

When I started to prepare for this week, I was looking at the scripture readings and I'm like, I don't know if I want to do Jonah. Some of you know, I have a very checkered past with this story. I've been kicked out of a number of churches because of this story. I'm like we got a good thing going right now. I don't know if I want a tempt fate. But I didn't want to back down from it, my own personal situation, with the story. I'm like maybe it's time. Maybe it's time to revisit this.

Again, when you hear the story of Jonah as a kid, it doesn't seem as violent as this story. You know we're told God speaks to Jonah and tells him that he needs him to do something, and then all of a sudden Jonah's in this whale God sent. Jonah went in the whale. Three days later Jonah came out of the whale. We don't really hear about the rest of it. We don't hear about all the violence and being on the boat and running and hiding.

The story starts off with God, talking to Jonah, and sets him on a goal, tells him to go and do this. Go talk to these people and instead Jonah goes and runs in hides. He goes into a boat, not thinking God created all of this. He's going to know where I'm at. He created the land and the sea like, he tells the people, the other Sailors that God created the one thing that I'm going to try and hide from him. That just doesn't make a lot of sense. But we do that frequently. We do that ourselves. Whenever something doesn't go the way we want it to or we have a task that we know is coming upon us, we have a tendency to kind of run and hide from it.

This week preparing for Jan's funeral service, yesterday, I did that. I hid a lot. Every funeral I've done has been somebody I've known. Somebody that I've known personally, somebody that I grew up with. And it's incredibly hard each time.

I talked to my friends who are chaplains at hospice at nursing homes, and they love doing funerals. I'm like, you guys are nuts cause why would somebody love to do that? And they always tell me you don't do it for the person that's passed. You do it for the family. He's like some of these people, it's the only time I'm ever going to get to meet them. It's the only time that I get to share in their life, so they love doing it. Me, I hate doing it because it's another friend I've lost. It's somebody else that's gone on. I should rejoice and be happy that they've gone on and joined God. That they're in the Kingdom of Heaven and that they're no longer in pain, They're no longer in sorrow and no longer suffering. I should be happy and rejoice in that but my own selfishness puts it aside. For those who were here yesterday, I don't know if you heard it, but the phone kept ringing the entire service. I'm like, that is so Jan.

That's what we need to remember, those things. That is what gets us out of that sadness. That's what gets us out of hiding. Now Jonah, finally came to the captain, got him up and was like, hey we got to take care of this. We got to figure this out. And everybody else in that boats was like, okay. They went, and they talked, and they figured out what was going on. They figured out what was happening. Why was he doing this thing? And Jonah finally said, he's like, all right, I gotta fess Up. I gotta take care of this. I gotta hit it head on and we just need to get it done.

It doesn't really end well for Jonah at that point, but it did end well for the rest of us. We had a great celebration yesterday of Jan's life. We had a great time doing things that we hadn't done. It was definitely one of the most unique services I've done and been doing a long time. In that sadness, there's also great joy. We don't have to accept all the bad things going on in our lives. We just need to face them and face them together because we're not alone. We're all

going through this part. We have a tendency to hide and go back into ourselves and be away from everyone As we think that's easier. We think that's better, but really it isn't. It's harder. It makes depression more and more hard. It makes life sad. But we have each other together. We have the opportunity to embrace and celebrate our lives even when things are changing. We recognize that it's going to be good. We might be sad, but we know it's going to get better. And we're doing it for the right reasons, and we're going the right direction. Let us pray.