

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Runaway– Nah, I’m Good

August 8, 2022

Every kid has a runaway story. Mine was when I was about four years old. I was having a lovely playdate with my friend when my mom interrupted our good time by announcing it was over. My friend and I were not happy! My mom’s request and our preferences didn’t jibe, so we concocted a brilliant, four-year-old style plan—we ran away. A whole 50 yards into the woods—surely, that would show we meant business.

Now, it's humorous when children do this over a playdate ending, but it's much less so when it's an adult running away from what God is calling them to. Yet we see this exact occurrence in the Old Testament story of Jonah, which Lead Pastor Ben Snyder unpacked to kick off our new series *Nah, I'm Good*. In the first verses, we learn of God’s request for Jonah.

Jonah 1:2

“Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are.”

Jonah had the opportunity to speak truth into the lives of ruthless people—to share God with them. Jonah, however, was having none of it and took off for the ends of the earth, trying to avoid doing what God asked of him. Just as I didn’t like my mom’s request, Jonah didn’t like God’s. And while it’s easy to chastise Jonah for his stubborn resistance to God's request, we need to ask ourselves, “Are we really any different?” How many times has God invited you to be a part of his work in our world, and for whatever reason, you said, “Nah, I’m good”?

Truly, God sometimes asks us to do hard things: Things that, if we were operating under our own strengths or for our own purposes, would be impossible. Things that don’t make sense to us. Things we flat out don’t want to do because they mess up what seems to be perfect right now. Through these lenses, the response, “Nah, I’m good,” seems acceptable.

But what if God is asking us to be a part of something bigger that will impact the lives of those around us? Even then, we aren’t always quick to “end our playdate” with our personal desires. We may still need to spend time in prayer.

Take heart—even Jesus wrestled with trusting God’s plan. In the garden of Gethsemane, he asked God to make a different way ([Matthew 26:36-46](#)). He had made friends, was doing good things; he didn’t want to leave those for what lay ahead.

Yet, in contrast to Jonah, Jesus’ love for God and his heart for the lost won out. Where Jonah ran and tried to pursue his own agenda, Jesus stepped into all God had for him, trusting in his perfect plan.

What will you choose?

Questions:

Has there ever been a time when God invited you to be part of his work and you replied, “Nah, I’m good.”

How is God inviting you to be a part of his work in our world, today?

Next Steps:

Text *21days* to 419-419-0707 and participate in [21 Days of Prayer](#) to connect with God and know him better.

Take 5 minutes each day to sit quietly with God and ask, “What are you calling me to today?”

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Day 1 Focus - For God to be Known ([Romans 1:16](#); [Mark 16:15](#))

Dear God, give me eyes to see and ears to hear on a daily basis where you are calling me to share the great hope we have in you. May I not be ashamed of your gospel, but may I be bold in proclaiming to all creation the good news that you are the way, the truth and the life. Amen

[Today’s Parent Prayer](#)

This post was written by Kelly Pagel, a regular contributor and director of the LivingItOut.

Which Way to Run– Nah, I’m Good

August 9, 2022

Last weekend, Lead Pastor Ben Snyder kicked off a new series called *Nah, I’m Good* in which he introduced the story of Jonah. If you’re like me, the first thing you think of when you hear Jonah is the Sunday School version about being swallowed by a whale. Pastor Ben began unpacking a much more in-depth version of the story, and as he did, I began to realize that sometimes, in some ways, I am not much different than Jonah.

Jonah was called by God to go to the city of Nineveh to tell the citizens they would face God’s wrath because of their wicked behavior. However, Jonah did not want any part of this task and ran and hid instead of trusting what God had planned for him.

As I thought deeper about Jonah’s story and revisited my own past, I could think of several times in my life when I also said, “Nah, I’m good.” Not just with God but with other life responsibilities too. Maybe you can relate.

There were a few times in school when the teacher was calling on us to answer questions, and I wasn’t as prepared as I should have been. I found myself sinking lower into my seat to hopefully avoid being called upon. Similarly, as an adult, I have searched for out-of-the-way “hiding spots” when I knew my boss had an extra job for me. Again, it was in an effort to hopefully avoid the extra workload.

Jonah took this behavior to an even greater extreme.

Jonah 1:3

But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the Lord. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish.

Pastor Ben explained how this only led to a downward spiral in Jonah’s life. Have you ever felt like you were in a downward spiral? I know I have. When I examine the reasons behind that, I invariably conclude that in my own way, I was running away and ignoring God’s calling in my life.

God's plan for each of us on our spiritual journey is to Know Him, Find Freedom, Discover our Purpose, and Make a Difference. But when it comes to these steps, how many times have you said, "Nah, I'm good"? Since I stopped running from God and began answering his calls, I have found myself in a much happier state of mind.

