

**Read: Jonah 3:1-5,10**

God, Others, Me

**Jonah 3:1-2**

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

"Me? . . . Them? . . . Now? . . . No way!" And just like that, Jonah ran away as fast and as far as he could.

Do you remember how that story went? God came to the prophet Jonah and told him to go and preach to the people of Nineveh. The people of Nineveh lived about 600 miles away from Israel, and they were very, very evil people. Not only were they wicked unbelievers, but they were also enemies with Jonah and his people.

Jonah was frustrated, upset, scared, and probably much more. Why would he go and preach to those people? Why would God want to save *them*? So Jonah ran away, hopped on a boat, and set sail in the opposite direction to a place about 2,000 miles away from Nineveh. That's when the famous story happened where Jonah was swallowed by the giant fish, he repented, he learned a lesson about God's grace and mercy, and he was spit back onto dry ground.

Then we pick up with the words for our devotion today: "The word of the LORD came to Jonah a *second* time." God told him again to go and preach to the people of Nineveh. This time Jonah did, and the incredible happened! Every last person in that wicked city listened to Jonah, turned to the LORD, and God spared them by his grace. Amazing!

Do you know that God has also called you to preach? Yes, God calls some to be pastors and teachers. But God also calls all of his followers, both young and old, to go and make disciples of all nations and share the good news of Jesus as our Savior. However, sometimes like Jonah we selfishly put ourselves first instead of God and his grace. We may not share Jesus because we are afraid of what people will say or because we are just too lazy to look for opportunities. Sometimes, sadly, we are even like Jonah and don't share Jesus because we don't like other people. "Why would I share Jesus with people like that?" Or, "They won't listen to me," we may think.

How important it is for us to learn the same lesson that Jonah did. God's amazing grace is for all people of all nations. All of us equally deserve God's punishment. Yet God graciously sent his Son Jesus to live and die for all people, and amazingly, that includes us too. You and I know

this truth, but many others do not. That's why God sends us to share this good news (we call that good news the *gospel*).

So unlike Jonah at first, let's not put ourselves first. We put God first and love him by obeying his call to make other disciples. Then we put others second as we love them by sharing the good news of Jesus with them. How pleasing to God when we get things in the proper order—God, others, me.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What did God tell Jonah to do?
- Why didn't Jonah want to do that?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What lesson did God teach Jonah by the end of the story?
- Can you think of people that might be scared or nervous to talk to about Jesus? Why do you feel that way?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Explain this statement: One of the reasons we don't always share Jesus with others is our own pride.
- As a family, think of one group of people not living in our country that you can pray for, asking God that they might hear and believe the good news of Jesus.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, you have called us to be your disciples and then to go and make other disciples. Help us to be bold and brave as we share your good news with all people. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 453:1,3 – Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spoke**

“Come, follow me,” the Savior spoke, “All in my way abiding.  
Deny yourselves; the world forsake; Obey my call and guiding.  
Oh, bear the cross, whate'er betide; Take my example for your guide.

“My heart abounds in lowliness, My soul with love is glowing,  
And gracious words my lips express, With meekness overflowing.  
My heart, my mind, my strength, my all To God I yield; on him I call.