

The Prodigal Prophet

I. Slide#1 Book Intro:

A. Slide#2 Book of Jonah - *The Prodigal Prophet*. Its right in-between *Obadiah & Micah* :)

B. Slide#3 The Main Character:

1. Who do you think it is? - **Not the big fish** (mentioned 4 x's); **not the great city** (9 x's); **not even Jonah the disobedient prophet** (18 x's); **but God** (mentioned **38 x's**).

a) Patricia Sjostroms bible, *red heart stamp*, on every time **God** was mentioned in Jonah.

C. Slide#4 Main Themes:

1. It is about the **Grace** of God to Jonah, the pagan sailors, & the Ninevehites.
2. It is about the **Will** of God & how we respond to it.
3. It is about the **Love** of God & how to share it w/others.
4. It is about the **Word** of God & how to obey it.
5. It is about the **Missionary God** & His greatest revival ever.

a) Charles Feinburg calls Jonah, *"The greatest missionary book in the O.T."*

6. It is about the **Sov. God**, over plant life, animal life, the elements, & the most stubborn of all...man!

D. Slide#5 Titles:

1. Prodigal Prophet. Missing the Boat. Whale-O-Gram. *Not Snail-Mail but...Whale-Mail.*
2. His name means **Dove**, *so we have, Dove* turns *chicken-of-the-sea*.

E. A Story:

1. We have diff writing styles throughout Scripture: Poetical, Historical, Didactical (Paul), Gospels, Story form.

F. It's not just about a man & a fish...

1. It's a story about **sin** & **grace**.
2. It's a story about **desperation** & **deliverance**.
3. It's a story that reveals how **we** are all **great sinners**, **but** that **God** is a **great Savior**.
4. It's a story about how a great God **relentlessly pursues** a **self-righteous fugitive**.
5. It's a story which shows, that while our sins **reach far**, Gods grace **reaches farther**.
6. It's a story that shows how God's capacity to **clean things up** is infinitely greater **than** our capacity to **mess things up**.¹

II. Slide#6 MISSING THE BOAT...GOD'S BOAT (1-3)

¹ Tullian Tchividjian, Jonah Intro.

- A. Here's a riddle: **When is making the boat, missing the boat?** - When you make *the wrong boat*.
- B. **Slide#7 The Books Credibility** (1)
- C. **It's found in Judaism** in the Tanak, **Yonah**. **It's found in Islam** in the Quran, **Yunus** (in Arabic).
- Jonah is the **only prophet** named from the Hebrew bible/Tanak in the *Qur'an, in the book As-Saaffat, chapter/Surah 37, verse 139-148*.
- D. **We have here a real person & a real story**.
- Slide#8 2 Kings 14:25 He** (Jeroboam II, 793-753bc) **restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hopher.**
 - It was a time of prosperity for Israel...but judgment was about to fall.**
 - Gath(winepress) Ha(the) Hopher(digging) – winepress of digging.**
 - Located 3 miles NE of Nazareth in Galilee.
 - Nicodemus spoke up to the Pharisees & they responded w/Jn.7:52 **Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.** (uh huh!)
 - Archeological evidence** for the occupation of this site **during the life time of Jonah** has been found. [**Also, Jonah's tomb** is there. **Jerome** even visited early 400's]
- E. **Slide#9 Jesus Substantiates: his name, his prophetic office, his story, & thus his book.**
- Mt.12:40,41 **An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.** For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.
 - So we have **a real man, with a real story, at a real time in history, with a real message for us today.**
- F. **Slide#10 Look at the 3 Imperatives** (2) *Arise. Go. Cry out.*
- G. *Obedience to God is the most serious obligation of man.*
- To fear God** is to stand in awe of Him; **to be afraid of God** is to run away from Him.
- H. **Here God also shows again His concern for other nations (Nineveh)**
- Both **Hosea & Amos**, *contemporaries of Jonah's day*, also showed God's concern for *other nations*.
- I. **Show Map:**

- J. **Slide#11a Joppa** – Today it is Jaffa/Yaffa [It is where we start our tour of Israel]
1. **Where** Tabitha/Dorcas was raised. **Where** Simon the tanner lived.
 2. From here to **Nineveh**...**500 miles NE**. From here to **Tarshish**...**2000m West**.
- K. **Slide#11b Nineveh** – Northern Iraq, on Tigris River [God speaks, “Go East young man.”]
1. It was the capitol of the **Assyrian Empire**.
 2. **Today** - Impressive ruins of Nineveh lie on the E. bank of the Tigris.
 3. **They were a cruel & heartless** people, who showed **no mercy** to their enemies.
 4. **They were known to bury** their enemies alive, **impale** people on sharp poles in the hot sun, & even **skin** people alive.
- L. **Slide#11c Tarshish** – SW Spain [His flesh whispers, “Go West young man.”]
- M. **Slide#12 Does man have a free will?** (3) *Yes, but an obvious “limited one”.*
1. The will of God is not an option(at least His decreed will) it is an obligation.
 2. **So did Jonah have a choice** in this manner?
 - a) Of course, he could **choose** *the easy way* or *the hard way* to get there. :)
 3. I wonder why we never ask, “**Does God have free Will?**” - *Didn’t our sovereign God have a choice to send His prophet of the day, to Nineveh???*
 - a) And if He is **Creator & Sustainer** of this world, & it was more than just His “*choice*” **but** His “*decreed will*”...then be **guaranteed** saints, it **is** going to come to pass, & **can’t not** come to pass.
 4. **Also remember**, **the will of God** is the expression of **the love of God**.
 - a) Ps.33:11 **The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.** What a blessing. *Not a capricious* (subject to whim; impulsive/unpredictable) *kind of God.*
- N. **Slide#13 How does this verse illustrate the deceptive danger of seeking guidance from convenient or coincidental circumstances?**
1. **What false security** might have Jonah seen as maybe being *in the will* of God because all was working in his favor?
 - a) **If I’m Jonah, I’m thinking:** Oh my gosh, I found a ship waiting at the shipyard. I have the exact fare that was needed. I was able to sleep soundly (5). *MUST be the Lord!*
 2. “When a person decides to run from the Lord, Satan is always happy to provided transportation, or accommodations.”
 3. **Oh**, **the grace of God** to allow him a good sleep *before* going down for a lesson.
 4. Ever notice that **backsliding** is always followed by **a spiraling downward**.
 - a) 3a down to Joppa. 3b down into the ship. 15 down into the sea. 17 down into the fish.

