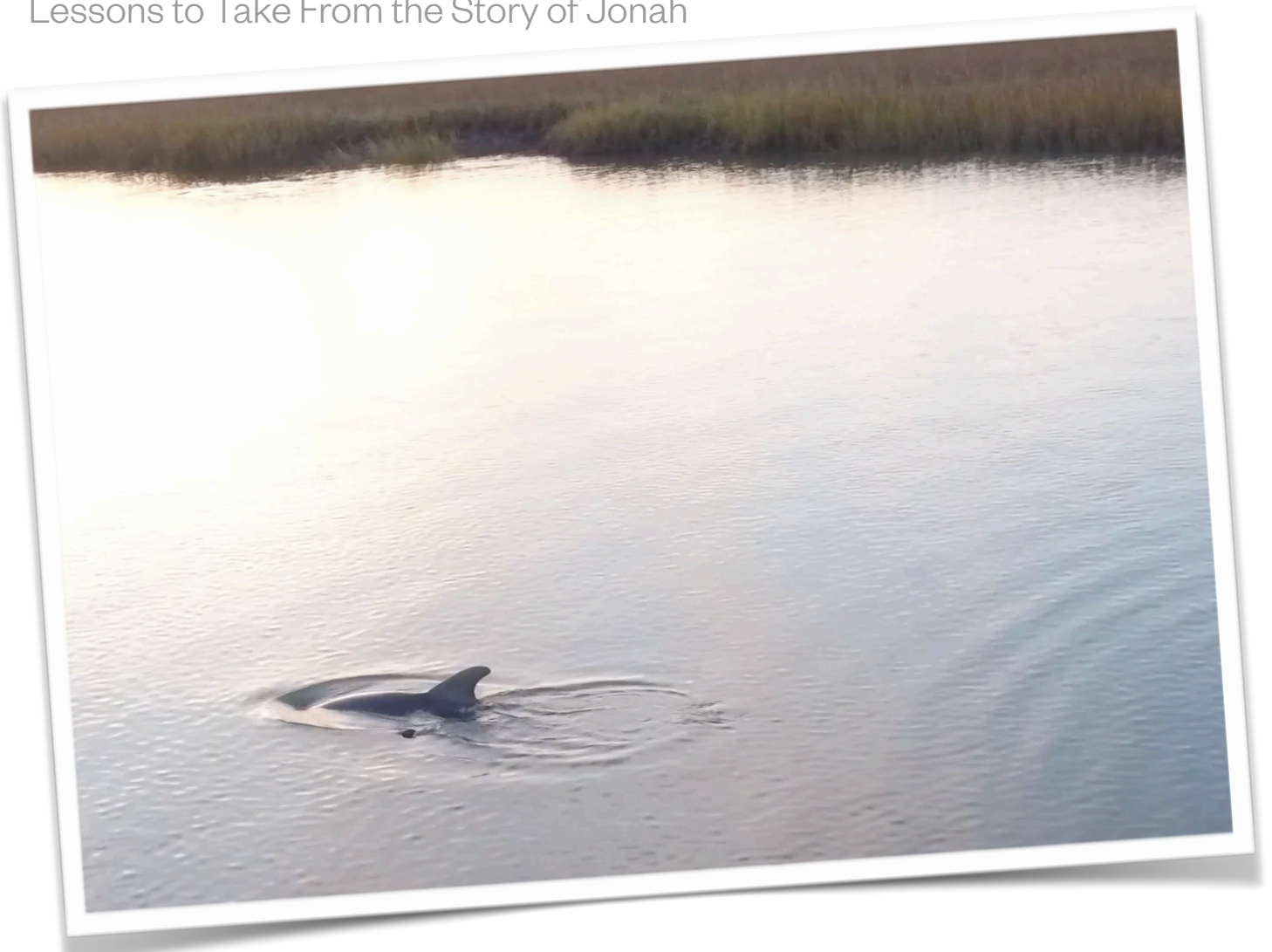


THANK GOD FOR YOUR FISH

Lessons to Take From the Story of Jonah



God Works All Things

Jonah was very unhappy about going to Nineveh because he knew God would forgive a people who repented of their ways. Jonah despised the people of Nineveh and didn't want to see them forgiven. Jonah did only the bare minimum to fulfill his obligation, there was no passion, no desire to see the people repent, and when they did, Jonah was angry. God chose Jonah to preach to Nineveh partially because of his flaws, He is always looking to improve our character and it's not unlike Him to use extraordinary means to accomplish it.

The “Fish” of Jonah

1:1-17 KJV

[1] Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, [2] Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. [3] But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. [4] But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. [5] Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. [6] So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

[7] And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. [8] Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? [9] And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. [10] Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. [11] Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. [12] And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

[13] Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. [14] Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. [15] So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. [16] Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows. [17] Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.



Am I Running Away From God?

1. God caused a great wind that broke up the ship Jonah was riding on much in the same way he allows our lives to fall apart because we're running away.
2. There was an instant reaction by God once Jonah accepted responsibility for his rebellion and He calmed the sea.

Three Wonderful Truths:

1. God Loves You
 2. God Knows You
 3. God Cares for You
3. Jonah went below deck in an attempt to hide from God. We hide in many ways as well through things we think will make us happy (sin) but they will not bring joy because they are merely distractions from God.

God did Four things for Jonah through the fish:

1. He Rescued Him
 2. He Transported Him
 3. He Refocused Him
4. We should thank God for the fish he sends in our life because in spite of the pain, it ultimately will be the vehicle that delivered us.

Four Questions to ask Ourselves:

1. What do I need to be Rescued From?
2. What do I need to know?
3. Where do I need to go?
4. What do I need to do?

Four Godly Approaches to Answer God's Call to Us:

1. Pray for it
2. Identify it
3. Thank God for it
4. Do something about it

Lessons to Take From the Book of Jonah

1. **God Loves People** - Jonah knew this about God which is why he fled from God's call to preach at Nineveh. Nowadays we get sidetracked about modern day politics and forget that God loves ALL people. God wants his love for people to become our love for people.
2. **God Forgives Sin** - God wants no one to perish, he wants ALL to come into his glory. All forgiveness comes from God, it is through his forgiveness for us that we can learn to forgive others. Only God can forgive sin.

Hebrews 7:25 KJV

[25] Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Psalms 86:5 KJV

[5] For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Psalms 145:8-9 KJV

[8] The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. [9] The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

3. **God Arranges Situations to Teach Us** - God used a worm to destroy the plant that was providing shade and comfort to Jonah, teaching Jonah how selfish he was being worrying about himself while ignoring the salvation of an entire city. Things that matter to God ought to be the same things that matter to us. God did a great work through Jonah, now he was working on Jonah
4. **Discouragement is a Trap for Defeat** - Valleys come after great moments because we are in a spiritual battle but God does not want us to be discouraged, it is not his will for us to wallow. We have to come back to the thought "God is able." God uses people who don't deserve to be used by God to do his will in ways we never thought he could.