

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

*“Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying,
‘Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it,
because its wickedness has come up before Me.’
Jonah, however, got up to flee to Tarshish,
away from the presence of the LORD.”*

Jonah 1:1-3

Jonah is a Cautionary Tale for Intercessors

Jonah is a profile in a classic mistake made by those called to be Intercessors; even anyone who is in a Covenant relationship with the Most High God. We can forget that personal circumstances are no longer just personal. They are situations and events where God has placed us to do His Will.

Are we seeking and listening to what is His Will in situations and challenges? God asked Jonah to warn the people of Nineveh, to change from their wicked ways or they would be destroyed. Jonah did NOT want this assignment!

The ego-mind is a very clever coyote. It can talk us into false reasons why we are choosing not to take a particular uncomfortable action. Jonah was called out of his comfort zone. He and the Hebrew people did NOT like the Assyrians. That is a vast understatement. There were centuries of bad blood between the two peoples. Jonah would likely have been happy to see them rot. Also, if God's word did not come to fruition, he would have egg on his face, discredited.

Jonah responded to God's call by fleeing the scene. Being an Intercessor is not an easy walk. Being a disciple of Jesus Yeshua is not an easy walk.

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

It's Not Meant To Be An Easy Walk

Early on in His ministry, the Lord Jesus said to His disciples: *"Pick up your cross and follow Me."*

*"Then Jesus told his disciples,
'If anyone would come after me,
let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.
For whoever would save his life will lose it,
but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his
soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?'"*

Matthew 16:24-26

Ironically, Matthew 16:4 begins with Jesus chastising the religious men: *"An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.' So he left them and departed."*

What is the "sign of Jonah"?

It is the Son of man rising from the 'belly of the beast'. Resurrection. Redemption. Mercy. Then Judgement.

*"But the LORD said, "You cared about the plant,
which you neither tended nor made grow.
It sprang up in a night and perished in a night.
So should I not care about the great city of Nineveh,
which has more than 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand
from their left, and many cattle as well?"*

Jonah 4:10-11

The story of Jonah is a mercy - redemption - judgment foreshadow story. God sends His emissary to warn the people, give them the opportunity to repent, change from their wicked ways and receive mercy. Then shall come judgement after free will has chosen its fate.

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

The story of Jonah is also a cautionary tale for God's sons and daughters. Do not shirk responsibility for calling others to course correction. Do not allow personal feelings, biases, fears, emotions and agendas get in the way of doing God's Will. Be radically obedient. Obedience means hearing and heeding.

The Key for Intercessors...

The key for Intercessors is that God uses His Intercessors to give others the opportunity to repent, change or correct their course, make amends.

We are God's emissaries of repentance.

When we shirk this responsibility, we incur sin ourselves. We have taken on the repercussions of that inaction. If the person we were supposed to warn, confront or hold to right action, harms another person on account of our not interceding, we are responsible for that harm inflicted. It is as the watchman on the wall.

"If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul."

Ezekiel 3:17-19

Cowardice is Selfish

If someone is being unethical, unlawful, abusive, deceitful, unfair, and we do and/or say nothing, we are condoning their behavior. We are depriving them of the opportunity to course correct and make things right. We are opening the door for them to abuse another person or party. Cowardice is

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

selfish. It impacts people and situations far beyond our own sight and understanding.

Running From God = Flesh Over Spirit

Jonah did not want to do the Will of God. He was in his own flesh mind. He did not want to be ridiculed or discredited. He did not want to be pilloried. He wanted to stay in a safe place in society. He did not want to go outside of his comfort zone. So he ran away from God, literally.

*”Jonah, however, got up to flee to Tarshish,
away from the presence of the LORD.
He went down to Joppa and found a ship bound for Tarshish.
So he paid the fare and went aboard to sail for Tarshish,
away from the presence of the LORD.”*

Jonah 1:3

The Great Storm

When God calls upon us, especially to be a watchman, and we choose not to answer the call, there are repercussions. God came after Jonah on the ship bound for Tarshish. He came through a great storm that affected the entire crew on the ship. God was in the storm. If there is a storm in your life, is God in the storm? If so, for what purposes? Ask Him.

This is a huge moral lesson. Whatever we choose to do and whatever we choose NOT to do, has repercussions for those around us. “Sins of omission” is not just a religious concept. Jonah was guilty of a sin of omission. He chose not to obey God. He chose not to act when he should have. His choosing not to obey God’s directive affected many people, not just his own well-being. The lives of the other men on the ship were in peril.

