Ki 14:25

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their **evil** way, God relented of the **disaster** that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. Jonah 3:10