

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Time-Out! - Nah, I'm Good

August 15, 2022

When you get to be my age, you start wondering, “Why am I so hard-headed when it comes to making good choices?” Even when I was younger, before I had given my life to Christ, there was a small voice in my mind saying, “This isn’t going to end well!”

I imagine Jonah was hearing that voice when he chose to head to Tarshish instead of doing what God told him to do. I bet he got on that boat and hid in the bottom—hoping God couldn’t see him but knowing he could. I would even go so far as to say Jonah wasn’t the least bit surprised when the boat almost capsized because he was on it. Jonah may have even hoped to escape God’s wrath by death as he was being thrown overboard. But I don’t imagine he was very shocked to find himself in the stinking, disgusting belly of a fish. Talk about a time-out!

When we find ourselves in a mess entirely of our own making, God will often, in his mercy, put us in a time-out—not as a punishment but to give us a chance to pause and think about what we are doing. **God will grow us privately, so he can use us purposefully.** The storm can be a wake-up call to get you where God wants you to go. The wreckage from the storm is usually a time for reflection and regrouping.

This is what we find Jonah doing, and at least in this, he can be a model for us. In times such as these, we find that God is using our circumstances to bring a redemptive or restorative change. As you begin reading Jonah 2, you can feel his angst.

Jonah 2:2-3

² ... “I cried out to the Lord in my great trouble and he answered me. ... ³ You threw me into the ocean depths, and I sank down to the heart of the sea. ...”

But as the chapter progresses, Jonah noticeably has a change of heart.

Jonah 2:7, 9

⁷ “As my life was slipping away, I remembered the Lord. And my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy Temple. ⁹ ... For my salvation comes from the Lord alone.”

It's when we arrive at this place of desperation that God does his best work in us. It may be in this place that we finally realize there is nowhere we can go that God cannot reach us. Resting in his salvation, we know that God corrects us, but he does not condemn us. In his eternal economy, God rescues us on purpose for a purpose.

Ultimately, life is best when we trust God first. Clearly, God was not done with Jonah, nor is he done with us. We can trust him to guide and direct us no matter how far we have run from him. And we can trust him to use our stories to encourage others who are in the same boat ... or fish!

Questions:

Do you trust God first, or do you only remember him once your boat has capsized and you've been swallowed up?

Do you have a "belly of the whale" story? Can you see how God rescued you? Are you willing to tell others about it?

Next Steps:

In every situation, trust God first. Share the good and bad with God through daily prayer. Join us for [21 Days of Prayer](#) by texting "21days" to 419-419-0707.

If you have a "belly of the whale" story, write it out and trim it down to 2 minutes. Practice telling it to some friends, then tell it to some strangers. Celebrate what God has done in your life with them!

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Day 8 Focus - Courage to Authentically Share and Care ([Colossians 1:11-12](#))

Dear God, there is no greater purpose for today than to share your story. But we confess how often we miss opportunities to share, or even turn away from a moment when we could care for another. Help us set aside anything that would distract us or take away from this great truth - it's because you first did all of this for us that we now have the privilege to do it for you. When we are united with you, Father, our hearts grow. Give us the courage to believe what you say and then act on it. Amen.

[Today's Parent Prayer](#)

This post was written by Lauri White, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Hide and Seek- Nah, I'm Good

August 16, 2022

In 1986, I packed a suitcase because it was time to go. I did something horrible, knowing trouble would find its way to my door.

The warning was clear: Don't remove the mattress tag "under penalty of the law." I rebelled, raged against the machine, and ripped it off. Panic immediately set in, and I ran, becoming a fugitive.

My mother was sick, but it didn't stop her from locating my whereabouts. In fact, she always knew where I was and was prepared to have my grandmother pick me up and bring me home within the hour if I hadn't returned. But she allowed me to sweat it out.

Eventually, I realized there was no escape, so I shared my fears with her. Obviously, my safety wasn't jeopardized, and Judge Dredd wasn't out for justice, but the six-year-old me didn't understand anything past the words on the tag. (For the record, I wasn't alone—warning tags still come on mattresses, but now, most of them say, "Do not remove under penalty of the law, except by consumer.")

Jonah did everything in his "power" to run from God, to avoid doing what was asked. It wasn't until Jonah realized he had zero control and his life was ending that he stopped resisting. He stopped rebelling.

Jonah 2:2

He said, "I cried out to the Lord in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead, and Lord, you heard me!"

In his despair, Jonah realized this truth: **You can't go where God can't reach you.** Jonah believed he could escape God, but God revealed otherwise as soon as Jonah stopped being childish and was ready to see what was always there.

We often take off to avoid or distance ourselves from our situations, because we aren't ready to accept a calling, or we feel there's no coming back from something we've done.

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ *And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.* ³⁹ *No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The lyrics to “Real Thing” by [Maverick City Music](#) say it best: “Your weakness is only my strength. I hear your questions, and I’m closer than you think.” We should never forget we’re not beyond God’s reach. Everyone gets to come back. Stop running and cry out to God, “You’ve been here all this time. Tell me where have I been looking ‘cause you weren’t hard to find. Mercy opened up my eyes. Now I’m losing my religion to be loved like a child.”

