

Big Fish

Jonah Week 3

By Pastor Mandy Barkhaus

Intro Video

Hello, my name is Jonah. I was a prophet for God in the Bible. one day God told me to travel to a place called Nineveh to tell them God's judgment was coming on them unless they changed their ways. that was a message I did not want to deliver. Because the Ninevites were terrible, evil people. They deserve what was coming to them.

I thought, so I boarded a ship in the opposite direction, and a great storm came, and the men on the ship threw me into the sea. I was swallowed by a giant fish and stayed inside for three whole days. I prayed and asked God to rescue, I was spit out of the fish's mouth and onto dry land.

It was a miracle. it was then that I decided to obey God. and go to Nineveh. I delivered the message from God. And to my surprise, the people told God they were sorry, and God forgave them. it just goes to show that God does great things when we obey him. I'm Jonah. That is my story.

Pastor Mandy:

Well, good morning. Morning. Today we're talking about Jonah and the big fish. And it's exciting. We're very excited. So sometimes, often when I write my sermons, I use my phone. I do a majority of my sermon writing on my phone, which works great most of the time.

Sometimes, though, the sermon, what I type in there auto corrects to something else. Early in my message planning I was reading the scripture for today, and I wanted to make a note that God provided the big fish. So, I got my phone out wrote, God provided the big fish, put it away, and then I pulled it out a little bit later, and it somehow auto corrected to B.Y.O fish. As in bring your own fish. But luck has it, or God has provided for us big fish, so you didn't have to bring your own fish today.

God provided this big fish. Also, Aimee Erickson, we have these big fish on the wall. We're working on the lights on this one, but we have these big fish on the wall. God provided these big fish also, Jim Brennan. Yes, but we're thankful that you didn't have to bring your own big fish today. That's kind of what it means to be a part of a community or part of a church. Everybody shares their gifts; everybody shares their talents and supports one another. And sometimes I often, try to bring my own solution to a problem instead of maybe first going to God in prayer, maybe first, recognizing that God provided me a church community. So, if we pay attention, though, we will see that sometimes God provides something that we're not expecting. For Jonah, it was a big fish. So, we're going to go fishing with Jonah today, and that's what we're going to do.

Go Fish, anybody like that game card game Go Fish? I do too. I like that card game. I like it when you don't have the card that they asked for. Then you get to tell them, Go Fish. We're going fishing today for the lesson now up until this point Jonah was called, he was told by God to go to Nineveh. Jonah decides to run in the opposite direction. In fact, he boards this big ship and he's like, I'm not going to listen to God. I'm going to get on this ship. I'm going to go in the opposite direction. So, he gets on

the ship with these sailors and this big giant storm comes, and you imagine being on a ship and there's this big storm. Well, the sailors, they are trying to devise a solution to survive this big storm.

We have some people who are going to share their talents and their gifts with us, and they're going to help us read the scripture today. We're going to read Jonah 1:7-17 Then we're going to skip to Jonah 2:10. Welcome our narrator, Kaylee. Playing the sailors, we have Trentell and Lyra. Last but not least we have Graham playing Jonah.

Kaylee: Meanwhile, the sailors said to each other,

Trentell: Come on, let's cast lots, and we might learn who is to blame for this evil things happening to us.

Kaylee: They cast lots. And the lot fell on Jonah. So they said to him,

Lyra: Tell us, since you're the cause of this evil happening to us, what do you do and where do you come from? What's your country and what people are you?

Kaylee: Jonah said to them.

Jonah: I'm a Hebrew. I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, the sea and the dry land.

Kaylee: Then the men were terrified and said to him,

Trentell: What have you done?

Kaylee: The men knew that Jonah was fleeing from the Lord because he had told them. They said to him,

Lyra: What will we do about you, so that the sea will become calm around us?

Kaylee: The sea was continuing to rage. He said to them,

Jonah: Pick me up and hurl me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm around you. I know it's my fault that this great storm has come upon you.

Kaylee: The men rode to reach dry land, but they couldn't manage it because the sea continued to rage against them. So they called on the Lord, saying,

Trentell: Please, Lord, don't let us perish on the account of this man's life. Don't blame us for his innocent blood. You are the Lord. Whatever you like, you can do.

Kaylee: Then they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased its raging. The men worship the Lord with a profound reverence. They offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made solemn promises. Meanwhile, the Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah.

Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days, and three nights. Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto the dry land.

Pastor Mandy:

Thank you.

What do you think it would be like to be in the belly of a big fish for three days and nights? Like what? What do you. What do you think you'd smell? What do you think you'd see? What do you think you'd hear? It smells like fish. Probably fish guts. That's even worse. Smell, acid. It would probably feel a little slimy. Maybe, dark in there. Then you're vomited up onto the dry land. That is gross. I really hope that Jonah, first thing he did, I hope that he just went straight to the shower come on. I really, really hope that. I don't think he did, because, I mean, the scripture doesn't say that, but come on, Jonah, that he would have had to smell.

