



## The Prophet Rebels

**Date:** Sunday 28th June

**Speaker:** Jeff Stamps

**Key Verses:** Jonah 1:1-3

**Talk Summary:** This week Jeff kicks off our Jonah series, setting it in its historical and Biblical context and exploring the question ‘Why did Jonah run?’ Through this looking at why we say no to God and how we can grow in trust.

- Whenever you start reading a book of the bible you need to ask – “what genre is this book”.
- Jonah is a book of prophecy
- But God’s message is coming through the story, not the prophet’s words.
- Jonah is written in a really interesting way, there are lots of unexpected twists and turns in the story, and it is full of humour and irony.

### Who was Jonah?

- Prophet during the reign of King Jeroboam 2<sup>nd</sup>
- A period of prosperity and stability for Israel, but also of wickedness.
- The prophets Hosea and Amos were operating at the same time.
- Unlike Amos and Hosea who were highly critical of Jeroboam. Jonah supported king Jeroboam II aggressive military policy. (2 Kings 14:23-25)

### The city of Nineveh

- Nineveh was one of the largest and greatest cities of the ancient world,
- It was an important centre of worship for the Neo-Assyrian Empire (911-609 BC)
- Jonah hates the Ninevites – Israel paid them a lot of money and they lived in constant fear of invasion
- Nineveh was about 500 miles east of Jonah’s hometown,

### Jonah Ran

- But Jonah tried to run from God, but you can’t run from the creator
- Fled to Tarshish, a fishing village near the Strait of Gibraltar in Southern Spain 2,500 miles west.

- It was just about on the edge of the known world at the time.

### **Why did Jonah run? (why do we say no to God?)**

- Lack of compassion
- Lack of confidence – Feared they might kill him.
- Lack of Faith – he just didn't believe God could do it.
- Timothy Keller - "Ultimately Jonah doubts the goodness, wisdom and justice of God"
- It all boils down to this Jonah, did not trust God.
- Whenever we say no to God, it is because we don't trust him – this is the heart of sin.

### **How do we learn to trust God?**

- You can't trust someone you don't know. Get to know God, spend time with him, read the bible, ask others about him.
- You don't know if someone is trustworthy until you trust them. Find a promise in scripture and try it out. Feel like God has prompted you to do something? Give it a go. You will quickly find he is faithful and trustworthy.

### **Worship**

- You might want to start by all sharing a story of where you have seen God's faithfulness? Where has he shown himself to be trustworthy in your life? Thank him for his faithfulness.

### **Word**

- Out of the possible reasons Jonah ran which one do you relate to most? Can you think of any other possibilities?
- Do you find it easy to trust God? Why? Why not? Is there some circumstance when it is easier than others?
- What one practical thing could you do to grow in trust, and step out in faith more?

### **Witness**

- Ask God to speak to you about someone who doesn't know Jesus yet, that he wants you to reach out to.

### **Prophetic words that were shared on Sunday:**

You may want to share these with your group and see if any of them resonate with anyone. Then take time to pray for each other.

- Psalm 85 KJV verse 10-11 -Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven
- Someone had a picture of A person standing in front of a window with the curtains closed, the intensity of the sun is there on the other side of the window and curtain you can see glimpses of it. We have a choice to rip back the curtains and allow that intensity in - it's powerful and can transform, but we might be reluctant as we know it's hot and with heat up the room and bring light into the whole room. So we pray that each of us will want to pull back the curtain and allow God's transforming power into our lives and into our current situations
- A warning to be alert to the enemies plans and his lies and an encouragement to seek wisdom, ask the Lord and He will speak, listen to the still small voice of God.

- An encouragement not to reject things out of fear and a reminder that God is calling us to go towards people we don't know, get on with or might consider our enemies. That we would accept the cost and move towards them with love.
- An encouragement from Hebrews 12:2 to fix our eyes on Jesus, trust him and not be distracted. "The Holy Spirit turns our eyes entirely away from self. Remember, it's not your hold on Christ that saves you - it is Christ. It is what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul".
- Encouragement from Exodus 14:13-14 to not be afraid, to stand firm and wait confidently for God to rescue you.
- Psalm 18:2 – God is our firm foundation in uncertain times
- Isaiah 53:6 Someone needs to know that God's forgiveness is always available, you can come to him, say sorry and receive his forgiveness.