Questions:

Are you trying to avoid God’s calling? Do you constantly wait until the trouble is too deep before you ask for God’s help?

Next Steps:

Embrace your walk with God by joining or leading a [Group](#).

Be more purposeful in your prayer life by taking part in [21 Days of Prayer](#)—text “21days” to 419-419-0707

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Day 9 Focus - The Next Generation (kids) ([Proverbs 22:6](#))

Father, remind us that children are a gift from you for us to share with the world. Continue to equip us with the ability to raise them to follow your truth and discover their purpose. Thank you for giving our children the best of our qualities without losing their individuality. Grant us patience when we feel our child’s rebellious nature pulls them from their path of faith. Let us not forget that we too endured a season or more of doubt, pride, or selfishness, but the knowledge gifted to us by you brought us back to our purpose. Amen.

[Today’s Parent Prayer](#)

Today’s post was written by Jaron Camp, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

With God – Nah, I’m Good

August 17, 2022

If you had the opportunity to sit across from Jesus at a table, what would you ask him?

Would you ask him why he sent you to your job, or why this is your family or significant other/spouse? Would you ask why you were made this way, for this reason, at this time?

Or would you talk to him about how things in life could have been good but seem unfair. Would you tell him, “What’s the purpose? I’ll just do it on my own!”?

Is it fair to question why Jesus does what he does when he is God? It's easy to wonder if he would respond with condemnation or with mercy and grace.

Jonah 2:3-4

³ *“You threw me into the ocean depths, and I sank down to the heart of the sea. The mighty waters engulfed me; I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves. ⁴ Then I said, ‘O Lord, you have driven me from your presence. Yet I will look once more toward your holy Temple.’”*

God wants us to enter into a relationship with him—to go on the life-changing adventure with him. But you can’t experience it if you tell God, “Nah, I’m good,” and go in the opposite direction when he calls you to action, like Jonah did.

Even though Jonah was disobedient, God chose to extend mercy and grace to him instead of condemnation. Rather than cutting Jonah off, God corrected him and pointed him back to his purpose. In the middle of Jonah’s “time-out,” he was reminded of God’s presence—he finally accepted that an adventure with God was better than one on his own.

God desires correction not condemnation is the second truth Jonah learned from within the fish.

Romans 8:1

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

This same truth applies to you today. During the ups and downs of your life-changing adventure with God, it’s his desire to help you grow more like his son Jesus ([Romans 8:29](#)). You were made to reflect God; he has a purpose and plan

for your life, even when it doesn't seem fair. So you can be confident—you can step out in faith and follow God instead of saying, “Nah, I'm good.”

And if you get lost along the way, God, in all his mercy, will always extend his grace, correct your course, and welcome you back.

Questions:

Do you know what God's mercy and grace are?

Has it been difficult for you to trust God and step into your life-changing adventure with him?

Next Steps:

Check out the difference between [mercy and grace](#). Think of a time when you experienced God's mercy and grace.

Journal to reflect on how God has made you like him.

Read the [second chapter of Jonah](#) and reflect on the truth that God desires correction not condemnation.

21 days of Prayer

Day 10 - Focus - Marriages and Family ([Psalm 128:3-4](#))

Dear God, today I lift up the marriages and families in our communities. I pray your spirit would strengthen our marriages and families. Please give a supernatural love and grace to spouses as they interact during these stressful times. You know exactly what each marriage needs, and I pray you would meet those needs. Allow our families to grow stronger during this time. Help parents represent you well to their children and help children have a heart that grows in its love for you. I pray marriages and families would come out of this season stronger and closer to you. Amen.

Today's Parent Prayer

This post was written by Becca Roberts, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Second Chance – Nah, I’m Good

August 18, 2022

How many times in your life have you wished for a second chance?

There have been plenty of those times in my life. I’m quite happy to play golf with partners who agree to allow mulligans—a second chance to hit a better shot. Second chances in life are great, but we don’t get them nearly as often as we’d like.

Fortunately for Jonah, he was given a second chance by God.

Jonah 2:5-6

⁵ “I sank beneath the waves, and the waters closed over me. Seaweed wrapped itself around my head. ⁶ I sank down to the very roots of the mountains. I was imprisoned in the earth, whose gates lock shut forever. But you, O Lord my God, snatched me from the jaws of death!”

Now Jonah was saved from death, but he found himself in another dire situation. He was trapped in the belly of a large fish, where he spent three days, alone with his thoughts. Lead Pastor Ben Snyder explained he was not in trouble—he was in a “time out” to hopefully learn from his mistakes.

God created us with the necessary intelligence to learn from our mistakes, but he didn’t stop there. God is the master of second chances, but it’s up to us to repent our mistakes and receive that gift of mercy he gives us. As Jonah spent time contemplating inside the fish, he learned this truth. **God rescued you and me on purpose for a purpose.** This truth helps us step out and follow him instead of saying, “Nah, I’m good.”

God gave Jonah new life. It’s the same gift that he offers to each of us, and it was only made possible when Jesus died on the cross for our sins. When you put your faith in him, he gives us his spirit so that we can do God’s work here on earth.

