



November 2017
DEVO #1 – Jonah, The Calling
By: Pastor Bryan Hart

I believe all people have a specific calling from God, but as men we have a special honor, privilege, and calling that others don't have. Not only are we called to live for Jesus, and invade the darkness by living out the Gospel, but we are also called to be leaders. We are to be husbands, fathers, and lead our homes into God's will! No matter your age we need to constantly allow God to shape us so we can do our best to be Men of God that leads others.

As we dive into this month's devotional I believe we will see many similarities in our life that we see in this man in the Bible by the name of Jonah. Now Jonah was a good man, in fact he was actually a prophet, but Jonah is known for being a reluctant prophet and running from God.

Now Jonah was called to go to a specific place, a city called Nineveh. This city was a sinful city, and is actually modern day northern Iraq, but back then in this area there were ruthless people that did not like Christians or Jonah's kind. They were ruthless and destroyed villages and killed many people. So, when Jonah was called he knew this was not going to be an easy mission. He knew there would be hard times and he knew that if he went he would most likely die for preaching to this ruthless and sinful city.

Today, the first thing we need to realize in this story is that when God speaks to us we will not always like what He speaks. Jonah didn't want to go. He didn't accept his mission and calling, so he ran because if he went he knew that it would not be the easiest thing. How many times as men do have the same choice? We feel God tugging at our heart to lead our family this way or even to share your faith at work but we run from that calling because we are afraid that we could get some backlash.

I want to encourage and challenge us all by asking this question: What have you been running from that you should be running to? Like Jonah you might have a good reason for not wanting to do what God has called you to and you might try to delay it, but let's remember that delayed obedience is still disobedience. As men we need to be leaders and obey what God speaks, even if we don't like what He speaks.

Men, let's make this a year of running to what God has called us to. Let's MAN UP and run through the storms. Let's run to His promises, to His provision, to His calling and to His will for our lives! Let's run and be the leaders, the husbands, the fathers, the teachers, the students and servants that we are called to be. Don't quit running. Keep going! Yes, there will be storms but if you run through them and embrace them, the Glory rests on the other side.

Scriptures (NIV) - Day #1

Jonah 1:1-2, The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."

Romans 8:28, And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Questions- Day #1

1. Reflect and ask yourself, have you run from something that God has called you to actually run to?
2. What are some steps that you can take to help prepare you now for when you feel God calling you to do something you may not like?
3. Do you need to ask God to forgive you of any disobedience or even delaying what He is telling you to do?
4. Spend time in prayer and ask God to reveal what He is calling you to do.



November 2017
DEVO #2– Jonah, The Boat, pt. 1
By: Pastor Bryan Hart

As we continue to look at the life of Jonah we know that sometimes God calls us to do things we don't really like, and many times when we don't like it we ignore what God is telling us. We excuse it. We delay it, or like Jonah we simply run from it.

I don't know about you but it seems every time I make up my mind to do something immediately another option appears. For example, how many times have we said we are going on a diet and going to start exercising then as soon as you get home or arrive at work they have your favorite dish of food or fresh coffee and donuts for you in the morning, or maybe someone might make their mind to quit a bad habit like smoking but then they go to a gas station and guess what they have a huge sale on. Its crazy that we try to choose something and another option appears.

Likewise, I think many times God calls us to something specific and other options magically appear and in our fleshy mindset we justify these options and come to the conclusion that more options means different and easier ways to sneak by and get accomplished what God has called us to. But if we could stop deceiving ourselves and look at scripture and actually believe in it, we see that there is only one option, one boat, one route, one way, and that is the Jesus way! There is no shortcut or formula, it's simply obeying and getting on the right boat that God has called you to!

I know as men we like to solve problems and figure things out on our own. Have you ever tried to construct something without reading the manual, or asking for help? Often times when we do that it takes longer, or we don't use all the pieces, or we even might decide to start over and actually use the manual. In our life God gives us a manual (the Bible) and He gives a guide (the Holy Spirit), but often as men do we apply both before we start or do we just try to get to work and look for what we think is the best option (boat) for us instead of praying about it.

Jonah was called to Nineveh, but he got on the wrong boat. How many of you know you can run from God, but you can't hide from God? Jonah got on a boat and was headed in the opposite direction of what God called him to. Men, today let's not run from but let's continue to run to what God has. Let's stop looking at option B and creating our own route, and lets lay down our maps for our destiny and let's pick up His atlas for our lives.

We are called to be leaders, but for us to lead we truly need to follow and obey God. We need to go to the next level and be men of faith that trust in the Lord like Noah, Abraham, and David. We need to get on the correct boat and not entertain the options we see. We need to be leaders that do what God directs and also leaders that help guide other to get on the correct boat that God has for them.