***As sons and daughters of the Most High God,
Righteousness is our calling.***

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

“Come!” said the sailors to one another. “Let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity that is upon us.”

So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

“Tell us now,” they demanded, “who is to blame for this calamity that is upon us? What is your occupation, and where have you come from?

What is your country, and who are your people?”

Jonah 1:7-8

With Great Blessings Come Great Responsibility

To be in Covenant relationship with the Most High God is a privilege, an honor and a joy. It brings great blessings, including protection, provision and favor. It also comes with greater responsibility. Even the non-Hebrew ship crew discerned this.

“I am a Hebrew,” replied Jonah. “I worship the LORD, the God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.”

Then the men were even more afraid and said to him,

“What have you done?”

The men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.”

Jonah 1:9-10

“What have you done?” The crew was incredulous, like “what were you thinking, running away from the God of the heavens?”

Jonah may not have woken up one day proclaiming: “I am an Intercessor!” But he was a Hebrew and therefore a son of the Most High God. He was in Covenant with the God of the heavens, who made the sea and dry land. Therefore, he had an obligation to heed God’s call when God made a request of him. This is true of all of the LORD’s sons and daughters. We are held to a higher standard of moral and ethical living. Righteousness is our calling. Courageous righteousness is the fabric of our character.

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

Shirking Our God Responsibilities Has Repercussions

Jonah's fate just went from bad to worse. In order to save themselves, the crew throws Jonah overboard into the turbulent waters. Can you blame them?

*"At this, they picked up Jonah and cast him into the sea,
and the raging sea grew calm."*

Jonah 1:15

3 Days and 3 Nights to Atone

Tests and tribulations in order to atone are often assigned the measure of three days and three nights.

*"Now the LORD had appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah,
and Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the fish."*

Jonah 1:17

Jonah's three days of atonement were a precursor to Jesus' three days and nights of atonement on behalf of humanity.

"From the belly of Sheol I called for help, and You heard my voice."

Jonah 2:2

Jonah went to Sheol. Jesus went to Sheol.

*"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish,
so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights
in the heart of the earth."*

Matthew 12:40

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness. He bequeathed His inheritance of righteousness to us, that we should bring souls back to God the Father. Courageous righteousness is our inheritance and it is also our duty.

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

Throne of Mercy and Righteousness for Courageous Righteousness.

This is a protocol going before God's Throne of Mercy and Righteousness to petition the Lord God Most High to assist in our commitment to possess true righteousness, courageous righteousness.

1. Going Before God's Throne of Mercy and Righteousness.

Lord God Adonai, I come before Your Throne of Mercy and Righteousness to seek Your assistance, Your Mercy and Righteousness, in my attaining true righteousness, courageous righteousness, the courage to always do what is Your version of right, no matter the situation, circumstances or perceived repercussions.

I put on the robe of Yeshua's righteousness according to Isaiah 61 and I loose the Blood of Jesus Yeshua over myself to enter into Your Court of Mercy and Righteousness sanctified, in praise and thanksgiving, in love and gratitude. I come to release my weaknesses, fallibilities and character flaws, that they may be dissolved and transmuted into righteousness incarnate.

I give permission to and invite the Holy Spirit to bring me revelation of all that I need to empty out in my own mind, heart, soul and life, that stand in the way of this transformation of my character. I seek to die to self, all the facets and habits of my human ego and flesh mind, that keep me in bondages of fear, pride and caring what other people think of me.

2. Petitions for Courageous Righteousness.

Lord God Adonai, receive, I humbly beseech thee, my petitions to receive Your help in cultivating courageous righteousness, the courage and integrity to always do Your Will, no matter how hard or uncomfortable it may be to me personally; no matter who is involved; no matter how the situation appears to be to the flesh mind; no matter the fears or insecurities I may possess whilst facing the challenge.

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

Help Me to Be as Stephen

- ◆ Lord God Adonai, help me to be as Stephen, Your first martyr who was *“full of grace and power”*¹ and epitomized courageous righteousness.
- ◆ Father God, give me the wisdom and the intelligence of the Spirit by whom Stephen spoke, according to Acts 6:10.
- ◆ Your Word in Acts 6:15 affirms the righteousness incarnate of Stephen: *“Then all those who were sitting in the Council, stared [intently] at him, and they saw that Stephen’s face was like the face of an angel.”*
- ◆ Dear Lord God, help me to have the courage of Stephen, the conviction of Stephen, the selfless passion-of-the-Lord of Stephen.

