

Brokenness Study #4 - the Protest

by Charles Stanley

The sermon emphasizes the importance of submitting to God's will and surrendering to His brokenness in order to fulfill His great purpose for our life.

Duration: 49:32

Scripture: Jonah 1:1

Topics: "Brokenness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Jonah and highlights the consequences of resisting and rebelling against God. He emphasizes that resisting God comes at a great cost to individuals. The preacher believes that if someone honestly evaluates their life, they will realize that the losses incurred from running away from God far outweigh any perceived gains. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of responding to God's calls for salvation, sanctification, and service. The preacher uses Jonah's example of rebellion and rationalization to illustrate how people often resist God's attempts to bring them to submission.

Transcript

There is always a price to be paid for rebelling against God. Many people think they can run from God, resist the Lord, have their own way, have their own will, and somehow escape the chastisement of God, but that's absolutely not true. And I think in the message today you can understand two things.

First of all, there is no escape from rebelling against God. There is a price to be paid. But secondly, oftentimes the pain and the suffering that we're enduring is something that God has designed in order to break our stubborn rebellious will, in order to bring every area of our life in submission to His will, in order that you and I may fulfill God's great purpose for our life.

This is our fourth message in the series on brokenness, the way to blessing, and today we're talking about brokenness, the protest. We've talked about the principle, the purpose of it, and then last week the process, that is, that God targets an area in our life that He wants to deal with, then He arranges the circumstances in which the brokenness is to take place, then He chooses the tools by which we're to be broken, then He controls the pressure that will be placed upon us, and then He determines the amount of time necessary in order to break us. God has a design in everything in our life.

And you'll recall that we said that brokenness is God's method of dealing with the self-life, that is, that spirit within us that desires to act and live independently of God. It is a condition, it is a condition whereby we lose none of our zest for living, but rather it's all brought under the submissive will of God. And that God's purpose is to so bring every aspect of our life in submission to Him that you and I would walk about in our daily life and our expression of life would be the expression of the life of Jesus Christ in our character, in our conduct, and in our conversation.

But sometimes we don't like that. Sometimes we don't want to give up our ways. Sometimes we don't want to have our wills broken.

There's a stubborn rebellious streak in us at times that rebels and resents and resists God. What happens and how does that take place and why? So in each of these messages on brokenness, we have dealt with some biblical character today. A good example of resisting God's brokenness is Jonah.

So if you'll turn to the book of Jonah and let's read the first three verses of the first chapter to get us started and then we'll cover most of the book. And I want you to notice here is a man who absolutely refused to be broken by God. Jonah chapter 1 verses 1 through 3. The word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before me.

But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa, found the ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. And let me say in the very beginning, how do you run from the presence of God when everything that is in existence, every body that is alive, every place, not only on this globe, but every place that is in existence is always everlastingly in the presence of God.

It is only a deceived mind that thinks that he or she can run from God. It is only a distorted view of life and of God that thinks he or she can rebel and run and escape the presence of God, which is what Jonah attempted to do, and which is what multitudes of people today are attempting to do. Run from the presence of God.

Running from the presence of God is like running from your own heart. You can't get away from it. You cannot escape it and remain alive.

There is no escape from God. But sometimes we resist God's brokenness and his attempts to work in our lives and in order to bring our body, soul, and spirit in submission to his will. Oftentimes we resist that.

And that is the theme of this message. And I want us to look, first of all, at this resistance and look at the way it is illustrated in the life of Jonah. And you'll notice, first of all, the Bible says that God called Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and to cry out against their wickedness in order that they may understand who the true God is, Jehovah God, and therefore repent of their sins and turn to him.

That was his very clear call from God. Now, the city of Nineveh was about 500 miles northeast of Jerusalem. And the city was a great city known for many things, but probably known for its beauty, its grandeur, its greatness, its power.

These people were known for their fierceness, their warlike spirit, and for the atrocities they committed upon the people whom they captured. And they were just gobbling up little nations around them. And so this was somewhere around 760 or thereabouts.

And so Jonah knew that Israel was being and would be threatened by the Assyrians. Nineveh was not the capital then, but was later the capital of Assyria. And so Jonah had a very difficult time with being sent to a city which he knew would be the enemies of the nation of Israel.