Scriptures (NIV) - Day #2

Jonah 1:1-3, The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."³ But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

Deuteronomy 5:33, Walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

Questions - Day #2

1. Are you getting on the boat God has called you to get on, or are you trying to look at other boats and other options in your life?
2. Do you spend time and apply the Bible and the Holy Spirit to your life to direct you or do you just jump in and make things work for you?
3. Spend some time in prayer and the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Ask him to show you the boat you need to be on and ask Him to show you if you are on the wrong boat.



November 2017
DEVO #3– Jonah, The Boat, pt. 2
By: Pastor Bryan Hart

Jonah is a man that many of us can relate to. He was a good man that God called to go to the city of Nineveh but instead of going Jonah runs in the opposite direction. Why? Because we learned that many times when God calls us to something we may not always like what He calls us to do. Many of us are guilty of delaying, disobeying, and running from what God has called us to do, and many times like Jonah we try to take a different boat. So today I want to share with you three things that will help us as men stay off the wrong boat and keep us heading in the right direction.

The first is a simple thing but a deep thing: Intimacy with God! As men this can be hard but it's vital to follow God, to stay off the wrong boat, and to be leaders. Intimacy simply means.... IN....TO....ME...SEE. This is more than saying a prayer it's about building a relationship. It is saying, "God, I want to know you more. Show me who you are. What is your character? What is your nature? What are your thoughts toward me?" It is also the flip side, where you say, "God, show me who I am called to be. God change me, transform me, shape and mold me." It is opening up to Him. So how do you do this? Through prayer and fasting. But my question to you is, if you keep finding yourself on the wrong boat, what does your intimacy with God look like?

The second thing is Bible Application, and this is not just about reading the Bible but it's reading the verses and saying, "God how can I apply this to my life?" See, I have learned that the blessing is not in the knowing, but the blessing is always in the doing. It's important to know the Word, but it's more important to live out the Word. When you let His word change you and shape you it will help prevent you from getting on the wrong boat.

The third thing is having a community of other believers. This is extremely important to staying off the wrong boat. Jonah found some people and they let him on their boat. I have learned if you're not intentional about whom you surround yourself with, people will easily let you on their boat and lead you in the wrong direction. Jonah went to strangers and not his church family or friends and those that knew him. He should have talked with someone from his community of believers that could give him wisdom, help encourage him, and direct him to listen to God. As men it is important to get plugged in with a Godly community. Many times in my life I would have run away or been on the wrong boat if it was not for my community of believers that fight with and encourage me. These are people that know the direction you should be headed, because I have learned if you are confused and don't know the direction you are going, people will be glad to take you where they are headed.

It is vital as men that we stay off the wrong boat and stay on the right one. Let's be men that dive in spiritually so God can continue to lead us. Let's not forget the basics of having a relationship with Jesus. Let's spend time praying, fasting, reading, applying and getting involved in the church community so we can build friendships of iron sharpening iron.

Scriptures (NIV) - Day #3

1 Chronicles 16:11, Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

James 1:22, Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Proverbs 12:26, The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

Proverbs 27:17, As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Questions - Day #3

1. Reflect and think, how much time do you spend praying and in His Word? Do you need to grow in this area? This will help guide you to the right boat.
2. What is an area you can get plugged into with your community of believers that could help sharpen you and help keep you off the wrong boat?
3. Pray and ask God to show you other ways and more things you can do to continue to follow Him and to stay off the wrong boat.



November 2017
DEVO #4– Jonah, The Storm
By: Pastor Bryan Hart

Our last devotion was about making sure you are on the right boat and I gave you three steps to help you stay off the wrong boat. However, like Jonah, there are times where we run from God and get on the wrong boat that is headed in the complete opposite direction then what God wants us to go.

As the crew started their journey Jonah eventually found a spot on the boat and fell into a deep sleep. While he was sleeping, the scripture tells us the LORD sent a violent storm. The boat began to rock and they began to cry out to their gods, but they realized Jonah was nowhere to be found so they went searching for him and found him sleeping. This storm was supernatural, it was violent, and they were astonished that Jonah could sleep through it. As they woke him the crew asked about Jonah's God. Isn't it amazing that Jonah ran away from God but is still getting asked about his God? How many of you know you can run as smart, as hard, and as far as you want from God, but you can never hide from God. We serve an all wise, all knowing, and all-powerful God. There is no one like our God!

Sometimes we try to run like Jonah. We get on the wrong boat, and sometimes we fall asleep in that boat. Listen, men, we are called to be leaders and to go to the next level. We need to be the people God has called us to be, but how often do we fall asleep on our destiny. I want to challenge and encourage you to wake up, don't settle and don't give up! Maybe some of us have been sleeping on the things God has called us to, and it's time to wake up and live it out. Sometimes we face storms like Jonah and they can be violent, terrifying, and overwhelming. But I love what happened, the storm woke Jonah up! This was a powerful storm that not only physically woke him up but also spiritually something shifted and awakened his heart.