When God calls you to do something, you have two choices: Be like Jonah and run away, or run to God and give him your best service. Which way will you run?

Questions:

How do you react when you hear God calling you to do something?

Does the thought of living out your purpose excite you or make you want to run away?

Next Steps:

Read the story of Jonah and consider when you have responded in similar fashion.

Tune in to the rest of this series to learn how to say "yes" when you really want to say "no."

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Day 2 Focus - For Our Cities ([2 Chronicles 7:14](#))

Dear God, today, we lift up each city in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. We come to you asking to see lives healed, people drawn to Christ, and your Spirit poured out in our communities. We humble ourselves, seek your face, and turn away from anything that draws us away from you, believing that you will heal families, communities, and people's hearts. Lord, give us the wisdom necessary to unite us, and lead us in the days ahead so our cities can be a light to our nation and a testament to you, the only one who saves. We pray this in Jesus' name—amen.

[Today's Parent Prayer](#)

This post was written by Ned Miller, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Warning, A Storm is Coming– Nah, I’m Good

August 10, 2022

Storms come in many forms. Twenty years ago, one began to brew in my life when a group of friends chose to take matters into their own hands. Granted, it was an attempt to keep someone safe, but I warned them that their approach could come back to bite them.

The following day, three individuals had mistaken my identity (it happens more than you think) as one of the people I had warned. Originally, I kept my wits and avoided confrontation, but my youthful pride had me seething. Ultimately, I succumbed and joined my friends in physically fighting for the cause they thought was justified.

I was the guy who typically broke up fights or talked people out of making bonehead decisions. My nervousness was a sign that I was getting involved in something that could change my life’s trajectory. Two cracks of thunder across the sky finally woke me up, and I convinced the others to leave things alone.

Jonah 1:4-6

⁴But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. ⁵Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold. ⁶So the captain went down after him. “How can you sleep at a time like this?” he shouted. “Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to us and spare our lives.”

God was using the storm to wake up Jonah. We often think storms in our lives are punishments, but like Lead Pastor Ben Snyder said, “Wake up. This isn’t going to lead to the life that you want. You’re heading in the wrong direction.” Jonah did his best to avoid God’s path.

The thunder was my warning shot. The one positive thing I did before we headed out that night was ensure no one was carrying a gun, so we didn’t send our own shots. Due to how things escalated, the results could have been drastically different if one of my friends had brought a weapon. I went back to

avoiding those situations after that night. Emotional thinking pulled me away from what I knew was right. I thank God for getting my attention.

Questions:

What storms have you encountered in your life?

Do you dwell in them because you think they are a punishment?

How do you listen to God in the storm?

Next Steps:

Continue attending or viewing the series *Nah, I'm Good*.

Dive into the book of Jonah throughout the week.

Text *21days* to 419-419-0707 Participate in [21 Days of Prayer](#) from August 8th - 28th.

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Day 3 Focus - For Our Nation and Our State ([Acts 1:8](#))

Dear heavenly Father, I pray for the life-giving message of Jesus to spread throughout our nation and throughout Ohio and Michigan. I pray in each community, people would turn to you for direction and answers. May they know you as their Lord, savior, healer, and provider. Use me today to share your message and to make an eternal difference in the lives of those around me.

[Today's Parent Prayer](#)

This post was written by Jaron Camp, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Opening Your Eyes and Softening Your Heart – Nah, I’m Good

August 11, 2022

Jonah has always been my favorite book in the Old Testament. His story is so raw and honest. It gives us an account of a man who was so against God’s will that he would literally rather die than repent from his disobedience and warn the Ninevites of God’s judgment in order to give them the chance to experience God’s mercy.

Throughout my life, I have run away from my own proverbial Ninevehs many times. I struggled with mercy and forgiveness in the past. I did not understand why bad things happened to good people and why good things often came to those who lived immoral lives. My heart was full of bitterness. I was not spiritually mature enough to grasp that I was created to serve a patient and merciful God. I sin every day, and I desperately need his mercy and forgiveness.

While Jonah judged the people of Nineveh for their wickedness, he needed the same mercy and grace from God that they did. As found in the Scriptures, God brought judgment down upon Jonah and the other passengers of a ship for Jonah’s disobedience through an intense storm. They all faced the consequences of Jonah trusting himself instead of God.

Jonah 1:10-12

The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already told them he was running away from the Lord. “Oh, why did you do it?” they groaned. ¹¹ And since the storm was getting worse all the time, they asked him, “What should we do to you to stop this storm?” ¹² “Throw me into the sea,” Jonah said, “and it will become calm again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault.”

The storm would have subsided if Jonah had repented of his disobedience and went to Nineveh to proclaim the word of the Lord. However, Jonah was so angry about God’s potential forgiveness and mercy for the Ninevites’ sin that, instead of repenting, he asked the other sailors to throw him overboard—even though it would potentially result in his death. He was so full of anger that he chose death over giving his enemies a chance at repentance.