5. See Jonah needed Nineveh *as much as* Nineveh needed Jonah.

O. Slide#14 Running from God's will

1. Are **you** running from the will of God?
2. Have you ever ran away from something you knew God wanted you to do?
 - a) Maybe a **situation** you're running from. Making a **phone call** you really don't want to make. Setting up a **meeting**. **Sharing** your faith w/_____. Going on a certain **Mission Trip**. Turning off that **TV show** you know is stumbling you.
3. We run from God's will daily...don't we?
4. Answer today, **what** are you running from?

P. Slide#15 Running from God's presence

Q. Jonah ran from the presence of the Lord (see vs.3a,3b,& 10)

1. He had to know he really couldn't run away from God's presence.
 - a) Surely he knew...Ps.139:7-10 *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*
2. So, what he was really running from was: *his office, his working for God, his calling. He moved out of the **sweet spot** of Gods will.*
 - a) He stopped preaching, he became a **backslidden prophet**, the **prodigal Prophet**.
3. **Jeremiah** thought it, *but* couldn't do it. **Moses, Elijah & others** have struggled with it.

R. This time period was only **30 years** from Assyria invading Israel. Maybe Jonah knew this (from Amos or Hosea), *so* all the more didn't want to help a future conquerer.

S. Slide#16 Where would be the last place on earth you would want to be sent by God? *And why?*

1. **Maybe** to the **Pashtun Tribesman** of Afghanistan (aka **Taliban**).
2. **Maybe** to the terrorist organization **Al Queda**. **Or** to the **Abu Sayyaf** in So. Philip.
3. **Maybe** you wouldn't want to be sent to **Iraq**. **Or** to the **Somalia Pirates**.
4. **Maybe** it's to specifically a **humid** place, or a **cold** place you wouldn't want to go?
5. **Maybe** a **war torn** place? Or a place that is **cut off** from the outside world/no communication?
6. **Maybe** its as scary as going to **your neighbor** across the street?

- T. Sometimes God asks us to do some things *we don't want to do* because they are **difficult, uncomfortable, or even painful**.
1. **But**, our **disobedience** can be more costly *than* our **obedience**.
 2. Ever **moved** when you weren't supposed to?
Ever **changed jobs** when it wasn't God's will?
- U. **Slide#17 You Can't Outrun God.** [*You can run, but you cannot hide*]
- V. Two ways that people run from God:
1. Some by **breaking** all the rules.
 2. Some by **keeping** all the rules.
 - a) **Immoral people** are trying to save/free themselves by breaking all the rules.
 - b) **Moral people** are trying to save themselves by keeping all the rules.
 3. As J.I. Packer used to say, *there is always 2 ways to fall off a tight rope*.
 - a) There are always 2 ways to **run from God**.
 4. Neither **rule breaking** **nor** **rule keeping** is **strong enough** to save us.
 - a) **Being good** can't save us anymore **than being bad** can.
 - b) Only *The Gospel* can truly save you (what God has done for you, not what you can do for Him).
 - c) *The Gospel isn't the ABC's of Christianity, but the A-Z.*²
 - (1) It doesn't just **ignite** the Christian life; **it's the fuel** that keeps Christians going every day. Tullian Tchividjian
 5. Jonah proves **both** in this story.
 - a) **1st 2 chapters**, Jonah's disobedience, **ruler breaking**.
 - b) **Last 2 chapters**, Jonah's obedience, **ruler keeping** (but with a wrong heart).
 - (1) Running from God in either direction is...**running from God**.
 - (2) **Note**: we all do this every day.
- W. **Slide#18** Many years later God would send another messenger.
1. Only when He came it was **willingly & joyfully**.
 - a) Because **He knew the heart of God**, in fact **He was the heart of God**.
 2. **He** would be God's Message (aka The Word) to a running away world.
 - a) He was **everything God wanted to say** in a person.
 - b) **And like Jonah** he would spend *3 days in utter darkness*.
 - c) **But unlike Jonah**....*this Prophet, this Redeemer, this Rescuer would emerge from darkness w/determination to pursue His enemies...with life giving love.*

² Timothy Keller

X. Communion:

1. Bread:
2. Cup: