

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org).

**Date:**                **November 4, 2018**

**Sermon Title:**    **God is on Mission: GODISNOWHERE**

**Text:**                Jonah

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Date: November 4,2018  
Title: God on Mission: GODISNOWHERE  
Text: The Book of Jonah  
Theme: Learning to Deal with a Bad Hand

### **Introduction:**

In 8<sup>th</sup> century BC Israel, the nation was under assault by the feared Assyrians. The capital of that empire tumbling entity was Nineveh. The Assyrians were a genuine threat to the nation of Israel. The outcome of the encounter would be complete annihilation. God called Jonah to preach a message of repentance to the Assyrians. Jonah did not like what God was asking of him. Jonah went into a deep-seated stink. The Book of Jonah is an autobiography of the prophet as he wrestled with God from his condition of what we might identify as clinical depression. From the book of Jonah, how might we work through our own seasons of emotional and spiritual displacement?

For me, Jonah's experience is not exceptional, but normal. Recently our own fellowship has encountered multiple deaths of aging parents. When aged loved one's pass, there is a tendency to be historical. My family, like yours, has history that is passed from generation to generation. The story is told in our family how our great grandmother Catherine Marie Held had eight children and within a three year period all eight died from a deadly diphtheria epidemic. Their ages were from 2 years old to 14 years old. After the passing of her eight children, Catherine Marie had six more children of which was my grandmother Helen Held. Of the six, the youngest died of diphtheria. My mother is named after her grandmother.

HELD [Catherine Marie]	
Jonnie 1879-1881	Henry 1881-1892
Hubert 1882-1884	Petie 1886-1892
Lillie 1890-1892	Rosa 1888-1892
Julia 1884-1892	Katie 1878-1892

Although we think that the experience was extraordinary, yet back then such experiences were all too common and unexceptional. One of the questions I ask myself is how someone who has experienced such grief can carry on.

On Wednesday nights, our class studied the Book of Jonah. The Book offers the readers five truths that speak directly to our loss and sorrow.

Jonah is written as a play with four acts.

### **OVERVIEW**

- Act 1 - The Scene on the Ship (1)
- Act 2 - The Scene in the Fish (2)
- Act 3 - The Scene in the City (3)

- Act 4 - The Scene on the Hill (4)

Each act contributes to the following four emphases.

**First, the primary point is God's vision for humanity at large. His design has always been global.**

- "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).
- "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

This story is a part of God's *Story*. Our stories are a part of God's *Story*. God does not relent. He does not deviate from what He willed to do. What God promises always comes to pass.

"We all are familiar with the story of Jonah and how he did not want to go to Assyria and do as the Lord commanded. However, we often miss the point of this important book; namely that God's purpose to save people from all nations is clearly demonstrated even the Old Testament, for the entire city of Nineveh repents (Jon 3:1ff). **The message is not about Jonah running from God, but God's mercy on sinners.** Christ as the true Jonah, fulfills this book by making atonement for sin (3 days idea), but also carries forth the message of hope and restoration to all the peoples of the world (Matt 12:39-41). However, Jesus does not grumble at God's mercy to Gentiles, but instead rebukes those who fail to understand God's forgiveness and mercy to pagan nations."<sup>1</sup>

God is on Mission. He saves worshippers from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation (Rev. 7:9). If this point is missed, then the Spirit's voice has been silenced.

God is faithful in fulfilling His Word to bless all the nations, including those of our enemies (Rom. 12:14-17). As Christians we must be careful that our patriotism does not interfere with our evangelism. Our nation is at war with several nations (i.e. people groups). We must pray for those in our government and respect those who have authority over us (Rom. 13:1; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; Titus 3:1) knowing the decision they make affect our witness and our worship. **God just might be saving those whom we "wish dead"** [awkward].

**Second, the book demonstrates the control of God in accomplishing His purposes (1:17; 4:6-8).**

God uses whatever He wishes to accomplish the fulfillment of His promise. Jonah is not the stereotypical image of one we would think God would choose to use, but **God chooses what we would not to accomplish what we cannot.**

The Book of Jonah allows the "curtain" of God's activity to be pulled back and enables the reader to see how He works providentially in the performing of His will. He 'prepared' a great fish, a gourd, a worm, and an east wind.

- **“The LORD hurled a great wind on the sea** and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up” (Jonah 1:4).
- “And **the LORD appointed a great fish** to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:17).
- “So **the LORD God appointed a plant** and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant” (Jonah 4:6).
- “But **God appointed a worm** when dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered” (Jonah 4:7).
- “When the sun came up **God appointed a scorching east wind**, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with all his soul to die, saying, and ‘Death is better to me than life’” (Jonah 4:8).