Whenever we feel angry at God and feel like we are lacking justice for the seemingly unfair events that have occurred in our lives, we have two choices, as Lead Pastor Ben Snyder explained. We can either trust the Lord and his higher ways, or we can trust ourselves.

God ultimately softened Jonah's heart and showed his great mercy by leading both Jonah and the Ninevites to repentance and a relationship with God. Therefore, at the times we doubt God's goodness and misunderstand his higher ways, let us remember to soften our hearts and trust in him. We are never too far gone for God's abundant grace.

Questions:

Has there been a time when you ran in the opposite direction of where God was calling you? How did you soften your heart and ultimately learn to trust in him?

What are the outcomes of trusting yourself instead of trusting God?

Next Steps:

Pray for God to examine your heart and let go of any bitterness that you hold against others. Ask him to help you place all of your trust in him rather than in yourself.

Text *21days* to 419-419-0707 to participate in the [21 Days of Prayer](#) to grow closer with God and help you discern where he is calling you to go.

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Day 4 Focus - For Our World – For the Churches ([Acts 1:8](#))

God, you alone are worthy of honor, glory, and praise. With you, we can overcome every storm that comes our way. You are the only true answer to the struggles that our world faces today. Help our world to see and recognize this truth. I also pray that a deep passion would grow within the church for our world and for your message to be shared to the ends of the earth.

[Today's Parent Prayer](#)

This post was written by Isabelle Billnitzer, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Unconditional Love – Nah, I’m Good

August 12, 2022

Do you know what God’s purpose for your life is? Years ago, I knew exactly what mine was. I created a mission statement and action steps, and I assembled an accountability group to support me in completing it. Convinced that the secret to fulfilling my potential in the Lord and running the good race was located mostly outside of my four walls, I was eager to take on opportunities that came in my path and stretch myself to the very max.

Then life happened—I found myself for a long time, sitting with the Lord in my chair, as my body would not allow me to do the very basic tasks in my day. It’s interesting what chronic pain will do to a person and how quickly you learn that control is only an illusion.

On one of those days, a friend, who was much farther along in years, visited me. She asked me, “April, are you valuable and loved right here, sitting in this chair?” I would be lying if I said I believed I was valuable or loved at that moment, not living the plan I was so sure God had given me.

Then something really ugly stood up inside me. I realized two things—I did not believe I was loved unconditionally, and I had been striving to make myself worthy in God’s eyes for years.

The truth of what Christ did for me and you finally got inside of me that day.

Romans 5:6

“When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.

He died for all of our past, present, and future sins, and he handed us a new life that we get to freely participate in. Whether you find yourself at work, at home, or in a hospital bed, God has a very special purpose for you right there.

As I truly received God’s unconditional love that day, I realized that his purpose for me is not complicated. Over the next few years, I learned that God had freed me to care for loved ones who needed me. God wants to show you and me how to extend the love he gives freely to everyone we come in contact with. I know,

and Jonah knew even better, that some people are hard to love. Sometimes it is easier said than lived out.

Thank you, God, for the body of Christ that makes this transformation to the likeness of Christ possible. We are never alone!

Questions:

Whom in your life do you need to love better?

Ask God to reveal a place you are holding unforgiveness.

Next Steps:

Do an act of kindness for a difficult person in your life.

Take time to call or write a letter to someone that has loved you well.

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Day 5 Focus - Our Leaders ([1 Timothy 2:1-2](#))

Dear God, grant our leaders wisdom. Help me to extend grace and confidence to the leaders you have placed over me. Guide and protect the leaders in our government, churches, communities, businesses, schools, and families as they make difficult decisions day in and day out. Thank you for allowing me to be an encouraging voice to the leaders in every area of my life. Amen.

[Today's Parent Prayer](#)

This post was written by April Willer, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Saturday - Day 6 Focus - For My Love for God and Others to Grow ([Matthew 22:36-39](#))

Dear God, you said that the greatest commandment to follow is to love you with all my heart, soul, and mind. As I connect with you over these 21 Days of Prayer, grow my trust in you and my heart for you so that I will love you more. Then, as my love grows for you, help me to love those around me more and more each day. Amen.

[Today's Parent Prayer](#)

Sunday Day 7 Focus - Our Churches ([Matthew 28:18-20](#))

Dear God, today, we pray for our churches. As we meet today, help us point people to you as the answer to our questions and struggles. Help us see our role in the world and to embrace the mission you have given us to introduce people to Jesus and the life-changing adventure with him. We trust that you give us an amazing life of purpose and it's a gift you want to give everyone around us. In Jesus' name — amen.

[Today's Parent Prayer](#)