

1. This morning we are going to conclude our series on the life of Jonah.
2. In week one our title was "How did I wind up here"? Jonah disobeyed a direct command from God to go to Nineveh and warn them that destruction was coming.
3. He fled on a ship headed as far away from where God told him to go and the result was that God prepared a great fish that swallowed him. He was bound and trapped in the belly of that fish for three days.
4. That is a picture of what can happen to each and every one of us when we refuse to be obedient to God's word. Not only his written word but his spoken word for our life.
5. In week two our title was: "How do I get out of here?" The answer, run to the only one that can provide lasting peace and fulfillment and that is Jesus.
6. So often in our world today we find our self in a bind and we run to everything but Jesus. Often times we run to things that leave us in more bondage than when we started.
7. Run to Jesus. No matter how far you have fallen he can still rescue you. Even if it was your fault.
8. Week three, last week. We discovered however that God isn't just interested in us being free. He wants to give us freedom so that we can live out our calling.
9. Every believer has a calling on their life to be an instrument or a tool in the hands of God to share the good news of Jesus to those who don't know him.
10. When we operate in our calling like Jonah, what occurs is nothing short of miraculous.
11. Jonah goes to Nineveh and the entire city turns to the Lord. They repent. They ask forgiveness of the Lord. They turn their lives to him and God calls off the punishment and judgment he was going to bring. In short there was revival.
12. Friend, America needs revival. Arkansas needs revival. Independence County needs revival. Batesville needs revival. Batesville First Assembly needs revival.
13. You need revival and I need revival. I will never be satisfied with the status quo. I want an outpouring of the miraculous that only God can bring. If you think that's old fashioned I don't mean to be rude but I won't apologize.
14. I believe God is still in the business of changing lives. And at the heart of any true revival lives will be changed.
15. Revival is not a series of meetings with an evangelist who comes from out of town. Revival is a sovereign move of God's Spirit whereby people can no longer live in their sin and pitiful state.
16. Now I know this will come as a surprise to a few of you but I must tell you, there are some folks who don't want revival.
17. There are some folks who don't want God's Spirit to move. There are some folks who don't want God to take control and change dirty, rotten, rank sinners.
18. There are some folks who don't want the Lord to be the Lord of his church and do what the Lord of the church does.
19. There are some folks who unfortunately have seen God do amazing things and they just don't want it.
20. Jonah was one of those people. For as amazing as this story is, these four chapters of this book. For as much like an action packed thriller of a movie Jonah's story has been.

21. For as many miracles as God did through Jonah, it boggles my mind that chapter three is followed by chapter four. This would be the greatest story ever written and lived if it just ended with chapter three but unfortunately it doesn't. Follow along with me as we see the reason for this terrible ending.

TEXT: **Jonah 4:1-11** But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. **2** He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. **3** Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." **4** But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?" **5** Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. **6** Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. **7** But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. **8** When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live." **9** But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?" "I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die." **10** But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. **11** But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

TITLE: **Get the Jonah out of here!**

INTRO:

1. This has got to rank right up there in the bible as one of the strangest happenings you will ever find.
2. It is absolutely mind boggling. I have broken up this teaching into four parts with each part corresponding to a chapter in the book of Jonah.
3. So each week we end with the last verse of that chapter and then you have a whole week to think about it before we start the next chapter.
4. Keep in mind the story didn't play out that way. I don't know exactly what length of time transpired from the time God spoke to Jonah to go to Nineveh until we find him here in chapter four but more than likely it was about ten days.
5. God speaks to Jonah one day. The next morning Jonah boards a ship to Tarshish. That's two days. Maybe they sail for a day and then Jonah is in the belly of the great fish for three days. Now we're up to five days.
6. Jonah goes back to Jerusalem where God speaks to him again and Jonah immediately goes to Nineveh. Six days.
7. It's three days journey all the way from one side of Nineveh to the other, that's now nine days. And then the day after he finishes walking through the city where a revival breaks out we encounter him outside the city in chapter four.
8. So about ten days all together.
9. Here is the last verse in chapter three, day nine. **Jonah 3:10** When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.

10. Revival is breaking out. There is repentance. Sackcloth and ashes. People are turning to God and they are being set free and lives are being changed and destruction is being averted.
11. And then **Jonah 4:1 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry.** Angry over what? Angry over God being God. (pause)
12. Here is our first point this morning. I don't fully understand it. I don't get it, but we see it throughout scripture and especially right here in Jonah's life.