And he did not want to go. In fact, his attitude was so bad about it. If you will turn over to chapter 4 for a moment, and you'll find out why he ran.

And we'll come back to this passage later. Chapter 4, verse 1 says, now, you know, he's already been there and something great has happened. But listen to his attitude, because he says something about what he was thinking back home before he ever took his trip to Tarshish.

But he greatly displeased Jonah, and he became angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, Please, Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore, in order to forestall this, I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that thou art a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. So he says in chapter 4, the reason he didn't want to go is because he didn't want to see the Ninevites converted.

He didn't want to see any big revival take place among those heathens. He resented them. He wanted nothing to do with them, and therefore, he didn't want to go.

And so the Bible says, instead of doing what God said to do, he went down to Joppa, bought him a ticket. They said, Where do you want to go? He said, I want to go as far west as I can possibly go. So he bought a ticket to Tarshish.

Now, God called him to go to Nineveh, which was about 500 miles, somewhere thereabouts northeast. He went 2,000 miles in the other direction, all the way to Spain. At least, that's what his ticket said.

Had an interruption on the way. Of course, you know the story. But he was doing his very dead level best to escape, to run from God, and to rebel against God's will for his life.

Now, it's interesting what happens when you look at the way he resisted the Lord, because that was his response. He just said, I'm not going to do it. Has God ever required you something? Did you say, Lord, I'm just not going to do it? Or did you say, well, now, Lord, sure, you know I'm going to do it later.

Or, I know what you're telling me to do, but Lord, I think I found an easier way or a better way over here to do it. Whether we obey God later or some other way, we're still rebelling against God when we don't do what God says do, when God says do it, and the way he says do it. So, he heads out toward Tarshish.

Now, what I want you to see in this very first point is, the way God pursued Jonah and attempt to break him, to break his stubborn, rebellious will, his pridefulness. No, I'm going to do it my way, and I'm going to Tarshish. I'm not going to Nineveh.

I'm not going to preach the truth to those people. I don't even want to see them say, I don't want to see them converted and saved. That's what he was saying, Lord.

I did not tell you when I was at home, if I came over here and preached the truth, they'd get converted. And at the end of his life, he's angry, even after this great meeting has taken place, and God has accomplished his purpose. Here's this angry servant.

So, here's what I want you to see how God operated in his life. Now, Jonah, of course, and God knew this, was a very prejudiced, resentful, hostile, angry man. He was hostile and angry toward the Assyrians.

So hostile and angry toward them, he was willing to disobey God. And you'll be surprised how many times in these four chapters, especially the last chapter in two or three verses, he talks about dying. He'd rather die than obey God.

So, when God calls him, God attacks in his very call. That is, God targets a problem within Jonah, and that is his prejudice and resentment and hostility toward his enemies. And so what happens? In order to avoid doing what God said to do, God called him to go to Nineveh.

And he buys him a ticket and heads out to Tarshish, escaping God. Secondly, God sends a storm out at sea, and the boat is about to sink. They're throwing everything on board, overboard.

And so what does he do? He goes down the hull of the ship and goes fast asleep. So far, no matter what God does, it doesn't make any difference. He keeps weaseling his way out.

Then the captain finally comes down and wakes him up and says, man, what in the world is going on? You're down here asleep. The ship is about to sink. Come up on board.

So he comes up on board. Then they decide, being very superstitious, they decide to cast lots. And usually what they would do, they would have like, if there were 20 men on board, they'd have 20 white stones or 19 white stones and one black one.

And so whoever pulls out the black stone, that means he is the one who's responsible for whatever calamity is going on. And at this point, it was a storm. So who do you suppose pulled out the black stone? Jonah.

And so he confesses before them and he says, my God is the God of creation. He created the heavens and the seas and God has called me and I've disobeyed him. And the problem here is that I am running from God in rebellion toward him.

They said, what in the world should we do? He said, just take me up and throw me overboard. Even when God put the pressure upon him by exposing him to the sailors as running from God, instead of confessing it and yielding and surrendering to God, he says, I'd rather die than to go to none of it. Just throw me overboard.