Jonah was running, then a storm came, then he woke up, then the crew asked him questions, and in the mist of the storm Jonah found his identity all over again. He stated who his God was, he stated who he was, and he claimed his mistake and said throw me overboard! We need to be men that not only wake up but also men that take ownership of our mistakes. This storm was an awaking to Jonah and sometimes God might send a storm in your life in his plan to prosper and save you. This storm saved Jonah, and if it was not for this storm, he would have still been sleeping.

This storm also paints a picture of salvation. It woke Jonah up and he was willing to kill his flesh, and his will. Jonah didn't want to run from God anymore so he went overboard. He was saying, "God, I completely surrender all. I'm getting off this boat!" Men, we need to be a place of complete surrender and say, "God your way not my way."

Scriptures (NIV) - Day #4

Jonah 1:4-17, Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶ The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish."

⁷ Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

⁹ He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

¹⁰ This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"

¹² "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

¹³ Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the Lord, "Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased." ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶ At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him. Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Ephesians 5:14, This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Revelation 3:2, Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.

Questions - Day # 4

1. Is there a dream or calling that God gave you that you have been sleeping on?
2. Do you think there are some storms that God used in your life to wake you and save you from your mistakes?
3. If you have been running from God and are on the wrong boat, will you choose to surrender like Jonah and say, "God, not my will but yours," and will you be willing to get off the boat?



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DEVO #5– Jonah, The Fish, pt. 1

By: Pastor Bryan Hart

In the past few devotions we noticed that when God speaks we sometimes don't like what he tells us to do. We noticed that options appear and we have to choose the only way and that is the Jesus way. We were then given some steps to help us stay off the wrong boat and keep following the right path God has for us, and then we talked about the power of the storm.

As we continue on the story of Jonah we know Jonah ran from God, he got on the wrong boat, fell asleep and then a violent storm came. What a crazy story but it only gets crazier, Jonah confesses that he ran from God and is thrown overboard. But that's not it; he begins to sink to the depths of the sea thinking he was going to die. Then, the Lord sends a giant fish to swallow him! Can you imagine this, being swallowed by a giant fish? Would it smell? What would you eat? Is it dark and cramped? Could you get seasick? Could you even survive?

We must learn from this story that God doesn't always give you what you want but He gives you what you need. In other words, I'm sure Jonah would have wanted a different rescue plan when being thrown over the boat. I'm sure he wished he had a life vest that the crew tossed to him, but instead the Lord gave him what he needed: a fish. See, many think this was the worst place he could be but it was actually the first time where he started to surrender to God in this story and is now finding his way back into God's will. Many would view this as an ending or like the movie *Jaws* where this is a terrifying moment, or like this is God punishing Jonah. But let's not mistake God's provision for punishment. This fish was sent by the Lord, this fish rescued Jonah from drowning to his death.

It would have been so easy for Jonah to yell and complain about this, but something happens while he is in the belly of the fish. He begins to surrender all and is broken before the Lord. The best way to describe this awesome moment is to ask this question: "Have you ever seen someone with a broken arm?" Well, they normally have a cast on it because the cast begins to reform, mold, strengthen, and structure the arm the way it was intended to be. Likewise, this fish is a cast for Jonah, while he is in the belly of this fish something happens and he is allowing God to shape, structure, strength and mold his life. Jonah is broken and cries out to God and God begins to do a work in his life.

It is important to understand that brokenness is only a season and it's not a destination. This means you can't live in or stay in the cast forever. It will come off. Men, it is time for us to go to the next level. Let's remember, when we have storms we need to accept what God has sent to rescue us. It may not look like we think it should, but if we accept it instead of complain about God, then God can begin to mold us into the men he has called us to be!

Scriptures (NIV) - Day #5

Jonah 1:17, Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Isaiah 64:8, Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Questions - Day # 5

1. What is your attitude like when you find yourself receiving what God has for you instead of what we think we need from him?
2. Are you allowing God to mold you and shape when you're in your cast or belly of a fish situation?
3. Are you broken before the Lord? Are there things you need to ask God to help you break so you can humble yourself by saying, "God I need you?"



November 2017

DEVO #6– Jonah, The Fish, pt. 2

By: Pastor Bryan Hart

As we continue to discover things about the story of Jonah, we last mentioned that a giant fish swallowed him. This fish served as a cast for Jonah. While he was in it he felt helpless but he was not hopeless. He began to have a conversation with God and God began to break and mold Jonah into who he was called to be. So for today's devotion we will be talking about the prayers of Jonah or I guess I could say we will talk about how we should pray when we feel like we are trapped in a fish.