Not all believers want God to be God

1. Not all pastors want God to be God. Not all people who claim to be Christians want God to be God.
2. Don't get uneasy on me this morning; I'm for sure not going to do any name calling, that job is assigned to the Holy Spirit. But without a doubt not everybody who claims to know Jesus as their savior wants God to be God.
3. **Jonah 4:2-3 He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."**
4. What did Jonah say to God in his anger? He said I told you so God.
5. I read that and I just scratch my head. There is a part of me that wants to yell at my bible. Hey Dude! Jonah! Have you forgotten already the three days you spent in the belly of that fish with the seaweed wrapped around your head.
6. Have you forgotten what God is capable of? Have you forgotten how low you were and how trapped you were and how miserable your life was.
7. Now I want to say something very clearly and I want you to be sure that I am speaking to myself first. But all of us need to understand that if we are not careful, the longer we serve God and the further we get away from when we were saved and God rescued us from our wretched life of sin, the more possible it is for us to come to a place where we think we know better than God.
8. The more possible it is for us to get into a state of being where we don't even want God to be God anymore.
9. Here is what Jonah says. Remember God when I was back at home and you told me to go to Nineveh but I fled to Tarshish?
10. I told you then I wasn't going because I knew that you were and are a compassionate and gracious and loving God and I just knew that you were going to save those people in Nineveh.
11. Remember the people of Nineveh were evil wicked people and they had tormented the children of Israel for many years.
12. Do not miss what Jonah was saying. Jonah was saying, God I know this is how you are. I know this is who you are. I know this is what you do. And I don't want any part of it. I do not want you being who you are and doing what you do, I want you to do what I want you to do and I want you to act like I want you to act and because you haven't done

exactly what I want you to do I don't mind telling you I'd rather die than go where you tell me to go.

13. **Jonah didn't want a God to be Lord over his life; he wanted a puppet he could control.**
14. My brother and my sister, I am convinced that Jonah was not the only one of his kind in the bible nor in the world and I am equally as convinced that some of Jonah's relatives have made it into the 21st century.
15. Let me be clear this morning. God will be no man's puppet. God is not interested in a relationship with you and me in which we come forward to an altar or we say a prayer or we ask for forgiveness and then act and live the rest of the time as if his word doesn't even exist.
16. We don't read his word and we don't study his word and we don't value his word as if it contains the very words of life that our lives are to be guided by.
17. And maybe the reason is because we feel that ignorance is bliss.
18. If I don't know then I can just go around like God is my little puppet and I can get him out when I need him and when I don't want him then he can just stay put up.
19. I repeat, God will be no man's puppet.
20. The next thing we need to know is that...

God will not be the entertainment at our pity party

Jonah 4:4-5 But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?" **5** Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city.

1. I loved the perspective of one of the bible commentaries I read. It said, can you imagine what the response of the people of Nineveh would have been toward Jonah?
2. These people had been spared severe judgment from God. God had in mind to destroy the whole entire city and everything and everybody in it. But because of Jonah's message they had all turned to God, even the king.
3. More than likely they were about ready to put him up on their shoulders and march him through the city while everybody thanked him for coming and being used by God to spare their lives.
4. Jonah had every reason in the world to get to experience the joy and the blessing of this great revival.
5. But look at what he does instead. He goes outside the city. Outside the city. The revival is taking place inside the city. But he goes outside the city.
6. Builds a crude shelter to shade himself from the sun and he sits there and he pouts and he folds his arms and he stewes in his angry juices and it says he waits to see what would happen to the city.
7. This city that he has just helped save, he now probably sits there wishing and praying that it would be destroyed.
8. He would rather it be destroyed and all the people killed than for God to have his way and be glorified through a great move of the spirit.
9. And as he sits there at his pity party God says. "Jonah. Do you have any right to be angry?"

10. The obvious answer is no Jonah you do not. I can just hear God saying, I created this earth and I created the city of Nineveh and I created you and I am God and I am going to do what I want whether you like it or not.
11. You can pout, you can fold your arms, you can be angry all you want but my will shall be done because I am God.
12. Now what happens next is nothing short of spectacular.

We shouldn't despise the very thing we need

Jonah 4:6 Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine.

1. Jonah was angry at God for showing compassion towards the people of Nineveh but yet here is God showing compassion towards Jonah when he is being obstinate and hard headed and acting like a baby.
2. But in spite of Jonah's arguing with God, God caused a vine to grow up over Jonah to give him relief. And Jonah was very happy about the vine.
3. I read that and I thought, what kind of person is happy when they get something but is angry when somebody else gets it.
4. The only thing that came to mind was a toddler going through the terrible two's. Only a baby is so selfish that if somebody else gets what they don't have they throw a fit.
5. I say only a baby unless that baby grows up to be a 42 year old baby or a 62 year old baby or an 82 year old baby.
6. I want God's blessings but I don't want anybody else to have it.
7. I'll quote those parts of the bible that make me feel good and promise me blessings and good things but I'll ignore those commands of obedience that are so vital to gaining those blessings.
8. I'll demand that everybody else tow the line without fail but if I don't then that's my business just leave me alone.
9. Friend, we can't take the parts of God's word that we like and hold to them and make the rest optional. It doesn't work that way. Jonah didn't want anybody else getting compassion from God, but he sure was happy when it came his way.
10. I mean let's be real. Jonah has gone from famous evangelist/prophet to a backslidden, pouting, angry excuse for a human being.
11. Why. Because...