And they didn't want to do that. But finally, they figured if that's what it took to save their hides, they wouldn't. That's what they did.

They threw him overboard. Well, I'm sure as Jonah went down, he thought, finally, I'm escaping. But what do you suppose? Waiting down there for him was a big fish.

And somebody says, was it a whale? What was it? Who cares what it was? It was a great fish. More than likely, it was a whale. In fact, their whale's big enough to swallow some of the little cars running around.

So there's no problem with a big whale swallowing little Jonah. It's no problem. And it was no problem with God keeping him alive while he was there.

And that is exactly what happened. And so I'm sure he thought this is it. But before long, after something happens in his life, and I'll show you in a few moments, the Bible says the whale threw him ashore, threw him up on shore.

And he goes to Nineveh, walks to Nineveh, long trip by the way. And when he gets to Nineveh, he starts proclaiming the message of God. Now, he's not doing it in love.

He's not doing it because he wants to. He's certainly not doing it with compassion and mercy. He's doing it out of anger.

He doesn't want to see him converted, but he's proclaiming the message. And I'll tell you, if you'd taken about a three-day trip in a whale's belly, you'd do what God told you to do too, whether your attitude was right or not. And that's exactly what he did.

Motive was all wrong, but he did it. And so the result was these people got on the conviction. And the king called for fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

People began to repent. And God brings about a tremendous change in the Ninevites. Well, you think, well, surely that would get the Jonah after all, after all this rebellious attitude.

And here he does what God says do. And God brings about a change in the lives of these people. You think, well, surely he'd finally break down and say, Lord, you were right after all.

I'm ashamed. I confess. I repent.

You know what he's doing? The Bible says he's sitting up on a hillside, angry as he can be, mad at God, mad at the Assyrians. And the Bible says in verse 10 of chapter 3, when God saw their deeds that they turned from their wicked ways, then God relented concerning the calamity, which he had declared he would bring upon them. And he did not do it.

But the Bible says that Jonah was displeased, said, Lord, did not tell you this is what was going to happen? I knew that if I came over here preaching, this crowd would get converted. He's sitting up there angry, angry at God and arguing with God. So he says, therefore, now, oh, Lord, please take my life from me.

Death is better to me than life. Can you imagine that? After seeing this tremendous miracle take place, he's up there saying, God, the truth is I'd rather be dead than obedient to you and submissive to you if I've got to sit here and watch a revival meeting take place in Nineveh. Well, God isn't finished, so what does he do? Sitting up there, the sun comes out real bright, and God provides a covering for his head.

And next day, his attitudes are messed up. The Bible says a worm ate that. And so he's about to have a sunstroke.

And that's exactly what's happening, if you notice, in this passage. The Scripture says in verse 6, So the Lord God appointed a plant and grew it up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. Jonah was extremely happy about the plant, not about God or about Nineveh, but about the plant.

But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant and it withered. It came about when the sun came up that God appointed a scorching east wind and the sun beat down on

Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with all of his soul, not for forgiveness, but what? To die. He says, to die.

Death is better to me than life. Then God said to Jonah, Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant? And he said, I have good reason to be angry even to death. Here's what I want you to see.

Here's a man who's stubborn and rebellious toward God. No matter what God does to break him, to crush him, to shatter his pride and his self-will and his stubborn self-centeredness, what does he do? He just bores up and just keeps plodding right on through and saying again and again, Have you ever been that resentful toward God? Have you ever been that rebellious toward God? God's call to Jonah was to serve him in Nineveh. God issues at least three calls to every single person.

First is the call to salvation. That is the call to repent of our sins, to accept by faith Jesus Christ, shed blood at Calvary as the all sufficient substitutionary atoning death, which brings about the forgiveness of our sins. And therefore, his call is for us to confess, and to acknowledge Jesus Christ's death on the cross as payment for our sin and receive him personally as our savior by faith.

That's the first call. The second call is a call to sanctification or separation. That is a call to a life committed to him in such a fashion that sin's reign no longer is reigning in our life, but we have the victory through the power of the Holy Spirit living within us in order to live a life of victory over the reign of sin and live a life of obedience to him by which the Holy Spirit can live out through us the life of Christ.

