

When Fear Meets Faith

Jonah 1:1-3

March 2, 2025

BIG IDEA

Fear can paralyze us, especially when faced with the impossible or uncomfortable. Jonah's story shows us the struggle between fear and obedience. When God calls us to step out in faith, the natural instinct may be to run, but God's relentless pursuit of us is a reminder that he can be trusted. In our own lives, when fear meets faith, we are challenged to choose to trust God, no matter how daunting the task. Jonah's disobedience shows us the consequences of resisting God's call, but also the lengths God will go to, to bring us back to his purposes.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Context:

Jonah was called by God to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, an enemy of Israel. However, overwhelmed by fear and national pride, Jonah fled in the opposite direction. His story is not just one of running from God's call, but of a God who pursues his children relentlessly, teaching them to trust him even in impossible circumstances.

Jonah 1:1-3 (ESV):

"The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.' 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."

MAIN IDEA

Jonah's attempt to run from God's call is a powerful reminder of the fear that can often arise when we are asked to do the impossible. But God's love and pursuit of us never wavers. Just as Jonah faced a choice to either trust or flee, we too face moments where fear meets faith, and the challenge is whether or not we will trust God in those times.



DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. The Call to Obey Even When Fearful

Jonah 1:1-2 – "Arise, go to Nineveh..."

- Why do you think Jonah fled from God's command?
- What are some fears or doubts you face when God calls you to do something that feels uncomfortable or impossible?
- How can we better respond to God's call when it feels difficult?

2. Running from God's Call

Jonah 1:3 – "But Jonah rose to flee..."

- In what ways might we run from God's call today (e.g., avoidance, denial, or resistance)?
- What are the consequences of fleeing from God's instructions?
- Can you think of a time when you chose to run away from a difficult situation, and what did that experience teach you about trusting God?

3. Trusting God When Fear Meets Faith

Matthew 12:39-41 – "The sign of the prophet Jonah..."

- How does Jesus' reference to Jonah's story impact our understanding of faith and obedience?
- In what areas of your life do you struggle with fear or doubt, and how can you learn to trust God in those moments?
- How does knowing that God will pursue us help us find the courage to follow his will?

4. The Relentless Pursuit of God

Psalms 139:7-8 – "Where shall I go from your Spirit?"

- What does it mean to know that we cannot escape from God's presence?
- How does God's pursuit of Jonah reflect his love for us, even when we try to run?
- How can you remind yourself of God's presence when you are tempted to flee from His plans?

PRAY

Father, thank you for your relentless pursuit of us. We confess that, like Jonah, we often run from your call out of fear or doubt. Help us trust you more fully, even when your



instructions seem overwhelming. May we always remember that you are with us, and that your plans for us are good, even in the most challenging circumstances. Teach us to trust you when fear meets faith, and help us to be obedient in all things. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- **Isaiah 55:8-9** – Understanding God's ways and thoughts above ours.
- **"The Runaway Prophet" by Timothy Keller** – A book exploring the themes of Jonah's story and God's pursuit of His people.

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

Jonah thought he could run from God. How foolish! God pursues his children because he loves them too much to let them get away.

