

Arise and Go!

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 August 2017

Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] Turn in the book of Jonah and stand for the reading of God's word this morning.

I'll be reading out of Jonah chapter 1 verses 1 and 2. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Please be seated. Since you guys have been getting the videos and the updates of what's been going on in our lives prior to coming here, you knew that just a couple of weeks ago, we were in St. Paul, Minnesota for a week-long mission trip with our youth group.

And while we were in St. Paul, they had our group divided up into different groups, and during the day we would go out in the city to different places and we would minister to the people there.

And so my group was tasked with going to the Salvation Army. And part of what we did there is that they had a daycare for their little ones.

[1 : 27] And so our group's job was to hang out with the little kids and to watch them and to play with them and just interact with them. And it was a lot of fun because the church that we were staying at didn't have any air conditioning, but the Salvation Army did.

So we were happy to be able to go to the Salvation Army and to be inside in August with all of the heat that was going on, even in Minnesota. And so it came time, our first day there, to go outside for recess to take the kids out to play.

And so right there, lining up at the door, and right when the door opens, they all burst through it, and they make a beeline for these cars that are in the back corner of the yard there.

It's a little yard, but they're all right there, and so they're all running to grab a car. And they grab a car, there's these little pedal cars, some of them have handles and they need to be pushed. And so all the kids run and grab those cars, and they're out, and there's this little track that they're going around.

And I look, and there's one little girl there. Her name is Zaria, and she was about two or three. She wasn't speaking yet. And some of these children, you don't know their past history, and you don't know some of the circumstances surrounding their birth into this world.

[2 : 44] But she, you could tell, was a little behind the other children. And she's sitting in this car, and she's looking around for somebody to push her. And so I see that, and I think, well, you know, I'm here to serve, not just the teens.

So I went, and I pushed her, and I thought, okay, we'll go around a few times. And there is this other great playground equipment. So I thought, I'll push her around a few times.

She'll get tired of that. She'll want to go jump on the playground equipment with all the other kids.

So we go around the track a few times, and it's hot. There is no shade back here, so I'm starting to sweat, right?

I'm longing for that air conditioning again. And with that, there was a lot of other things that were on my mind throughout that week, especially that first day. You know, we were in the process of transitioning out of our previous church and coming here and transitioning to our new house, new church.

And we were selling our house. We were in the process of that and also looking at renting a house here and looking at some houses that potentially we might be interested in. And there was just a lot going on.

[3 : 49] And so all those things were on my mind. Plus, I'm responsible for 25 other people, and my group was mainly middle schoolers. So all these things were on my mind.

And, you know, middle schoolers, they ask a lot of questions. So I was being asked a lot of questions. So my mind wasn't really in the right place. I was pushing her around, and after the third time, I looked down at Zaria, and I said, okay, are you ready to go play? And she just gave me this look like you're crazy. What are you doing? Why did you stop? So, okay. So we'll go around a few more times, I think, and then maybe by that time she'll be ready to go. And so we go around a few more times. I looked down to her. Zaria, are you ready? Look at all of these great places that you could be playing, right? You could be having so much fun. And she just looks at me like you're crazy. And so I pushed her some more.

And it was while I was pushing her that, you know, God speaks in many ways to us. But one of the ways that he speaks to us primarily is through his word. And when we read his word, when we memorize his word, the Holy Spirit has a way of bringing those verses to our attention whenever we need to share them or whenever we need to hear them ourselves.

[5 : 03] And so as I'm pushing Zaria around this track, my mind's not in the right place. My heart's not in the right place. The verse that comes to my attention is Matthew 25.

And Jesus talking about, whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me. And in that moment, I was convicted. You know, here is one of the least of these.

And I've been called to serve. And so I realized in that moment, despite all the things that were going on, God's mission for me on planet Earth was to push that little girl around that track until she was done being pushed around that track.

And what I realized is as much as that little girl needed somebody to push her, I needed to be the one to push her.

You know what I'm saying? As much as I was there to serve her for the Lord, God knew that right then and there, what I needed was to push that little girl around the track just to get my mind and my heart in the right place.

[6 : 14] And so as we go through the book of Jonah, I think what you'll realize is that as much as the people of Nineveh needed Jonah to go to them, Jonah needed to go to the people of Nineveh.

