



SHARING SCRIPTURE

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The Restless Prophet

For use: September 12 - 18

Texts: Jonah 1–4, Jeremiah 25:5, Ezekiel 14:6, Revelation 2:5, Luke 9:51–56, Jude 1–25

“If I would have known six months ago that this could be possible, this would have been a no-brainer,” confesses Joe Gammon who now finds himself in critical condition as he battles COVID-19. “But I honestly didn’t think I was at any risk.” [1]

Against recommendations, Gammon was reluctant to get immunized against COVID, believing that the highly politicized vaccines would infringe on personal freedom. Now, as he wonders if he will wake up the next morning, he strongly reiterates the suggestion that he had ignored so long: get vaccinated.

Of course, Gammon and others are aware that the vaccine is not a complete safeguard against catching the virus, but that it can help the body prepare to fight against and withstand it. And as they lie dying, they are still able to share the message by serving as an example for others who have been living in doubt about the inoculations. [2]

These case studies reveal how stubbornness is one of our biggest personal downfalls, and that good—at least for others—can still come from our mistakes. Perhaps the best Biblical example of this phenomenon is Jonah, who was able to influence an innumerable number of people because of what he experienced.

As Jonah reaped the repercussions of running away from God and refusing to preach to the Ninevites, his boatmates witnessed the power of God and became believers. Yet, Jonah still attempted to descend into darkness and out of God’s sight. It was only when he was at his most vulnerable moment, alive but trapped in the belly of a large fish, that he began to see how dependent

upon God he truly was.

And so, once reunited with dry land, Jonah preached—although reluctantly—to the Ninevites and watched them receive the good news with receptive ears.

This would be a great place for the story to end, but unfortunately, Jonah never truly learned his lesson. A few more pangs of suffering would be needed for it to sink into his dense skull.

Fortunately for those with whom Jonah came in contact, Jonah's stubbornness, anger, foolishness and pride didn't get in the way of their receiving the news they needed to hear. Rather, his running spread the message to more people. God turned a bad situation into a good one.

All in all, Jonah and the COVID ICU patients reveal that we should not wait to be in the face of death before we allow our own lives to be transformed by God and before we desire to act on others' behalf.

~ Stefani Leeper

[1] <https://khn.org/news/article/icu-filled-with-covid-and-regret-nashville-hospital/>

[2] <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/09/09/1035489298/tiktok-covid-vaccination-megan-blankenbiller-hospital>

For Reflection

Connecting: Have you ever made a fool of yourself but taken away positive lessons from the experience? If you could go back in time, would you relive the experience to gain the value of its lessons, or avoid it altogether?

Sharing: In what ways do you find yourself sometimes trying to distance yourself from God?

1. Skipping church services
2. Neglecting to commune with God one-on-One
3. Refusing to admit sins and seek forgiveness
4. Acting unkindly toward other human beings
5. Acting against your convictions
6. Other

Applying: Putting God and others before our own pride can be difficult. The next time someone acts unkindly toward you or another you know, make a conscious effort to find the lessons hiding beneath the pain. Additionally, the perpetrator of unfriendliness may be going through something that requires understanding, patience, and prayer.

Valuing: Did God open a door for you but your feet pulled the other way? When this situation occurs, pray for the Spirit to walk beside you and give you the courage to make the journey.

Other Helpful Resources

Creative Ministry's website equips you with friendship evangelism, small group, community outreach, and healing ministry tools right at your fingertips. Our website also features Adventist research conducted by Monte Sahlin, as well as Sharing Scripture archives, ScripShots, and more. And if you're tired of staring at a screen, digital files are available for download as PDFs and to print.

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Three decades ago, we created this resource for small groups and Sabbath school classes, and it continues to bless so many people worldwide. Thank you for your continued interest in these biblical themes and what they mean to your life and those people with whom you share it.

Paul Richardson
Executive Director

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