

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

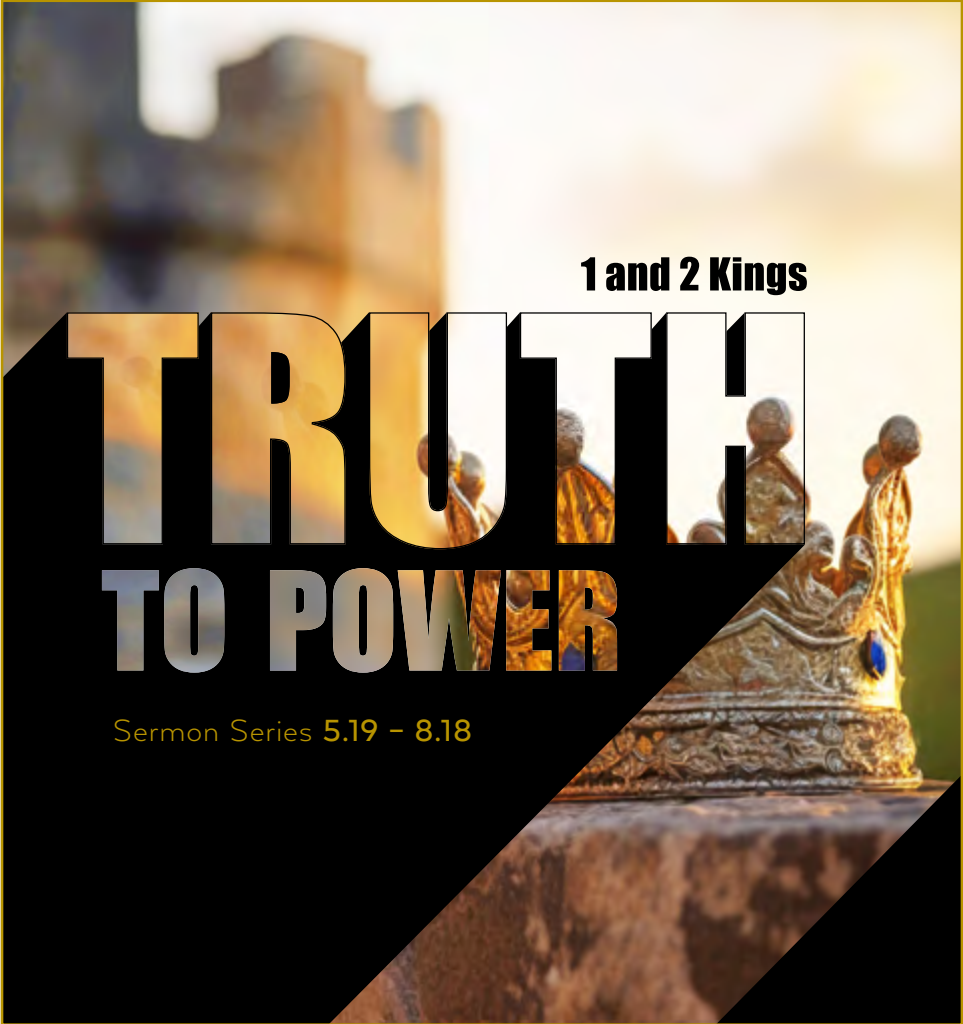
# DEVO

JULY 29 - AUGUST 2, 2024

**1 and 2 Kings**

# TRUTH TO POWER

Sermon Series 5.19 - 8.18





# MONDAY

Read **Jonah 1**

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At the time of Jonah, Assyria had not been a threat to Israel for a generation, and the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 BC) had achieved prosperity and military success in the history of Israel's divided monarchy. Nineveh (modern day Mosul, Iraq), at this time, was no longer the capital city of a vast empire but a provincial center of a struggling nation.

When the LORD tells Jonah to go to Nineveh, Jonah, a prophet of the LORD, whose calling it was to proclaim the words of the LORD to whoever and wherever the LORD sent him, runs away. He ran away in the opposite direction to a place that represented the farthest destination he could go to the west, Tarshish. He paid fare, probably for the whole ship, to sailors who were most likely of Phoenician and Egyptian background, as they were the expert sailors at that time.

The LORD would not let Jonah escape his mission and caused a storm to ravage the ship. The sailors had different beliefs and gods and prayed to them for help. After casting lots, the answer pointed to Jonah as the cause of their adversity. But they had to wake up Jonah, who was in a deep sleep below decks. Jonah is so like us even today. He knew he was running away from God. He even had told the sailors that, and he slept deeply in his denial.

