

Wednesday of the First Week of Lent

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I think that most people, Christian or not, are at least somewhat familiar with the story of Jonah. It's one of those Biblical tales that just stick with you. Three days in the belly of a whale? It grabs you from the beginning.

As I read and reflected this book- there are only three chapters – something resonated with me. Jonah was running away from God, but he was also running toward something. God told him to go to Nineveh, but instead he fled to Tarshish. Tarshish was a busy city where fleets of ships traded silver and gold. Jonah wanted to go there and enjoy it, not go to preach to the people of Nineveh who were known for their savagery and evilness. His decision was so strong that he went in the exact opposite direction of Nineveh to the comfort of Tarshish.

We often have situations where we have to choose to move toward something or away from it. Do I hop in the car and head to work or do I drive to the golf course or nail salon? Do I walk to the library to study or toward my friends and hang out? Not that any of those choices on their own are bad, but which one is better. In other situations, we have the opportunity to help others. Can I help with a food drive or give my time or money to help someone in need? It's easy to ignore the situation and walk the other way.

Jonah ran but eventually repented and followed God's direction. He saved a whole city from a disastrous end by doing the one thing that God asked him to do. We may not think that our actions will have that big of an effect, but our obedience and our kindness can make a world of difference in someone's life. As we continue through these 40 days of Lent, let's focus on the path that God has for us, whether that is going to work, school, or just giving a word of encouragement to someone. His way is always the best.