“God is in total control of the forces of nature but is not part of them. The sea is not a person but a part of creation. Yahweh can make it rage or be still (Jonah 1:4 Jonah 1:13 Jonah 1:15). He can send the wind and cause a storm (1:4 ). He can remove the clouds and make the sun bear down with all its force (4:8 ). He can use the fierce desert wind to carry out his plan (4:8 ). He can appoint huge denizens of the deep (2:1 ) or commission a tiny worm (4:7) to do his will. If he wishes, he can make a special plant come up from the earth to fulfill his purpose (4:6 ). He can also control people – even those who have not previously known him. In 1:15 the sailors throw Jonah into the ocean, but in 2:4 the action is attributed to Yahweh. He is the God of heaven but also Creator of the sea and dry land (1:9 ). The sovereign Lord even controls the casting of the lots so that they identify Jonah as the source of the calamity (1:7-10).”<sup>2</sup>

A supporting element to this primary idea of God’s oversight is how God works.

**Third, this oversight/control is often worked directly through secondary agents to accomplish His purpose.**

There is mystery behind the working of God. It is almost impossible at times to discern what is or is not the working of God. But His world is ordered in such a way as to see His greater good accomplished, even if through secondary causes.

God is the God of providence. He orders and is behind the natural outworking of this universe. I cannot answer as to why things happen, only that each event has significance. His *Story* is moving forward. This working through secondary agents is no less real than if He touched them Himself. This thought enables us to make certain observations about our lives in general.

- God is master of the sensational and the mundane.
- Although we seek to know God and crave some kind of visual and/or verbal intervention, God is present and appointing our moments.

- Learn to accept where you are as part of God’s program for you.
- Stop kicking against the goads.

**Fourth, Jonah’s emotional and spiritual frame of mind must be considered a primary element within the book.**

Jonah has become the “poster child” and “scratch pad” for unfortunate application. Yet I believe there is another way and I think a more honest way of looking at Jonah’s disobedience.

Our emotions always lag behind our intellect. Books like Jonah help us understand the complexity of the human condition and perhaps a smidgen of God's mystery. God is not threatened by our fatigue nor is He challenged by our failure. God is bigger than this. There are several thoughts we might consider when looking at Jonah’s emotional and spiritual depression.

God can handle our emotional instability. He is not threatened by our mental frailty. Our emotional responses to the prosperity of the wicked is illogical.

Our peace of mind only happens as we see our story inside of His.

We cannot undo what is true. Trying to live in the fantasy world of the fictional leads to a deeper and darker depression.

God is never pushed off center by our emotional and spiritual frailty.

God’s victory does not always look like what we want. Trust him and continue to believe that His ways are not our ways.

What God designed us for is to trust Him even when none of this makes any sense, even when emotionally and spiritually spent.

What might we do when we find ourselves emotionally and spiritually drained?

First, the best defense is a solid offense. The “ounce of prevention is always better than the pound of cure.” Learn to live inside of His *Story*. **Although we all seek the sensational, God is often moving in the mundane.** None of us wish to be swallowed by the “whale.” Do not neglect the regular responsibilities you have inside of existing relationships as part of God’s presence and power. Do not downplay or overlook the regular and routine.

In addition, we should work to consciously [i.e. volition] keep ourselves inside of God’s greater *Story* by . . .

- a. Gathering for corporate worship on a weekly basis
- b. Seeking opportunity for continued instruction in the Word of God
- c. Desiring transparent fellowship with other believers whom we can trust and “feel” unjudged and
- d. Finally, learn to live gospel rich lives that communicate Jesus to those around us.

**Finally, in light of the New Testament, we should read every story as a single *Story* with Jesus at the center (Matt. 12:40).**

No one reading Jonah would think this is a primary type of our own Lord's death, burial, and resurrection. Yet, our Lord and Savior Jesus refers to it as such.

- Jonah as a sign will become a voluntary sacrifice that appeases the wrath of God (1:11-15).
- Third, God's justice is placated and His wrath abated as sacrifice is made (1:15).

"Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin." They attempted to appease God through the work of their own hands (v. 13-15), but God required "blood." Jonah had to be offered up/sacrificed.

What is God after in all of this? The sailors recognize God as Creator and as such He may do what He wants with what is His and when He does it, it is always right. God does what pleases Him. How He goes about doing this does not always make sense to us, but behind all of it, God is working.

They assumed God controlled life and that a displeased God was behind the storm's fury. They assumed God's justice must be placated. They assumed the sacrifice would appease God. Jonah was so depressed that he was willing to die. He fully expected to die, but God had something else in view.

Two walking takeaways.

1. God cares for us more than we can imagine. He is tenderly turning our hearts toward Himself. God knows that our joy is firmly and ultimately sourced in His presence.

The Book of Jonah ends rather abruptly. We can rightly assume that Jonah recovered from his self-inflicted wound and returned to a state of emotional and spiritual stability. How might we know this? You would have to be in your right mind to write about your wrong mind.

2. God is on Mission and will fulfill His Vision of seeing the earth covered with a knowledge of His glory as the waters cover the sea.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://theroadtoemmaus.wordpress.com/2007/08/17/the-message-of-the-minor-prophets/>

<sup>2</sup> Paul Ferguson - <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/jonah-theology-of.html>