And the third call is a call to service. Whether it is in the home or in the business world or in the church or on the mission field, no matter what, it is a call. God sends three calls to every person.

A call to be saved, a call for sanctification, and a call to service. What is our response? My friend, how many of you have responded the same way Jonah responded? By rebellion toward God, running from God, and then rationalizing your action. Nobody's perfect.

Well, God, I know this is what you said, but I think if I will get it instead of getting into the ministry like you call me, Lord, I'm going to get in the business world, make all this money, and I'm going to support the missionaries, and I'm going to support the pastors, and I'm going to support the ministries. That's not what God said. God called you to preach the gospel.

Yes, but Lord, I understand that. But look at all this money that you're going to help me make over here so I can send all these people. God doesn't need a thing, and God can come up with all the money that He needs.

What He wants is you committed to Him, whatever He's called you to do. So what do we do when God calls us? We run, we rebel, we run, and we rationalize it away. You know what He said about that marriage you're contemplating.

You know what He said about your vocation. He may have called you into the ministry. He may have called you to the mission field.

He may have said to you as a wife, you're not to go to work. You're to stay home with these children and raise them. You can have less things and more love, more compassion, more mercy, more joy, more happiness, more contentment in the family.

But there's some things in life that you want, and you've decided you're going to work whether God says so or not. You see, all of us can come up with all kinds of ways of rebelling against God and explain it away as if we can convince God on second thought, Lord, see, there's something you hadn't thought about. Can you imagine thinking about something that God hasn't already thought about? Reasoning and rationalizing and excusing our disobedience to Him because we've come up with a better idea in a better way than God has.

And what we do when we do that, we put ourselves in a position to be broken. That is our stubborn, rebellious, self-centered, self-seeking will broken until all of us, our whole being, body, soul, and spirit come under submission to the will of God. That's what He's up to.

That's what He's after. But some of us act like Jonah. I think I've met some people whom God has carried through enough trouble it might be equal to a rod in the belly of a whale because they've gone through such turmoil, and in spite of that, still rebel against God.

Explain it away. Well, you know, it just happened. That's the way things are.

Now, let's look at this matter of the reasons for our resisting God's call in our life or whatever He's trying to do, but resisting His brokenness. Because you see, all of us came in the world with a bent away from God towards sin. All of us came with a will.

All of us came with a desire to have it our way, do our own thing, love a self-centered life. And so we resist. So let's see how Jonah resisted for a moment.

The Bible says he certainly did that. And the reason for it, first of all, was he had a rebellious spirit. And I'm going to keep saying rebellion and pride because they're the two problems.

God said, I want you to go to Nineveh. He said, I'm not going. Now, I want you to listen to something.

Once God tells us to do something, nothing else we have to say is of any real value. If God says, this is what I want you to do, that's it. In other words, God doesn't say, would you like to go so-and-so? Would you please do so-and-so? What do you think about doing thus and so? You know, God's never asked me what I thought about it.

But it's always, here's what I want you to do. Here's the next step. Here's the next turn.

And so our problem is rebellion. A second problem is pride. Whenever you and I choose to do it our way, what we're saying is, now we wouldn't rationally say this, but here's what we're saying.

God, I found a better way. That's what we're saying. Can you find a better way, something better than what omniscience, a loving, omniscient God knowing all things and knowing what is best for us? How can we come up with a better way? Sometimes it's fear.

And I can imagine with Jonah, his old Hebrew pride, be a Hebrew, knowing the one true God, going to that wicked, vile city and luring myself to talk to them, no way. And sometimes it's fear. And I can imagine that Jonah may have had two fears.

I know he had one. He feared that what he would do would bring about the kind of results that God wanted. And he didn't want those kind of results.

And secondly, he may have had some fear of this Hebrew walking through the streets of Nineveh, talking about the one true God, Jehovah, when they believed in many gods. They're very idolatrous, wicked, vile people. And so my friend, no matter what the issue is with Jonah, it was very simple to see.

Full of pride, rebellion, and probably some fear mixed up with it. Now, but what about us? Why is it that you and I resist God's breaking process in our life? Remember what we said, the process goes something like this. He targets the area in your life, which he knows is hindering what he wants to do in your life.