God is With Me

- ◆ Lord God Adonai, I acknowledge that even if I am afraid, I can rely on You to work with me and through me. Your Word in 1 Chronicles 28:20 instructs: *“David also said to Solomon his son, “Be strong and courageous and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the LORD is finished.”*
- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, with this Word, I acknowledge that I have no excuse for indulging in fear and avoidance of difficult tasks. If I answer Your call to service or action and turn to You for help, I know that You will walk me through it, that You will be beside me the whole way. You will not fail me nor forsake me until the task is complete.

I Give Myself Fully to the Work of the LORD

- ◆ Lord God Adonai, help me to stand firm, immovable in perfect faith, as 1 Corinthians 15:58 exhorts: *“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”*
- ◆ Help me Lord God Adonai, to remember and recognize that ALL that I do is *“labor in the LORD”*, and that I am not alone in my labors.

¹ Acts Chapter 6

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

You Go Before Me

- ◆ Lord God Adonai, Deuteronomy 31:6 reminds me that in whatever I am tasked to do, You will go before me: *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*
- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, this brings me comfort, peace and reassurance that You are in the victories as I walk out my part in the task at hand. I have no excuses for not taking up the harder duties when called to do so. You ARE with me!

Let Ego Shame Die

- ◆ Lord God Adonai, Isaiah 54:4 encourages me not to be snared by the flesh mind that is afraid of shame and humiliation: *“Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.”*
- ◆ Dear Lord God, help me to release the seeds of self-consciousness, being concerned about what others think of me. Let ego shame die. I seek only to please You. By loving others as You love me, I am free.

Equip Me With Your Sword

- ◆ Lord God Adonai, Jesus teaches us in Matthew 10:34: *“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”*
- ◆ Father God, I repent for the times I chickened out, I did not confront, resolve, address a wrong committed, whether against me or someone else. I repent for lying to myself and even others, rationalizing or justifying why I stood on the sidelines or just did nothing. I repent for camouflaging my cowardice or laziness with some faux noble virtues, such as a faux peace-maker or harmony-keeper. No. I repent for my lies and inaction. I repent for the harm that has caused others; others who were then the recipients of these operators of wickedness.

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

- ◆ Heavenly Father, equip me with Your sword, Your sword of righteousness, to cut asunder injustice, to cut asunder violations, abuse, theft and fraud, to cut asunder bullying and cruelty, to cut asunder criminal misconduct. Equip me with a courageous heart and an unwavering spirit that is made of perfect faith, faith that knows I am one with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and no weapon formed against me shall prosper.

Whom Shall I Fear?

- ◆ Lord God Adonai, when fear is removed from the equation, there is no stopping me from radical obedience to You. As Psalm 27:1 reminds me: *“The LORD is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?”*
- ◆ Psalm 56:3-4 underscores: *“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise— in God, I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”*
- ◆ Indeed Lord God, what can mere mortals do to me? My eternal life is in You. In God I trust. Jesus Yeshua, I trust in YOU.

A Spirit of Power

- ◆ Lord God Adonai, 2 Timothy 1:7 says: *“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but of power and love and self-control.”*
- ◆ Lord God Heavenly Father, I repent for mistaking timidity for gentleness, for masking my own fears and cowardice with a veneer of virtues, as an excuse for running from my duties.
- ◆ Dear Lord God, I commit to guarding the good deposit of that entrusted in me through the Holy Spirit, the One Who dwells in me, according to 2 Timothy 1:14. I commit to honoring the Spirit of power and love and self-control Who is within me.

My Courage is Rewarded

- ◆ Lord God Adonai, Isaiah 41:10-13 comforts me: *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen*

Don't Be a Jonah! Cultivate Courageous Righteousness

you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you.”

- ◆ Thank you Loving Father God, for Your Mercy and Grace, for your patience with me as I walk out my salvation daily, as I cleanse myself of leaven, as I choose to walk in courageous love, mercy and faith.

3. Thanks and Gratitude.

- ◆ Thank you Lord God Adonai for receiving me before Your Throne of Mercy and Righteousness and helping me to cultivate true courageous righteousness, to always do Your will, when, how and with whom You call me to do so.
- ◆ To You alone be all the glory in Heaven and Earth forever and ever! Amen!

~~~~~

*“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul.*

*He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.  
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”*

Psalm 23

~~~~~