This is an odd story. This is a strange story that we find in the Bible. A fish swallowed a man and then vomited the man up. Now, some of the books in the Bible are historical accounts, but most scholars agree that this is probably not one of those books. But the story and the characters provide this incredible message for us.

If you didn't grow up hearing the stories, if you didn't grow up in a church, maybe you're new to the faith and you're like, okay, this is an odd story. A big fish ate a man and vomited him up. But, you know, we have more odd stories. We have a talking snake. We have a talking donkey. There's lots of, odd stories, but these stories all lead us to Jesus, because they are lessons, we can learn about God and who God is. So, in the story of Jonah, we learn that we cannot run from God. Jonah tried to run from God, but it didn't work out.

We learn that God hears us when we pray. We learn that God gives us a second chance when we say no to God. Another lesson we learn is that in all things, we should be filled with gratitude for what God provides us along the way.

Now, we can't go on without talking about the faith of the sailors. They were praying to their gods and that wasn't working. So, they turned to our God, Jonah's God, to make sure that they were safe. Then you have Jonah's faith. Jonah was scared of what God might or might not do to the Ninevites, but he had enough faith to realize that he messed up, right? He ran away, but he realized I made a mistake. It was this, you know, Taylor Swift moment. It's me. I'm the problem. It's me. Throw me overboard. So, he was willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of others.

What do you think happened in the in the belly of the. What happens between overboard and vomit? The only thing that we know that happened in the belly of that big fish is that Jonah lifted up to God a prayer of thanksgiving. That's what we know. The entire chapter two is just Jonah praying to God. Here are some of the verses that we read in chapter two.

Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish. He said, I called out to the Lord in my distress, and he answered me right. God listens to us from the belly of the underworld.

I cried out for help. You have heard my voice. You had cast me into the depths of the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounds me. All of your strong waves and rushing water passed over me, and when my endurance was weakened, I remembered the Lord. And my prayer came to you to your holy temple. But me, says Jonah, I will offer a sacrifice to you with a voice of thanks.

That which I have promised I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord. And then, Jonah finishes his prayer. And then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah on to the dry land.

So, Jonah gave thanks to God. While in this belly of the fish, sometimes we forget to stop and give thanks and praise to God for what God provides to us on good days. On bad days, are we stopping to give thanks to God now?

One of Jesus's earliest apostles like one of his earliest followers, Paul wrote this regarding God's will for us, what God wants us to do. This was a letter that he wrote to the church in Thessalonica. It says this, give thanks in every situation, because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

We're supposed to give thanks in everything. These words are Paul's words. These words are not Jesus's words. So, I thought did Jesus ever tell us to be thankful? Did he ever say, hey, followers of me, you should stop and give thanks to God?

I looked through the gospel books where they have the account of Jesus. I couldn't find anything in those words. Then I googled it, did God ever tell us to give thanks? I couldn't find anything. If you find something, let me know, however, the writers of the stories of Jesus in the Gospels, they did give us something even greater than Jesus's words. They gave us several examples of Jesus modeling a grateful heart.

When Jesus's friend Lazarus died, Jesus gave thanks to God before he raised his friend. Jesus gave thanks before he fed the 4000. He gave thanks before he fed the 5000. Jesus ate supper with his followers, and he gave thanks again. So, if we model our lives after Jesus, we need to stop and give thanks. Thanking God for all that he has provided us. Sometimes these things are unexpected, like a big fish. Every day we need to say thank you God for the big fish in our life because we all have big fish in our lives.

Some of our high school arise. Students are off on their mission trip this week, so they're leaving tomorrow morning early. There's 22 of them and they're headed to Arkansas, not near the water. We don't have to worry about a ship in a storm. I do invite you and encourage you to pray for these students who are going on this mission trip. I invite you to pray for their safety, for the drive there, for the time they're working this week and for the for the for the way home. I also invite you to pray that their eyes would be wide open and aware of what God is providing for them along the way. That's what I hope for them on this trip. That's what I hope for all of us in our lives to give thanks and to be grateful for what God gives us, because if we are supposed to model our lives after Jesus, we need to stop and give thanks.

What big fish has God provided for you in your life? Maybe your big fish is your mom or your dad. Maybe your big fish is your brother or your sister. Maybe your big fish is a friend or someone from church. Your challenge today is to thank God for the big fish in your life. Better yet, to thank the person whom God provided to you.

Now, the consequence of Jonah not listening to God was he was thrown in overboard He was thrown overboard and swallowed by a big fish, but God provided that big fish. Jonah ended up in the big fish because of decisions that he made, but God gave Jonah a second chance. God gives us a second chance, and like Jonah, our choices have consequences. Our decisions, our actions, our words also affect other people too. But if we decide to make our life filled with gratitude for God, for what God provided, it will impact our life and it will impact others around us.

I want you to join me in saying this simple prayer.

Thank you, God, for the big fish in my life.

Let's say it one more time.

Thank you, God, for the big fish in my life.