Then God arranges the circumstances or allows them to be arranged in which you feel the pressure. Then he chooses the tools. It may be somebody.

It may be something financially. It may be a relationship. He chooses the tools.

He governs or controls how much pressure is to be placed upon you. And he also controls the intensity and the rapidity with which it is to be intensified. And he also controls the time.

When you and I think about that in our own lives, why do we resist him? Why do we run from God? If he's a loving God that he says he is. If he only wants what's best for us, why do we do that? When we know that he's trying to break something within us that's causing us a problem. That's causing us to be entangled and imprisoned and enslaved.

It may be a habit. It may be an attitude. It may be a desire.

You see, the world says, I don't want anything to do with God, Jesus Christ, church, this whole religious bit. I want to be free. I want to tell you, my friend, you are never free until Jesus makes you free.

You see, you're deceived in your thinking to think that you can live in sin and be free, rebel against God and be free. First of all, you entangle with emotional bondage. You're entangled in a spiritual bondage.

The entanglements of the world are compressing and entangling and imprisoning and shackling. And whereas you think you're free, the truth is you've been so deceived in your mind by sin that what you call freedom. Friend, you don't know what freedom is until you are able to walk in obedience to God, disentangle from the rule and reign of self-centeredness and sin and pride and rebellion in your heart.

But why is it we do it? We all know better. And it's sometimes in our lives, all of us have done it. Well, probably for this reason, some people are very strong.

They're strong personalities. They have a very forceful will. Some people are emotionally very strong.

They can take a lot of heat, a lot of persecution, a lot of criticism. They can take a lot of rejection. They can do without a lot of loving.

They're very strong in their emotions. So they can just bullnose their way on through. And no matter what's going on, they have enough self-determination and persistence and belief in themselves that no matter how much pressure comes upon them and how difficult things are, they just keep moving on and hammering their way through.

And then some folks are very strong minded. They know how to manipulate, weasel their way out. They can figure out how to deliver themselves even from God's breaking process in their life.

The pressure turns on, they get busier. They sense some setback and some failure and their sense of self-will, self-determination, their pride and rebellion just motivates them to go on and on. And in spite of everything God does, they just keep on moving on.

It's what Jonah did. Just think what happened. God sent him a storm, threw him overboard, swallowed him up, spit him out, had a revival, sent him a sunstroke, nothing he did.

All he said, I want to die, but I don't want to be obedient to God. My friend, listen to me carefully. Some of you have already drawn yourselves a circle around you.

You've said, I'm not letting anything in this circle, but what I want, not even God. Now you've not put in those terms, but that's what you've said. Or you've drawn a line and you've said, this is as committed as I want to be.

This is as committed as I'm going to be. I'm willing to do whatever God says up to this point, but not beyond that. Maybe you're contemplating a marriage and God says, that's not of me.

Maybe you're contemplating a business and God says, don't do that. Changing your vocation, God says that your motive's wrong. Leaving your husband, you think you've got legitimate grounds.

God says, don't do it. Leaving your wife, God says, it's a sin. You said, but oh, does it make any difference what the oh is? You and I can always rationalize disobedience and rebellion toward God.

There's a second part of this problem. Why? We respond the way we respond. When you look at old Jonah, God said to him, cry against the wickedness of Nineveh.

What does he say? The Bible says, he says, I'm going to Tarshish. I'm leaving town. Now, here's the problem.

We fail to see God's hand in our life when he's trying to break us. And so the pressure comes on from somebody. Maybe somebody we live with, maybe a husband or wife or children or parents, employer, a friend.

We feel great pressure. Some circumstance, some situation we're in, the pressure's on. Instead of being able to see that this is God trying to bring us into submission to his will, we look at somebody and we say, well, it's the people in my life who are causing the problem.

It may be that they're the tool, but it is God who's using them as the tool to put pressure on. And so you resist that person. It may be that you, and some folks would say, well, it's my circumstances. If my circumstances weren't the way they are, if it were not the way they are, if my circumstances were better, I wouldn't be feeling this.

And so therefore it isn't God, it's just my circumstances. And everybody has difficulty in their circumstances. Somebody says, it's just my environment.

