



Near and Now

When My Calling Is a Second Chance – Jonah

By Allison Grainger

Warm-up Question

*Have you ever been given a second chance that you did not expect?
Give examples.*



Photo by Joshua Earle on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

The Word of the Lord Came to Jonah a Second Time

Read [Jonah 3](#)

Bible Story Reflection

In the first part of Jonah's story, he does everything he can to avoid God's call. He flees not just by ignoring what he has been told, but also by physically leaving on a ship to try to escape. He is in "flight" mode, perceiving that God's mission and vision do not align with his own. Attempting to run away from God causes difficulties for Jonah at sea. Through the turmoil, Jonah feels a continual sense of accompaniment by God. Jonah comes to see God as committed, persistent, and unrelenting in the pursuit of God's work in the world.

In chapter 3, Jonah is again called by God. Instead of resisting, Jonah embraces the call. He gets up and does as he has been instructed, living into his calling as God's messenger. He is asked to bring the same message to Nineveh that he himself needs to hear: turn away from your own ways and trust in the presence and wisdom of God.

Jonah had a different plan than God. However, God never abandons Jonah and continues to nudge him, despite his flawed human nature, towards his calling. God does not call Jonah a second time merely because there is unfinished work to be done. Rather, this second calling allows Jonah, and us, to see how endlessly God will pursue and encourage us to embrace our calling, rather than fear it.

Discussion Questions

1. Has there ever been a time where you have felt like Jonah? If so, when?
2. How do you think Jonah would tell this story?
3. How do you think Jonah felt when he was called the second time?
4. Have you ever tried to avoid God's calling once only to encounter it again?
5. Talk about a time in your life when you were in "flight" mode. Did it help or hinder you?
6. How can you deepen your trust in the presence and wisdom of God?
7. Near the end of the story of Jonah, God is described as "abounding in steadfast love." What does God's steadfast love look like in your own life?
8. What words or phrases would you use to describe God in this story?
9. This story elicits feelings of joy, relief, and liberation. When have you felt those feelings?

Activity Suggestions

Stand in a circle with one person taking a turn in the middle with their eyes closed. People in the circle will all speak at once, repeatedly calling another person's name in the circle. One person in the circle will be selected to call the name of the person in the middle. They are the only person who will call this person's name. As the person in the middle hears their name, they will move toward the person calling their name and open their eyes once they reach them. The person doing the calling will then take the place in the middle and the game will begin again.

Write a letter to your future self. Explain how you see yourself being called in the present moment. Indicate when to open the letter in the future. When you open it, what do you notice? Are you still being called in the same way? Did new callings arise since you wrote the original letter?

Consider an upcoming important decision. Go through one whole day thinking you are going to choose "Option A." The next day, think about choosing "Option B." After pondering both options, consider the feelings that each option elicits for you. Does one feel more exciting? Does one feel more fear-based?

Prayer Concerns

For those who long for a second chance, for open hearts, for those who are struggling to let go.

Closing Prayer

Thank you for not giving up on me, O God, and calling me again and anew when I have turned from your mission and vision. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