We, like Jonah, often express our faith in the Lord whom we worship and acknowledge who He is even as we sit in the midst of our disobedience to what He has told us to do. Our sin falls into two categories: disobeying God or disregarding God. Jonah was definitely disobeying the word of the Lord that told him clearly to go to Nineveh to tell the people to repent. He was disregarding God's word by doing the opposite; Jonah did what he thought was right. Even prophets were not perfect. They were human and sinners just as we are.

We can inadvertently drag others into the consequences of our disobedience. These poor sailors did what Jonah told them to do and threw him overboard. The storm stopped for them; it continued for Jonah.

## QUESTIONS

When has your disobedience caused others to be caught up in your consequences?

## PRAYER

For Shepherd's Pantry

Shepherd's Pantry continues to see a growing demand for services. It is now serving an average of 3,000 households a month across its three sites of distribution. Pray that this ministry continues to receive donations of food, monetary donations, and grants in order to continue blessing those neighbors in need.



## Read **Jonah 2**

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Jonah's punishment for disobeying God was being thrown overboard to his death and being swallowed by a fish. Wait! The fish was part of the punishment? God sent the fish to swallow Jonah, and only then did Jonah pray and ask for deliverance. *"I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple"* (v. 4). Jonah prays to the LORD whose holy temple was in Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom, not in the Northern Kingdom where Jonah was a prophet.

Jonah continues, *"When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple"* (v. 7). Jonah had been far away from the LORD even before boarding that ship. On the verge of death, he finally cries out. Verse 8 gives us even more insight: *"Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them."* The Israelites in the north had rejected the temple of Yahweh in the south in favor of golden calf shrines in Dan and Bethel. In the belly of the fish, Jonah is coming to an epiphany when he sees he has been giving his worship to idols, not the LORD. This brings him to repentance; he vows that he will do what the LORD asked him.

How far do we let ourselves get before we turn in repentance and tell the Lord that we will do what He has asked of us? Are we even listening to know that He HAS asked something of us? We let idols get in the way all the time of our singular worship of the one true God. How quickly do we realize we are in the chaos of the sea, in the belly of a fish, and distanced from relationship with Him?

If we worship God in spirit and in truth as Jesus told the woman at the well to do in John 4:23, we need to be present and in daily communion with Him. Jonah and the other Israelites in the Northern Kingdom had been off the mark for some time. Divided Israel was symbolic of the hearts therein. The Lord doesn't want us to have divided hearts; He wants us to worship Him alone, wholeheartedly.

## QUESTIONS

What idols in your life are keeping you from true and singular worship of the One True God?

## PRAYER

### For Shepherd's Pantry

As the need for Shepherd's Pantry's services continues to increase, it has begun to outgrow its space. Shepherd's Pantry currently rents both of its facilities. Pray for guidance, opportunities, and support to work towards one day owning its own facility.



Read **Jonah 3**

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Scripture does not state exactly where the fish left Jonah. But if it was anywhere near Joppa, Nineveh was 550 miles away, and it would take Jonah a month to get there by caravan. Jonah obeys the word of the LORD and is going to preach to the people that they must repent of their wicked ways or God will destroy the city in forty days. The Scripture says it was a large city, so it would take Jonah three days to go through it.

The Ninevites respond right away: *“The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth”* (v. 5). The people responded before the ruler of the city had even heard and sent out a decree to do the same thing.

God wanted Jonah to share His word to people outside of the Israelites. “Probably the very purpose of the book was to show Israel that the despised and yet dreaded heathen were more susceptible to the voice of God than they were: *‘I will provoke you to jealousy by them which are no people.’* [Yahweh said this to Moses; see Deuteronomy 32:21 and Romans 10:19.] The story was a smiting blow to the proud exclusiveness and self-complacent contempt of prophetic warnings, which marked the entire history of God’s people.” (Alexander MacLaren) The Israelites had continued to turn their backs on God, so the Ninevites were given an opportunity

to believe in God and turn from their wicked ways. In God’s great mercy, He gave them a forty-day warning, and they responded on day one.

Should this story be an awakening moment for us to consider our own life and death? If we only had forty days to live, what would we be doing? “We should be alarmed if we were sure not to live a month, yet we are careless though we are not sure to live a day.” (Matthew Henry) We are not guaranteed tomorrow. Jesus wants us to be sharing with those who don’t know Christ, like Jonah, declaring the Good News at every given opportunity to those who need to repent and turn to Jesus. We cannot be selfish in keeping this saving knowledge to ourselves. We cannot run from our calling like Jonah did because God wants to expand our hearts for those still lost and seeking.