It's the way I grew up. It's the way I'm having to live. And if it were not this way, I wouldn't be feeling what I'm feeling.

And so instead of acknowledging that God is behind my circumstances, God is in my environment, and God may be using somebody whom I love dearly, or maybe even my enemy as a tool to chisel and sand

and cut away. What we do instead of seeing the hand of God in it, we blame and we create our own avenues of escape. Now, what we don't realize is this.

We're running from God. We're blaming it on people. We're blaming it on the circumstance.

What we are doing is manipulating our ways out of God's oppressive, loving, breaking spirit. His hand breaking the stubborn rebellious will and our pride and self-centeredness to bring us in submission to His will, which is always the best for us. We keep running, rebelling, and rationalizing.

Then there's a second problem. Not only do we fail to see God's hand, but another reason is, it's just self-love. Now, what I mean by self-love is that unhealthy, unhealthy, unscriptural view of ourselves.

God, I want it my way, self-centered, self-seeking, prideful, my way. I want to do it my way when I want to do it, where I want to do it. It doesn't make any difference if it hurts anybody else.

It doesn't make any difference. All that matters is the big eye is in control. Now, listen, that is exactly what God has targeted.

The expression of the self-will rather than the will of God. And so this idea of being macho and this idea of being self-made and self-centered, I can do my own thing. I don't need anybody else.

I want to tell you, my friend, there's a bullseye right across your heart. God is accurate to break it and to bring our emotions and our body and our spirit in submission to what is best for us. God's only looking out for us.

And yet we resign and we keep running and we manipulate our way out of it. And we think we've escaped it. I want to say again, there is always a price to pay in rebelling against God, in resisting God, in running from God.

Always, not sometimes, always a price to pay. Now, let's look at one other aspect here. That is the result of this kind of resistance.

Well, it's interesting that God didn't give up on Jonah. He just kept on pursuing him and kept on adding the pressure, changing the circumstance, kept on putting pressure on him. And here's a man who lived his life and absolutely refused to be obedient to God.

He never broke. Wonder what God would have done with Jonah if he had broken under his stubborn rebellious resentment, his prejudice, his animosity and hostility toward those Assyrians. Now, I want you to put a circle around several things, and this is one of them.

I want to talk about the kind of price Jonah had to pay, and then I want to come back and apply it to us. But I want to say at this point, Jonah's resistance to God's breaking power in his life endangered someone else and caused them to suffer. On board the ship, that ship was about to sink.

All the sailors were scared to death. They didn't want to throw Jonah overboard, but they finally did it in order to save themselves. They suffered.

They had to throw everything on board, so they lost all the cargo. They finally threw him overboard. Here's what I want you to watch.

I want you to watch what it cost Jonah to resist and rebel against God. And my friend, with all of my heart, I want you to listen carefully because what you don't realize is what your resistance and rebellion toward God is costing you. In fact, I believe if a man will be honest with me, if he'll give me a sheet of paper, and a pencil, and will be honest with me, and he will tell me the kind of life he's living, absolutely honest, and he'll put all the assets to his life the way he sees it, I believe without a shadow of a doubt I can list two times the losses, if not more, more like five times the losses to everything he thinks he's gaining.

It is a very foolish person who thinks that his ledger sheet is going to come out gaining when he's running from God. You're always losing. And if you look at this passage to symbolize it for a moment, Jonah went down to Joppa, down into the hull of the ship, down into the sea, because you see, the day you start running from God, I don't know where you may have been or where you are, but the day you start resisting and running from God, you start down, and the price tag starts up right there.

The meter on your life begins to running the day you say, God, I'm not going to do it. Or the day that you just ignore what you know is the will of God and decide to do your own thing. Brother, the meter starts running right now, and I guarantee you, your losses will be several times your gain.

And look at Jonah. First of all, it cost him separation from his family. He had to leave.

The Bible says he went down to Joppa, bought him a ticket, heading out 2,000 miles in the other direction. Secondly, his conscience became very guilty. He was disobeying God.

Thirdly, he had this estrangement between he and God. He had no relationship, no fellowship, no oneness with God. He was living in rebellion and resisting God's will.