And so I hope that over the weeks as we go through this book of the Bible, that you will see that God called Jonah to arise and to go and to preach to a people who were very wicked.

And he was to go there that they might change their ways, that they might be brought to salvation. But this calling served not only to change the heart of the people of Nineveh, this calling was also used to soften the stone-cold, cold heart of God's prophets.

The Bible says that Jonah came from a town near Nazareth and that he lived during the reign of Jeroboam II, which is around 750-790 BC.

And he was a prophet in the northern tribes of Israel. And during this time, the ten northern tribes of Israel enjoyed great peace and prosperity.

[7 : 42] Economically, they were doing very well. At this time, both Syria and Assyria, their enemies were weak. And so as a result of this, Israel was allowed to flourish.

Their boundaries expanded. Their kingdom was growing. But spiritually, they were impoverished. Their worship of God had become empty and ritualistic.

At the same time, they were becoming more increasingly idolatrous as a culture. And so while they were strong economically and militarily, they were weak and impoverished when it came to their morals, their ethics, and their spirituality.

If you remember, the Assyrians had long been a nemesis of Israel and Judah prior to this point. And Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. And at the time, historians believe that this was the biggest city in the world.

And not only was it the biggest city in the world, but it was filled. It was truly wicked. The Assyrians were new, were known for what they would do to their enemies.

[8 : 54] In fact, in the streets of Nineveh, they would decapitate their enemies and they would often burn them alive at the stake. So these were people who were ruthless and they treated their enemies with much hate.

And Jonah knew this. Before we continue on, I know one of the questions that some of you might be thinking or you've heard maybe proposed, you know, asked of you as a Christian is, did Jonah really get swallowed by a fish?

Did he really get swallowed by a fish? Was it something else? Was it just metaphorical? Well, here's what I think. Did Jonah get swallowed by a fish? Yes. Yeah. He was swallowed by that fish.

And here's the thing. You know, we believe in more stranger things than that as Christians, don't we? We believe that a man died and was dead for three days and came back to life. That's even more hard to believe than I think a man being swallowed by a fish. But we believe that. And here's the thing too, is Jesus did not teach the story of Jonah as a parable but as an actual event that was firmly rooted in history.

[10:10] If you remember Matthew chapter 12, some of the scribes and Pharisees, they answered him saying, Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you. But the Lord answered them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. So if you don't believe me that Jonah was swallowed by a fish, then believe Jesus.

And if anybody asks you, that's something that you should tell them as well. But really, is it that hard to believe? Is it really that hard to believe? We believe and testify that God created all things through his voice.

And if God is able to do that, then certainly God was able to appoint this fish, even if it was a one-of-a-kind fish, with the ability and the capability to swallow a man whole and keep him alive in its stomach for three days.

And who knows? Maybe it's still swimming around in the depths of the Mediterranean Sea today. We'll find out, I think, when we get to heaven. But God was calling this prophet to arise and to go.

[11:26] These people who he hated, he was called to go and to preach to them. He was called by God to go and warn them in the hope that they would turn from their wicked ways and that they would be saved.

And so this is what I want us to focus on today. God wants to do in your life today what he did in Jonah's life back then.

God wants to do in your life today what he did in Jonah's life back then. We know how Jonah initially responded to that call and we'll focus on that more next week.

but I want us to lock into God's calling us to arise and to go. Like Jonah you and I are going to be going about our normal day to day lives and God at certain times and in certain places is going to speak into your life by the power of his spirit and he is going to move you for a particular mission to reach somebody with the gospel who desperately needs to hear about his grace.

Now here's the thing this should not come as new information to anybody who is a follower of Jesus Christ should it? Matthew 28 Jesus says very clearly in his final instructions in the great commission go therefore make disciples of all nations baptize them in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit and teach them to observe all that I have command you.

