

# The Beauty of God's Faithfulness

The Old Testament prophet Jonah is *not* a good example of a prophet.

- Chapter 1 – Jonah ran away from what God wanted him to do.
- Chapter 2 – Jonah repented.
- Chapter 3 – Jonah delivered God's message, but he did it without sorrow over the city's pending doom.
- Chapter 4 – Jonah got mad because God didn't destroy the city.

The reluctant prophet. The disobedient prophet. The angry prophet. Not exactly the guy you want to call for your next pastor.

OK, enough about Jonah's less-than-stellar behavior and attitude. Let's focus on God. The whole account of Jonah's life begins with God.

"The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 'Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it because their evil has come up before me'" (Jonah 1:1-3).

The next time we hear from God, Jonah is on the shore, washing off the seaweed and gastric juices he just spent three days swimming in.

"The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: 'Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach the message that I tell you'" (3:1-2).

God had a specific plan of action. He made His call to Jonah clear. When Jonah ran from that call, God didn't change His mind or give Jonah an easier task. God called Jonah back to His original call for him.

God's plans don't change just because we fail. God's plan is always good. It's not always easy, but it is right, and it is best. Our own disobedience doesn't change that. Even when we are unfaithful, God remains faithful.

Humanity's sinfulness reached epic proportions in Genesis 6. So much so that God determined to "start over" with Noah. When the water had receded, Noah came out of the ark, the aardvarks headed for Africa, and God established a covenant with Noah.

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority" (Gen. 9:1-2).

Let me stop at this point of the covenant and focus on what we just read. Verses 1-2 are essentially the same words God spoke at the creation of man.

"God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth' " (1:28).

All humanity sinned, but God's plan—His covenant with humanity—did not change. He reiterated His covenant with Adam when He made the covenant with Noah. I find that highly encouraging. Humanity may have been unfaithful, but God remained faithful to His covenant. Despite our waywardness and fickleness, there is nothing fickle about God.

God's love does not change. His protection and security do not change.

"The Lord — the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth" (Ex. 34:6).

"Because of the Lord's faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!" (Lam. 3:22-23).

God's plan for your life does not change. When you come back to Him, He restores you and desires to do His glorious work through you. He stays true to His character and plans, and He wants you to do the same. And since He is so loving and gracious toward you, why wouldn't you want to embrace His call on your life?

Make your commitment the same one Jeremiah made when he declared the faithfulness of God.

"I say, 'The Lord is my portion, therefore I will put my hope in him'" (v. 24).