He didn't keep the main thing the main thing

1. Jonah is happy about the vine that is shading his head but then comes verse 7.
2. Jonah 4:7-11 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?" "I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die." 10 But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot

tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

3. Church, to me the lesson here is as glaring and as plain as the nose on our face. When we keep the main thing the main thing then what happens in our life is that fulfillment and joy and peace and power and life come flooding in when we need them because we are on the same page with God.
4. That is not to say that we won't experience problems because we will. That is not to say that we won't go through some valleys because we will.
5. That is not to say that sickness or wayward children or heartache will be avoided all together because it won't.
6. But when we keep the main thing the main thing then Jesus will make blessing us one of his main things.
7. Jonah was angry about a vine that withered and died. He was so mad that he wanted to die. And when God questioned him about the vine and asked again, do you have a right to be angry Jonah selfishly responded.
8. You better believe I have a right to be angry.
9. I find it interesting that Jonah didn't offer any real proof that he had a right to be angry; he just wanted to be angry.
10. I hate to say it but again, I think some of Jonah's relatives have survived into the 21st century. Some folks just need something to constantly be angry about. They continually need something to be steamed about.
11. They constantly need somebody or something to be mumble mouthing about because it's the only thing they know.
12. And like Jonah the problem with all that is that often times the things they are mad about are really insignificant compared to the main thing.
13. God's rebuke of Jonah was based on the fact that Jonah had spent more time being angry about a vine that he didn't even tend or help grow than he was a city full of people who were lost and going to be destroyed.
14. He was more concerned about a lifeless plant than he was about a lifeless people who were headed to destruction.
15. Church, I submit to you that it is entirely possible and according to my study of church history it is entirely probable that if given enough time any church, any believer, any religious organization can become just like Jonah.
16. We can forget what the main thing is and we can make things that were never meant to be the main thing the main thing in its place.
17. The main thing is that God has created his church to not only be a place of worship, and a place where people can grow in their faith and connect with other believers, but it is also to be God's agent to reach a lost and dying world with the good news of Jesus.
18. It is not our only priority but I do believe it has to be our main priority and that is the reaching of those who are on their way to hell and destruction.
19. But if we are not careful, we can take any one of a million other things and put them in the place of the plant that Jonah was angry about and we can have our own anger fest.

20. Satan just loves it when we stew about how we will worship or when we will worship or what we will wear or not wear when we worship and how hot or cold the building is and what curriculum will we teach from and what version of the bible we will read from and who didn't say hello to me or acknowledge me and oh no, someone scratched the wall and who's going to tell who what to do and who's going to be in charge.
21. I'm not implying that those things are completely unimportant because some of them are important.
22. But none of them is the main thing. God told Jonah, you're concerned about a vine but I'm concerned about 120 thousand people who don't know their right hand from their left. They are lost.
23. More than likely the city had more than 120 thousand people. That was probably just the counting of the men who were of fighting age.
24. It is more probable that there was between 500 and 600 thousand people who were about ready to meet the judgment of their maker.
25. God says to Jonah, that's the main thing.
26. Church I submit to you that the main thing in Batesville Arkansas is not what happens here in our buildings. That is important but it isn't the main thing.
27. The main thing is the thousands of people, thousands, who are lost and without Jesus and who are going to split hell wide open unless God does a miracle through some church who is willing to step up.

Conclusion: Look at Sydney.

1. I hate the ending of the story of Jonah, because if this story was a movie it would be the worst of all time.
2. Where are we left? What is the very last picture we see of Jonah? While revival is taking place, while God is doing miracles the last thing we hear about Jonah is that Jonah is outside of the miracle, angry, dejected, defeated, sullen, complaining and miserable.
3. I don't know that Jonah ever comes around. I don't know that Jonah ever realizes that he has gotten things completely out of whack and that he needs to repent.
4. God just leaves him there and that is the last we hear.
5. Church I don't want to be left behind. I don't want the God of all the universe to turn his back on me, on you, on us and leave us because we refuse to make the main thing the main thing.
6. I confess to you this morning. Sometimes the spirit of Jonah rears its ugly head in my life. Maybe you don't struggle with that but I am here to tell you I do.
7. And the only solution is to **get the Jonah out of here.** (Head)
8. The only solution is to get the Jonah out of here. (Heart)
9. The only solution is to get the Jonah out of here. (church)
10. Salvation call.
11. This morning as the pastor of this church, as the shepherd of this flock, under the direction of Jesus Christ, I am calling on you today to join me in repentance.
12. I'm calling you to join me to ask the Holy Spirit to get the Jonah out of here. To break this spirit that rears its head sometimes in all believers everywhere.