The Bible says he went down and paid the fare up thereof. Now, I don't know how much it cost to go from Joppa to Tarsus, but 2,000 mile trip in those days cost him some money. My friend, it's costing a lot of you more money than you realize to live in sin and rebellion toward God.

If you put out on paper what it's costing you to rebel against God, and you're interested in your finances, it isn't... Listen, it isn't worth sinning against God. He paid the fare thereof, got on board ship, and what happened? He's bound to have been frightened. This tremendous storm rocking this boat, throwing everything overboard.

Can you imagine what Jonah must have felt when they picked him up and threw him into a stormy Mediterranean sea? Can you imagine the agony and the horror that he felt when all of a sudden he realized he was being swallowed up by something? Well, he describes it. Listen to this. In the belly of the fish, chapter two, then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish.

And he said, I called out of my distress to the Lord, and he answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol, or hell. Thou didst hear my voice, for thou hast cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the current engulfed me, and thy breakers and billows passed over me.

So I said, I have been expelled from thy sight. Nevertheless, I will look again toward thy holy temple. Water encompassed me to the point of death.

The great deep engulfed me. Weeds were wrapped around my head, seaweeds. I descended to the roots of the mountains.

The earth with its bars was around me forever. He thought he was dying, this terrible death. Can you imagine the stench of being inside of a whale's belly? Can you imagine the awesomeness of what's happening to this man? I descended to the roots of the mountains.

The earth with its bars was around me forever, for thou hast brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God. While I was fainting away, he thought he was dying. I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to thee.

Into thy holy temple, those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness. But I will sacrifice to thee with the voice of thanksgiving that which I have vowed I will pay salvation from the Lord. Well, now, he made a promise to God, but didn't have a change of attitude.

In the moment of the depth of overwhelming fear, and unbelievable pressure, and excruciating pain, he said, I will pay. Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land. God gave him another chance, not because he deserved it, but because God had a job to be done.

Think of the horror. Think of the experience. Think of what he paid.

Then he had that long walk to Nineveh. And then think about him up here on the mountain looking down on Nineveh. Think of the anger and the hostility.

Have you ever been angry, and hostile, and resentful? Imagine all the emotional turmoil. This man is in emotional bondage. He is a prisoner of his own making, sitting there on the hillside, watching to see if God's judgment is going to come upon Nineveh.

Knowing that it's not really, because they're repenting of their sin. Imagine the emotional bondage that he's going through. The suffering, the pain, the churning inside of this man.

Almost hating God for sparing these Ninevites. And then he almost had a sunstroke. This hot, burning east wind coming off that desert.

And what is he saying? I don't want to live any longer. I want to die. Can you imagine a man getting himself in that mess? Yes, you can.

Because that is exactly where some of you are. You've rebelled against God. You've said, I don't want anything to do with church.

I don't want anything to do with Jesus Christ. I don't want anything to do with God. I'm going to live my own life.

Well, you're living it. And look what a mess you've made. Now, let's be honest.

Don't turn it off. Listen. Think about what you feel.

Your emotions. Your entanglements. Your relationships.

The anger. The hostility. The resentment.

The bitterness. The emptiness. The loneliness.

The estrangement from God. The hopelessness. The times of despair.

Those moments of depression. How empty your future looks. And all the relationships that you've cultivated and created.

And all the affairs you've had. None of them have satisfied you. You just keep looking and longing and searching and running and trying.

And dipping into this and dipping into the other. Trying to find something that'll satisfy that awful, nauseating emptiness in your heart. My friend, you'll never find it.

There is only one place where all that can be satisfied. It is in a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. Look what it's costing you.

And you see, I want you to put a circle around this. You can't sin against God, rebel against him, resist his breaking power in your life without hurting somebody. And usually, we hurt the people who are the dearest to us.

Here's a husband. God has him under great pressure. Trying to break his stubborn will.

And he resents and resists. And what happens? His wife feels the pain. And she suffers as a result.

Here's a wife. Rebellious toward God. Resentful toward her husband.

Wants to do her own thing. There is no way for that husband not to suffer and to feel the hurt from all of that. Here are parents whose kids are rebelling against God, rebelling against them.