First, we see that Jonah's prayers were precise. He begins to pray specifically. I once heard a pastor share this quote with this thought and it has stuck with me: "How precise we can be with our worry but how generic we can be with our prayer." Think about that, how specific we can be about the things that overwhelm and worry us but when it comes to praying how specific are we with our prayer? I encourage you to begin to call things out in your life when you pray that you know you need to change. Begin to call out to God for that job, or for that specific thing that is going on in your family. Jonah began to pray precise and specific prayers. If you study his prayers he begins to pretty much quote scripture that is found in the book of Psalms while in the belly of the fish. I encourage you as you pray don't hesitate to use the word of God, it is sharper than a two edged sword and is one of the most powerful weapons we have in prayer and in life.

The second thing is that Jonah prayed with passion. I challenge us all to be passionate and not just go through the motions or just pray to check it off our Christian checklist, but pray like Jonah, pray with passion. I'm reminded of times where I have been in a hotel room and for whatever reason I am so thirsty and I have to get a drink of water because my throat is so dry. It's hard to see and I'm in an unfamiliar room but I'm desperate for a drink. I have learned that when you get desperate you then get determined. Desperation leads to determination. My question for us men is, "What are we desperate for?" Are you desperate for things to change? Are you desperate for a breakthrough for your family? When you get desperate that leads to determination, and determination fuels your passion. We need to have prayers of passion, of desperation, and of determination!

The third thing we see is the position of Jonah's prayer. He did not complain. He actually began to pray with praise and gratitude. When you get grateful you get faithful. Jonah began to pray and praise like he knew and was expecting to get out of the belly of the fish. As he was praising his faith was rising in the Lord. Let's remember that God can work all things for His glory and let's give Him the praise in the good and bad times of our life.

Scriptures (NIV) - Day #6

Jonah 2:1-10, From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. He said: "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit. "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. "Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'" And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Philippians 4:6-7, Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Questions - Day #6

1. What are some specific things in your life you can begin to pray about?
2. What are you desperate to see changed in your life? Desperation leads to determination. What are you desperate for that you can passionately pray about?
3. What is your attitude when you are not in the best situation and you need to pray? Are you complaining and blaming God or are you grateful and faithful?



November 2017

DEVO #7– Jonah, The Second Chance

By: Pastor Bryan Hart

Today is our last day in this devotion series of Jonah, and I think many of us can relate to him. How many times do we not like what God is speaking and calling us to do and so we run, and then we have storms, then we begin to pray to God again. Like Jonah we all have messed up. We all fall short of the glory of God. But, also like Jonah, when he gets spat out of the fish God forgives him and also gives a second chance.

Jonah is a good man, a prophet, and he knows that God is all wise, all knowing and all powerful, and he knows he can't run from God but he knows he can flee from his presence. What do I mean?

Have you ever wanted to stop talking to someone before? For example, have you ever been in an argument in a car? I think we all have, it seems lots of conversation happens in automobiles. Have you ever been in an argument in a car and you know you can't run from them, but you are mad and just gaze out the window and try to avoid them? You try to avoid their presence and their voice as they are stating their case.

This is like Jonah, he knows he can't run from God, but he tries to ignore God's presence. He wants to avoid that personal conversation with God. God speaks to Jonah and calls him but then he runs by avoiding and ignoring God. Then, in a fish Jonah finally acknowledges God and begins to pray. As men, we need to be willing to not run when God speaks to us but pray and talk it out with Him.

Jonah finally comes to that personal conversation with God in the belly of a fish, and it's amazing what talking to God will do! God spits Jonah out onto land and then He gives Jonah a second chance. I love it! Jonah ran, he sinned, but God still gave him another chance. You might feel like you have messed up, but let me tell you our God is a God of second chances. He doesn't write you out but he tries to write you in, He says I didn't give up on you, I still have plans for you, and I still want to use you. Our God is so awesome! He is a God of second chances!

This story is awesome! See, not only did Jonah get another chance, but the ship crew got a chance to see the real God at work, and the city of Nineveh got another chance. Finally, Jonah repents and obeys God. Men, it's amazing what happens when we take our second chances. The entire city was saved. What if we obey God as men? Who all could that impact? Could it change your family, job, school, friends, church, or city? Let's be men of God and not run from things but let's run to things, when we run to things God calls us to lives are changed. And if we missed it, let's repent and answer the next time because our God forgives and is a God of second chances.

Scriptures (NIV) - Day #7

Jonah 3:1-10, 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." Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Questions - Day #7

1. Are you running to God or are you avoiding and running from His presence?
2. Is there anything you need to repent of and talk to God about? When we pray and talk to Him, great things happen!
3. Are you ready and is your heart molded by God to answer if He calls you to do something you don't like? Are you ready to answer if God gives you another chance?