[13:06] I know that this isn't a surprise to you because I look in the corners of your sanctuary go go as Christians this is our calling by the Lord to arise and to go Christianity is not a spectator sport God wants to use us to accomplish his will on this earth God wants you to get in the game God wants to maneuver you for his purposes right where you're at today fulfilling the great commission doesn't mean that you have to quit your job tomorrow and move to some distant mission field unless that's what God is calling you to do but here's the thing you are already on a mission field right now you are on a mission field where you work where you live the people that you work with the people in your neighborhood where you go to school or the place where your children go to school those are the places that God has given you as your mission field these are the people those who are around you who he has put in your place and just like the people of Nineveh they are lost many of them they are enslaved to sin they are without hope and because of that they are in danger of facing the wrath of God without being shielded by the blood of his son

Jesus Christ you are on a mission field as a follower of the Lord and all who follow Jesus Christ are called all of us to arise and to go so how should we respond to God's call well first we see that you must receive it you must receive it there we see that Jonah was receiving a call from God now the word of the Lord came to Jonah and it was saying it was speaking to him God was and Jonah received God's call by hearing his voice and like I said before God communicates to us in many different ways he communicates to us through a brother or a sister in Christ he communicates to us through that still small voice he communicates to us through preaching or through singing but primarily the way that God will communicate to you today is through his word through the

Bible Jonah didn't have the completed work of scripture but we're blessed because we do do you want to hear God speak to you today do you want to hear God speak to you today then you must make time to read and to study his word a lot of people especially new Christians wonder well how do I begin doing that and I always recommend go to one of the gospels Matthew Mark Luke or John and here's another thing give God an hour of your day and break it up in increments 30 minutes 20 minutes 10 minutes 30 minutes in the morning 10 minutes at lunch 20 minutes at night before you go to bed easy to do and before you know it you've spent an hour in the word in your day seven hours in a week you can do the math beyond that and God I'm telling you will use that to speak to you get a study bible there's lots of good study bibles out there and I would be willing to recommend them to you get a study bible dig in ask questions to your brothers and sisters in Christ who have walked with the Lord for a while to me or to Dan to one of your Sunday school teachers ask questions and then finally give it time give it time because a lot of times you might be reading something and you think oh that sounds good but I don't know how it applies to my life right now and then like I said you know you might be on a mission trip or somewhere and you're not in the right state of mind and the Holy Spirit has a way of bringing that scripture to your attention give it time God wants to speak to you and he will and here's the other thing that we've got to understand in receiving our call from God is this that God will never ask you to do something that contradicts his word he'll never ask you to do anything that contradicts his word I once had a lady tell me that God told her where she could find a purse on sale you know she was driving and God spoke to her and said turn in here you find a purse on sale okay I don't know that contradicts scripture but I think that when God speaks it's going to be for over more important things you know yeah be frugal be good stewards of what God has blessed you with find those sales ladies and men and be good stewards of what God has blessed you with but you know God doesn't doesn't speak in little insignificant ways like that if God's going to tell you something it's going to be very important I once heard it said that if an angel flies into your room tonight don't get too excited wait to hear what he has to say first and if you look at Mormonism if you look at Islam we have examples of prophets who claim to be given a message by an angel but there we see in Galatians chapter 1 verse 8 that if even an gospel have nothing to do with it and cursed is that person who would give you a different gospel so be careful and make sure that it matches what the Lord has said in his word again [18:56] Jonah didn't have the completed work of scripture but he did know that his people had been given a mission by God they were to be a light to the Gentiles if you remember they were to proclaim the excellencies of God to the world they were supposed to be used by the Lord to draw the nations to him so he knew that this message this calling that God had given them it matched what God had said for them to do through his word and God by his spirit was telling him to go now where else do we see that!

! God's! spirit calling us to go we will ask chapter 8 with Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch if you want to turn in your Bible you can I put it on the screen for you to follow along now an angel of the Lord said to Philip rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza this is a desert place and he rose and he went and there was an to worship and was returning seated in his chariot and he was reading the prophet Isaiah and the spirit said to Philip go go over and join this chariot so Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked do you understand what you are reading and he said how can I unless someone guides me and he invited Philip to come and to sit with him so we see that the Holy Spirit prompts us in receiving God's message to action have you ever been prompted by the Holy Spirit have you ever felt that you know you saw somebody in need or you knew there was something that you should do maybe there was a ministry in church that they were looking for volunteers for and all of a sudden the bottom of your seat started to get hot right you started to sweat you knew God was talking to you but you didn't want to believe it when God's when you know God's word you can better respond to God's call when the Holy Spirit prompts you to action and when you receive God's call the best thing for you to do is to respond to that call in faith so secondly how should we respond to God's call well you receive it and then you respond in faith it's interesting because Jesus called men out of their boats to fish for men and