## QUESTIONS

How many non-believers are you sharing Christ with on a regular basis? What does that look like?

## PRAYER

### For Shepherd’s Pantry

Shepherd’s Pantry will be having its Second Annual Breakfast of Champions to End Hunger on September 27. This is its only fundraiser. Pray that this event will be successful in raising much needed funds and that it will bring awareness to the many things that Shepherd’s Pantry does beyond food.



Read [Jonah 4](#)

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Why is Jonah so upset with the LORD's compassion on the Ninevites? Jonah obeyed the LORD's directive and preached to the people. The people responded rightly by repenting, and God relented from inflicting destruction upon them. Why is Jonah angry? He says, *"Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity"* (v. 2). Jonah is being selfish and it's rather ironic. Jonah knew who God was but didn't want Him to show that graciousness and compassion to a heathen nation.

Again, this shows Israel's thinking to be an exclusive kind of patriotism when God's plan from the beginning was to have all people be His people and come to a saving knowledge of Him. Jonah shows some selfishness because he is concerned for his own reputation as a prophet. He says, *"Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live"* (v. 3). Jonah is angry with no real just cause. Possibly, he's thinking that people won't take him seriously as a prophet anymore because God relented and spared repentant Ninevah.

We need to be mindful that God's ways are not our ways. We often get out ahead of God's plans and start inserting our own conclusions. Then we get angry when things don't turn out the way WE expected

them to. Can we hear God say, "Is it right for you to be angry?" Um. Hmm. Our flesh gets in the way. We must battle against our ways and always be looking to God's leading and plan.

Jonah then gets angry because the plant that the LORD provides to shade him from the heat one day dies the next day. The LORD confronts Jonah about showing more concern about the plant than about the thousands of people in Nineveh. Jonah's priorities are all messed up. God is trying to expand his heart for the people beyond Israel.

We need to make sure that our priorities match God's. Our hearts can always expand more for the people who still need to know Him.

## QUESTIONS

When you have been angry at circumstances or even with God Himself, have you ever asked yourself if it was right to be angry with God? Why might that be a good thing to do?

## PRAYER

### [For Shepherd's Pantry](#)

Shepherd's Pantry has tripled the number of households it serves across its three sites. The demand on this team is great. Pray for the staff, interns, and volunteers to be granted good health, patience, and always feel and know how appreciated they are.



# FRIDAY

Read **Jonah 1-4**

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If we're honest, we can all identify with Jonah. We've all disobeyed and/or disregarded what God has asked us to do. We've all gotten ahead of God's plans and decided how things should turn out or how others should act. We've all become angry with how the Lord's shown mercy on others when we didn't think they deserved it. News flash: we don't deserve His mercy either.

The Old Testament Israelites lost sight of the prime directive of God, which was for them to be a people set apart to worship Him alone. So, God used Jonah, in this instance, to extend His compassion and mercy to a heathen nation (that would soon take them into captivity).

As believers in Jesus, we tend to forget that we, too, were once enemies of God. Our fleshly nature is one of sin. God extended His grace and mercy to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, God opened the door and ripped the curtain down to allow us to have direct access to Him. God has extended this same compassion and mercy to the whole world. We believers can become a bit complacent and exclusionary in our worship of God like the Israelites. We should always be looking for ways to invite others to know Jesus. We should never keep Jesus to ourselves.

God will follow through with His plan for our lives and for the world. We must trust Him to see His plan through. We need to decide if we are going to obey Him when He directs us or if we are going to run away or run ahead when we think we know better than God does. We may feel angry at Him sometimes because we do not like what is coming to fruition. But we must ask ourselves, "Is it right to be angry with God?" The Sovereign Creator can handle it, desiring openness and intimacy with His own. However, we need to guard against the fallen, self-worshiping tendency toward "My will be done!" God will be sure that His will is done—on earth as it is in heaven. Trust that He will.

## QUESTIONS

What are the areas in your life with which you have not fully trusted the Lord? Have you sensed an anger in you about them?

## PRAYER

### For Shepherd's Pantry

Shepherd's Pantry could not fulfill its mission of helping our neighbors in need without the help of our volunteers. We pray for each one of our existing volunteers that they continue to help us fulfill our mission and that new people will be moved to join our mission by joining us as long-term volunteers.



## Sources

- Alexander MacLaren, *Expositions of the Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1982). Quotes from this commentary on Jonah 3 can be found at <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/maclaren/jonah/3.htm>.
- Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003). Quotes from this commentary on Jonah 3 can be found at <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-concise/jonah/3.html#>

*These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at [KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org](mailto:KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org). If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.*

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