Every night they go to sleep. They don't know where their kids are. Out having sex with somebody.

Hooked on drugs. Wasting away their life. Wrecking their life.

Flunking out of college. Oh, you mean to tell me that there's no price in sin and rebellion and resentment toward God? Don't fool yourself. My friend, I don't know what your ledger sheet says over here under the dollar mark.

But what does it say over here under the emotional mark? Minus zero. Because it's costing you dearly. Why do you think so many people in America drink? It's an escape.

They're not running to Tarsiers. They're going down to the package store. Why so many affairs? Anything to get away from the pressure of God.

Anything to escape. Giving up control of myself and saying, Lord, finally. Your will, not my will, be done.

But here's what I want you to see. You cannot resist and rebel against God without hurting somebody else. There's an awful price to be paid.

To resist and rebel against God's breaking process in your life. So I want to ask you this question and I want you to be honest. And my friend, if you're listening.

Answer this question. You may be sitting with somebody you love dearly. Who's hurting today because of your resistance to the will of God? Who's feeling the pain and the hurt and the despair and the hopelessness? Because you are running from God.

Whose heart is aching? Who's anxious and fearful for their future because you're running from God? Now, I wonder how many of you have small children. Maybe 8, 9 or 12 or maybe teenagers. And they're hurting because their dad's rebelling against God.

They're hurting because their mom is resisting the will of God. Or you say, you know, it'll all work out. It sure will.

Listen, work out of you into them. And for years in their life, they are going to bear the weight of your sin and your rebellion and your resistance to the will of God. Your children suffer as a result of your rebellion.

You see, that's the part of the legislation you've not tabulated. You cannot resist and rebel against God. Without paying an awesome price.

And oftentimes, the hurt and the damage to others is worse than to ourselves. Likewise, when you and I resist the will of God, we delay God's purpose in our life. You know, a lot of people are going to stand before God in the judgment and realize that they never did.

They never found out God's will for their life. And they just sort of moseyed their way through life or rushed their way through life. They never stopped to ask God, what do you want to do with my life? Some people are going to resist him until it is eternally too late.

The clock's going to strike. It's going to be all over. All no second chances.

Life will have been spent and wasted. But then for some others, listen carefully. You can run and resist and rebel until finally, God says, all right.

You win, but you lose. And God just puts you on the shelf. And there you are.

But here's what I want you to see. Most of all, listen very carefully now. Jonah did what God told him to do finally by going to Nineveh and preaching the message of repentance.

They repented. But look what happened. Jonah missed the blessing.

If he had submitted himself to God and gone there trusting the Lord and obeying him, think of the joy and the excitement and the testimony and the story he would have had to tell to other people as a result of how God used him. He had nothing to tell. He's up there wanting to die.

You know what's going to happen to some of you? Because God puts the pressure on you, you're going to go through life and you're going to do a lot of things God wants you to do. But you will have missed the blessing. And the joy and the peace and the contentment that only comes when you say all to Jesus, I surrender all to you, I freely give.

I will ever love and trust you in your presence daily live. Or you weasel your way out, but look what it's cost you. It's cost you the joy of living.

So I ask you one final question. What is it that you put such value on in your life that you are willing to miss God's best? You're willing to resist and run from God's brokenness. You are going to insist on having your way.

What is it that you've put such value on that you are willing to pay the awesome price of disobedience to a loving father? What is it that you hold to that's so valuable is that? My friend, when you stand in the judgment, you'll recognize your hand was folded. Dust. Nothing you and I hold to that keeps us from the will of God.

Nothing has any more value than a hand full of dust. Foolish is the man, a woman who resist God's breaking process. Wise is the man, a woman who says, Lord, not my will, but thy will be done.

Lord Jesus, we know these are solemn moments, sacred moments, holy moments, crucial, critical moments. As your word has penetrated the hearts of those who've listened. I pray the Holy Spirit will grant wisdom to those who are asking, what shall I do now? I pray father for those who are unsaved.

To be willing to confess their sinfulness, their rebellious attitude. Ask for your forgiveness of their sins based on the shed blood of Jesus at Calvary. Receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal savior by faith here and now.

Thank you for what you're about to do father in Jesus name. Amen.

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