Jonah was called to fish for men but he immediately got into a boat instead and we see that Jonah will eventually go but not before he first becomes food for the fish and Jonah had his reasons for refusing to obey God's call and we learn that later in chapter four that basically Jonah was a racist he hated the people of Nineveh he hated the Assyrians he did not want to see them come to

salvation that was his excuse when God asks you to do a specific mission there are going to immediately be reasons that pop up into your mind for why you should not be the one that God asked to do that you ever had that happen you felt the Holy Spirit prompting you you knew that God was asking you to do it and then automatically you thought it can't be no not me God you've got it all wrong it can't be me who you're talking about you know who was like that Moses there's many people in the Bible who responded that way but Moses came to mind remember God wanted to use Moses to deliver his people from the Egyptians and at this time Moses was a washed up old shepherd he was a fugitive who escaped out of the land of Egypt and now God is showing up he's calling him Moses arise and go to the people of Egypt and I want you to bring my people out and what does Moses say you're right God I was waiting for you to say something you know I've had that on my heart for a while and I wonder what took you so long no Moses says he argues with God surely not me right I can't speak well I have a stuttering problem they're not going to all of these excuses for why God should not choose him to go but then [23 : 45] I love Exodus chapter 4 verse 20 this is one of my favorite verses so Moses after all of this arguing with God and God finally gets his way Moses took his wife his sons and had them ride on a donkey and he went back to the land of Egypt and Moses took the staff of God in that Moses has here he's about to go and confront one of the mightiest men if not the mightiest man in the known world at that time and God calls him to go and look at what God has him go with your family a donkey and a stick and you're going to go to Egypt with these things and you're going to deliver my people and I love that first because I try to imagine what must have been going through Moses' mind as he was traveling towards

Egypt right what a struggle coming to grips with the immensity of the task that he'd been given and looking around and see how ill equipped he felt to undertake that task right wondering God do you really know what you're doing here and here's the thing often quite often if not all the time when God calls you to a mission you will feel unqualified you will feel ill equipped to undertake whatever he's put on your heart to do so that's why it requires you to respond in faith why do we have to respond in faith well Hebrews tells us that without faith it's impossible to please God Hebrews 11 6 and without faith it is impossible to please him for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he awards those who seek him God is going to call you God is going to ask you to do something that you cannot do on your own he will do that but here's the thing he will supply you with all that you need to do what he's given you to do you just got to have faith Satan will always give you convenient reasons and excuses to run away from God you know you might see somebody and the Lord says you need to share the gospel with them and automatically I know have and he will accomplish what he's asked you to do despite of how ill equipped you feel to do what he's asked step out in faith respond in faith and then third you must reject passing

God's call off to someone else how should we respond to God's call you must reject passing God's call for you off to someone else you know Jonah wasn't the only prophet that God had whom he could have called he wasn't the only prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel there were others God could have asked them and you know what they probably would have gone they probably wouldn't have been as reluctant as Jonah was and when Jonah chose to reject God's call you know God wasn't like ah too bad Jonah well you'll get swallowed by fish well find somebody up next up right next up we'll go to the bullpen we'll call in a reliever and we'll bring somebody else who's no God held him accountable to what he had called him to do and he does the same thing with us why was that why was it so important to God that Jonah be the one and not somebody else well again because

God knew that as much as the people of Nineveh needed Jonah in his message that Jonah needed them Jonah needed this mission he just didn't know it yet what happens a lot of time in! [28 : 35] church is! God will call you to something God will call you he'll put it on your heart he'll put somebody on your mind on your heart to be praying for to invite to church to share the gospel with to do a number of different things and you know what you're automatically going to think I'll call one of the pastors to do it I'll call one of the pastors to do it and I will say you know for myself and for Dan if you call us that's that's part of what we're we are here to help you and we'd be glad to do that there's a lot of people that I've gone and knocked on their door and had no idea who I was a lot of cold calls that I've made but here's the thing God is asking!

He's asking you why is that? Because you're the Jesus that that person has seen it's your testimony that they have been witnessing and it is God who's wanting to use you to share with them and why would you be so willing to give that blessing up to somebody else?

You know I'm obviously still new in town but if I was to ask any of you for directions to Murphy's you could tell me right?

You guys could tell me why? Because you've been there some of you have probably been there a whole lot some of you have probably eaten there a whole lot and you could tell me step by step turn by turn directions where to go where to sit what to order when's the best time of the week to go right?

