



Takeaway: We run in the direction of our strongest desires; if the Kingdom isn't our desire, then we will run the wrong way.

Scripture: Jonah 1, Luke 11:39-44, Psalm 139:23-24, Ezekiel 36:26, Matthew 9:36

INTRO

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah. Jonah 1:1 ESV

Anytime a book starts with, "The word of the Lord came," that tells us that this is a prophetic book. The purpose behind prophetic books is to deliver a message to God's people that shows they are living in a way that is cutting them off from God's goodness and offers a plan to correct their living.

But what sets Jonah apart from the other prophetic books is the way the author wrote Jonah's story. We don't know who wrote Jonah or when it took place, but the way the author wrote is very unique and intentional. There are details that are blown up and made to feel huge. There are also moments that are so ridiculous that are meant to make you laugh. These are all on purpose and really happened.

- The word "great" is mentioned 15 times. So, everything feels exaggerated in size. The ship is huge, the storm is huge, the city is huge, and the fish is huge. Everything is over the top.
- No one acts like the readers of Jonah would expect. The prophet didn't act like a prophet, the heathen sailors didn't act like heathens, and the barbarian nation of Nineveh didn't live up to their reputation. Everyone was the reverse of expectations.

This may feel weird and crazy but it was written that way intentionally. The story of Jonah is meant to reveal the hearts of the reader as they follow the life of Jonah.

TENSION

The book of Jonah starts off like this:

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai. Jonah 1:1 ESV

When you read this first line and you hear the main character's name, you need to imagine a laugh track plays in the background. Jonah means "peaceful dove" and son of Amittai means "son of faithfulness." It's funny because Jonah was the opposite of this. As you read on about Jonah's life, you'll find yourself booing Jonah more than cheering him on. He was a terrible human being and an even worse prophet.

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." Jonah 1:2 ESV

This second line sets Jonah apart from the other prophetic books even more because Jonah was not being sent to God's people, but God's people's enemies. This was clearly outside of Jonah's job description as a prophet. He likely wondered why God was concerned for His people's enemies.

The Ninevites were a brutal people. They were savage warriors that had conquered most of the region. This was the same group of people that destroyed 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel. They skinned the leaders alive in front of the people before sending them into exile. To say Israel had a grudge would be putting it mildly.

Jonah had a plan for how his life should work. He needed to care for his people and bless Israel. Yet, God invited Jonah into the most scandalous movement of revival history has ever seen. So, what did the peaceful dove do?

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 down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord. Jonah 1:3 ESV

Jonah did not travel east to Nineveh but west toward the nearest port, and he grabbed a boat to Tarshish. Tarshish was a port city in Spain. It was the furthest west you could travel before reaching the Atlantic Ocean. So, Jonah's intent was to get as far from Nineveh as was possible. This would be like you moving to Antarctica to avoid having an awkward conversation. Cue the laugh track because this is ridiculous.

TRUTH



Application steps from the message:

- Identify the Division
 - Pray For a New Heart
 - Be An “US for THEM”
1. What is the scariest or hardest thing God requires from us?
 2. Read this verse out loud: *Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I’m about; See for yourself whether I’ve done anything wrong —then guide me on the road to eternal life. Psalm 139:23-24* **Message.** What sticks out to you in this passage? What seems hard?
 3. How do you decide who your enemies are?
 4. Would it be easy for you to rescue and love your enemies? Why or why not?
 5. How do people’s hearts become transformed?
 6. What would you need to do differently to have a transformed heart?
 7. What are some ways you can love people who are different than you?