

Unit Three: Sacred Living: Saints as Mentors

Lesson 3

Jonah, The Reluctant Prophet



Pray Together

Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooyn Surpo, Amen.

We remember you, Lord; our prayer comes to you in your holy temple. Those who worship vain idols forsake their true loyalty. But with a voice of thanksgiving, we will sacrifice to you; what we have vowed we will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!”

Based on Jonah 2:7-9

Quick Quiz

Mark the correct answer

1. The Israelites faced the army of the Philistines at the

- a wall of Jericho b Valley of Elah c Mount of Olives d Garden of Gethsemane

2. The Philistines had a giant soldier named

- a Saul of Tarsus b Cain c Goliath d Ahab

3. David did not want to wear the armor offered to him by

- a Joshua b Goliath c Jesus d King Saul

4. David used what weapon to kill Goliath?

- a crossbow b slingshot c sword d spear

5. David wrote many of the

- a Psalms b Lamentations c Epistles d Ten Commandments

Did You Know?

You may have an Armenian friend by the name of “Hovnan.” Hovnan is the Armenian for Jonah.

He Didn't Listen the First Time

Read Jonah 1

1. Why might Jonah not have wanted to do what God asked?
2. Look at Matthew 8: 23-27 which is about Jesus' miraculous calming of the storm. Compare and contrast with Jonah 1.
3. Jonah was in the great fish three days, then came out alive. What other Bible occurrence reminds you of this situation?
4. Which one of God's commands do you find hard to follow? Why?
5. Jonah had some character traits that made it hard to help Nineveh. What were they? How do you usually solve your problems? Does God enter into your problem-solving process? Why or why not?



The Great Commission

Christians often refer to something called "The Great Commission." This is simply God's command to take his message of salvation into the entire world. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Like the prophet Jonah, we are to share God's message with as many people as we can, even though there can be negative consequences for this. From the prophets of the Old Testament to modern-day missionaries who leave home and family to spread God's Word, history is full of people who suffered and were even killed because they would not keep quiet about their faith. Even today Christians are persecuted and murdered by those who refuse to hear the healing message of our Lord.

We can carry out the Great Commission in many ways. Sometimes God will provide you with an opportunity to talk with another person about your faith. Other times, you can allow your behavior in certain situations to be proof of your love for Jesus without you saying a word. The way you allocate your time, money, or other resources can speak loud and clear about where you stand with God. Your enthusiasm and solidarity at church or Sunday School can be an encouragement to someone who isn't getting the message.

How could you express God's message to others – with or without words - in the following places?

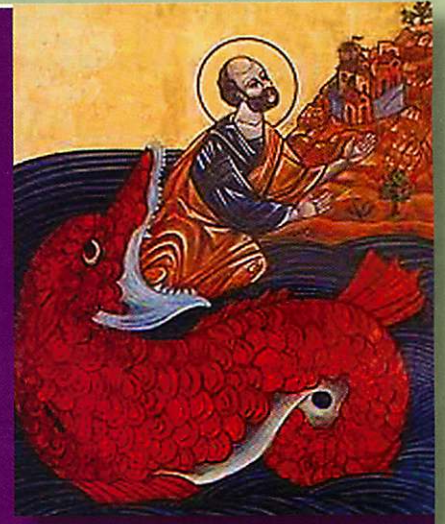
- Sports event
- Hospital emergency room
- School cafeteria where someone is being bullied
- Nursing home
- Animal shelter
- Scene of natural disaster
- Playground fight
- Wedding
- At the airport during a massive flight delay
- In a garden
- In a courtroom



Jonah, You Just Don't Get It!

Even after spending three damp days inside of a large fish and being spit up on shore, Jonah was still giving God a hard time. After Jonah finally did as he was told and delivered God's message to Nineveh, he was very annoyed when God spared the city after the residents changed their bad behavior. Jonah complained to God about sending him on the mission to Nineveh when Jonah knew God would spare the city because of his great mercy and compassion.

God taught a subtle and somewhat humorous lesson to straighten Jonah out once and for all. After speaking to the Ninevites, Jonah went out of the city and waited on a hillside to see what would happen. God caused a big, shady vine to grow over Jonah's head. Jonah was very pleased and enjoyed resting under the vine. At dawn the next morning, God sent a worm to destroy the vine. Then he sent a blazing sun and hot wind to make Jonah so uncomfortable he told God he wished he could die. Read Jonah 4:9-11 to find out the conclusion.



Our Armenian Way

Jonah and the other prophets are part of the foundation of our worship. We look to the writings of Isaiah, Elijah, and others to point us to the true Christ. They also serve as examples of leaders who would not compromise God's message no matter what happened to them. Besides the Bible writers, we also have Gregory the Illuminator, Gregory of Narek, and other teachers from church history who spread God's message in lasting ways.

The words of the prophets are woven throughout the Badarak. We see their role in our faith in the Havadamk, or Nicene Creed, which states "We believe also in the Holy Spirit, the uncreate and the perfect; who spoke through the law and through the prophets and through the Gospels." Elsewhere in the Divine Liturgy, the Prayer after Communion quotes the prophet David, who wrote in Psalm 28:9, "Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever." Our Eucharistic Prayer comes from the Egyptian theologian St. Athanasius. Each week when we kiss the Gospel book at the conclusion of the Badarak, we recall those who carried the Word to the ends of the earth, and we renew our pledge to do the same.

Words to Live By

"I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise will be at all times in my mouth."

Psalm 34:1