Why is that? Because you're familiar with it and so here's the thing Satan will bring all those excuses but you just got to understand that he's a liar and you don't believe him because if you know Jesus you know him well enough to direct somebody else to him you know enough all you've got to do is tell them about what he's done in your life and you'd be amazed at what God and his spirit can do to bring change and transformation to another person because of your testimony and it's a tremendous blessing to be able to lead somebody to Christ don't give that up don't give that up fourthly how do we respond to God's call well!

[31 : 12] you must be ready to go arise and go in the Hebrew this would be like somebody grabbing you by the collar and shaking you and getting your attention and say wake up it's time for you to go when I thought about that I thought about myself as a little boy and as a young man and a teenager on Sunday morning and my dad coming to my room and getting me out of bed for church wake up get up get dressed it's time to go to church we are being called by God in a way that is immediate and God is telling Jonah right here get up right now and go immediately you know he isn't saying gee Jonah I know you got a lot going on I know that you're an awfully busy prophet and you're doing a good job and I was just wondering if ever you find yourself kind of in the area of Nineveh would you mind stopping in and preaching to those people

I'd really appreciate that no God is shaking this man waking this man up and saying arise and go be ready this is urgent the window of opportunity is now and you must go immediately so what this tells us is that when God prompts our hearts to do something his expectation is that you do it right now don't wait don't hesitate delayed obedience is disobedience go don't wait don't hesitate when I was a youth pastor some time ago at worlds of fun they have this ride it's called the rip cord if ever you've been to worlds of fun you know what I'm talking about and basically you're on a cord and they slowly pull you up and you're about 200 feet off the ground and then there's a handle that you pull they say 3 2 1 fly and when they say fly the person on the outside their job is to pull that handle and you fly and so a couple of our teenage girls they really wanted to go on the rip cord they wanted a third person to go because it's cheaper with three people than it is with two and also they were afraid to pull the rip cord and so they said

Pastor Mike will you be our third person on the rip cord we're terrified and we're afraid that when we get up there neither of us is going to be able to pull the cord so would you please be the one who comes with us to pull the cord okay okay okay I'll go with you well come to find out the can't pull the rip cord and so they were scared because one of them was going to do it and so I told the one who was going to do it now listen we're going to get up there and we are all going to be scared all of us and the longer it takes for you to pull that cord the more scared and terrified we are going to be so pull it scary but once the cord kind of snagged and pulled us tight the fear was gone and the joy came and that's like it is when

God calls you to do something it's like that it's terrifying not going to lie to you it's scary but when you step out in faith and you respond and you do it oh man it's exhilarating there's nothing like the God of the universe using you to accomplish his will on this earth it is the greatest thrill that you could ever experience and so in the days in the weeks in the months in the years to come that I have the great privilege of serving you as senior pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church there will be moments for you for me for us as a church and we must understand that we have been given a tremendous calling but we have been given all that we need to be able to achieve it and I believe that God will but it's going to require all of us answering the call to arise and go now you might be here this morning and you're hearing this for the first time you think you know

Pastor Mike I can't arise and go and do what God has called me to do on a mission because I don't know Jesus like you all know him I haven't made that decision I'm not sure what I think but maybe as you've been hearing this message you're excited about what it would mean to follow Jesus

Christ as your Lord and Savior and I'm here to tell you there's no!

[36 : 31] I couldn't imagine living in this world with all that is going on and not having the hope that I have in Jesus Christ that there is a God who has it all under control and one day it's all going to be made and set right why is that because we as human beings you see we're great at sinning we're great at hurting one another not loving each other being selfish being self centered being scared feeling hopeless because we sinned against God God made it and it was good the Bible says but it's we not God it's us who rejected him and God could have said you know what that's fine you don't want me I understand but he didn't why is that because

God loves you with a love that is deep that knows no bottom God loves you so much that he gave his only son you know as a father I have a son and I couldn't imagine giving his life up for anybody I couldn't imagine seeing him die in anybody's place but God so loved us that he gave his son and he obediently went to the cross enduring our sins the wrath of God for what we've done and by his wound by his shed blood he provided atonement and like I said before the great thing is that he was dead for three days but the great thing is that wasn't the end of the story that being God he rose from the dead as proof that his sacrifice was sufficient that we can be set free from our sins that we can be!

! from the wrath and there's no greater life than living in this world and knowing Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior Thank you.