



The plot of this story concerns God's desire to save Nineveh and have the people repent. Jonah is given this task. Instead he goes in the opposite direction. Now on a boat a storm swells up. The crew work hard to lighten the load. Jonah sleeps through this until found by the Captain. The crew blame Jonah for their misfortune. Jonah makes the decision to jump over board. A great fish swallows Jonah. He remains in its belly for three days. He prays. God asks the great fish to throw Jonah onto dry land. Here God calls Jonah again. This time Jonah responds with no hesitation. God shows mercy to these people. But Jonah gets angry that God has done this and would rather die.

At the heart of Jonah's story is the loving heart of God that belongs to everyone. Both near and far God inhabits our lives. Fully alive comfortable and loving.

Where we go God follows.

Then why does God allow the darkness to consume us?

Then why does God not speak with me?

We could also ask why is Jonah angry. After all he was saved when he turned away God.

God holds back in order to catch our attention. He wants us to explore being at one with Him. The profound image of "being at home" in His presence. To understand He always loves us. He will respond to our deepest needs.

He might say "yes."
He may say "no"
He may also say "not yet"



Here we are at a point it feels we are emerging from a dark place. Taking a leap of faith in cross cultural issues within a crisis. Angry at the way people behave. Pointing the finger of blame. People on their own survival agenda.

We are searching for the way forward that reshapes both personal and communal life. We may feel there is an urgency and immediacy to get on the task. We may feel overwhelmed with the long lists of guidelines and risk assessments for every aspect of church life.

To prevent us getting swept overboard the remedy is to hold each other in a relationship that is grounded in God's relationship. Here God can refill us. Restore us and release the life within us.

Jonah reminds us that this "new society" is a human/divine world. We are people coming together bonded in love that rises from God's heart. His story expresses "accept that we are all accepted" We all are given God's beautiful, soothing healing love. In both stormy seas and on dry land.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish [die] but have eternal life {John 3:16}

...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough troubles of its own.

{Matthew 6: 33-34}

May everything we do be for God's glory.