Wow! A second chance.

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

While he was in the belly of the fish, Jonah realized God was not going to kill him, otherwise, he would already be dead. As Pastor Ben explained, "If you aren't dead, God's not done with you." One of my favorite songs is "[What If](#)" by Matthew West, in which he sings, "The last I checked, this heart inside my chest is still beating. Well, I guess it's not too late." As I am in the twilight years of life, I find it particularly inspiring to know it's not too late.

God meets each of us right where we are. He's waiting to snatch us from the jaws of death with his gift of salvation and grace. And he wants us to accept it—only then can we live out our purpose on this earth, which he planned for us long ago. That is a second chance I don't intend to waste! I hope you don't either.

Questions:

When was the last time you felt like God was putting you in a time-out? How did you react?

How does it make you feel to realize God offers you a second chance?

Next Steps:

Imagine what it would be like to be in the belly of a whale and how you might react.

Tune in to the rest of this series to learn more about how to go from "Nah, I'm good" to "Yes, I will."

Check out the song "[What If](#)" by Matthew West.

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Day 11 Focus - Our Schools ([Mark 10:14](#); [Matthew 5:16](#))

Dear God, you said to “let the children come to you,” showing that you have a big heart for children. I pray for safety for the children, teachers, staff, and administrators as they embark upon a new school year. I pray for the district leaders as they make crucial decisions, that you would grant them great wisdom. May your followers be salt and light in their schools, shining the hope that we have in you. Amen.

Today's Parent Prayer

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

Trust God First – Nah, I’m good

August 19, 2022

One of my favorite spots to read is on our balcony. Rocking on the swing and turning the pages of my book, it is like I am somewhere else, on a beach or in a garden. I have spent hours at a time up there, loving life.

It can be delightful to slip away for a while, into a book, game, song, vacation, or project. The problem is when they become idols. We can make idols out of our phones, parties, or chocolate. But idols are often sneakier. They can be a person, a dream job, safety, or an adventure. We can even make an idol of our good deeds. Our idols trick us into trying—trying to please God, other people, or living on our own.

When Jonah was stuck in the fish, he cried out to God:

Jonah 2:7-9

⁷ “As my life was slipping away, I remembered the Lord. And my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy Temple. ⁸ Those who worship false gods turn their backs on all God’s mercies. ⁹ But I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise, and I will fulfill all my vows. For my salvation comes from the Lord alone.”

Jonah had made an idol of his pride. He chose to go his own way, rather than trust God, who wanted to show mercy to the enemies of his people. Jonah’s life was slipping away from him, when he remembered and cried out to God. And God heard.

Jonah 2:10

Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.

By turning to our idols, we forget that salvation and mercy come from God alone. He just wants our trust—our honest and earnest cry to him for help.

When I find that all I can think about for days on end are the characters in my book or I can’t stop worrying about the future or I’m constantly afraid of disappointing someone, I know it’s time to refocus my attention on God and away from the things that are threatening to become idols. It is best to trust God with whatever I’m trying to gain from those other things.

If God says, “Take a break,” *obey*. If he says, “Take a step,” *obey*. If he says, “Be present,” “Chase your dreams,” or “Be authentically yourself,” *obey!* What he says is merciful!

Life is best when we trust him first.

Questions:

Do you look to God to hold you securely through difficult situations, or do you look for security and distractions in other things?

What do you find yourself slipping into? When do you see it become an idol? How can you remind yourself that life is best when we trust God first?

Next Steps:

Find any areas in your life that have become idols, and if possible, remove them. If you can't (or aren't ready to remove them), pray before stepping into that part of your life, asking God to help you trust him more. Figure out what you are trying to gain from your idols (approval, security, power, love, etc.), and trust that God will provide all of it and more.

[21 days of Prayer](#)

Day 12 Focus - The Economy and Businesses ([Philippians 4:19](#))

Heavenly Father, thank you for each business that makes up the economy of our community and region. You know the details of each one, and we pray they are firmly established in you. May their work reflect your generous heart. We ask you to show them great favor. Give each business leader your wisdom through the challenges and opportunities placed before them, and may whatever they put their hand to have a legacy of eternal impact for your glory and the good of our community. Amen.

[Today's Parent Prayer](#)

Day 13 Focus - Next Steps ([Proverbs 29:18](#))

Dear God, I pray for individuals to understand God's vision for their lives and grow in the life-changing adventure to know you, find freedom, discover purpose, and make a difference. I pray for the courage to take the next step you have for me, and I pray for others — that they would see the next step you have for them and move forward on their spiritual journey.

Today's Parent Prayer

Day 14 Focus - Guests, online and in person ([Hebrews 13:1-2](#))

God in heaven, we pray that you would give us open hearts and open minds to receive those you send through our doors, be it our physical doors or virtual doors. We trust that each person shows up because you ordained their presence long ago. We thank you for the incredible privilege of telling them about how much you love all of us, but especially them. Open their hearts to the message you have for them today. As we move forward, give us wisdom as we continue to discover new ways to share your love, and help us to do all we do for your glory, because it is in your name that we pray. Amen.

Today's Parent Prayer