

# Separated Unto the Gospel

by Detlef Stegen

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*God's word is a source of purpose and direction, and ignoring it can lead to a lukewarm and unfulfilled life, but surrendering to it can bring about change and restoration.*

**Duration:** 1:12:56

**Scripture:** Proverbs 13:20, Jonah 1:1, Matthew 5:16, Matthew 28:19-20, John 8:44, Ephesians 4:29, James 1:22

**Topics:** "Gospel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing when God speaks to us. He highlights the awe-inspiring nature of God's creation, particularly the vastness of the universe and the formation of new stars. The preacher encourages listeners to view the word of God as binoculars that bring clarity and focus to their lives, helping them stay on the right path and not be distracted. The sermon also references the story of Jonah, who initially tried to flee from God's calling but eventually surrendered and allowed God's word to bring about a change in his heart. The preacher urges listeners to embrace the transformative power of the word of God, which can melt hardened hearts, bring about forgiveness, and lead to a complete change in one's life.

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## Transcript

It is for me a privilege to stand here this morning, at the same time a responsibility and I pray for grace from the Lord to be able to share that which I believe the Lord has placed on my heart. I would like to share something out of the book of Jonah. Let us pray together before we read.

Lord, we want to bow before you this morning in humble submission to your authority, to your word, through which we pray that you would enlighten our hearts and minds, that you would be able to reach your purpose for each and every life present. May we experience you among us, O Lord. Use your word to your glory alone, we pray.

Amen. We start from the first chapter, the first verse. The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai.

Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me. But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port.

After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord. But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port.

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He went aboard the heavens and the earth and everything in it and has imparted us with the breath of life. It is the one who actually owns our souls. Do we realize that we do not belong to ourselves? It is not because of your choosing that you find yourself today in the service to hear the word of God directed at your heart.

And maybe it is not the first time that you hear the word of the Lord. Maybe you are also a son of a prophet. Maybe you call yourself a son of God.

A child of the truth. And what was on my heart especially this morning, one of the points is how wonderful that the word of God comes to us humans. The word of the Lord came to Jonah.

Praise God for men who experience God speaking to them. Who have a message in their lives, who have a message that is placed by God on their tongue. Has the word of God come to you? When last did you

experience the word of the Lord coming to you? Can you testify? We hear that this is Jonah who wrote this book about himself, about his own experience.

When last did you hear God speaking to you? And what did you do concerning that? Child, has God been able to speak to you? Or do you just hear others speaking to you, those who surround you? You listen to lies? Do you like lies? Beware, lest you have the father of lies owning your life and taking control of your life. Are you surrounded by people that speak evil and filthy words? Do you like to hear love stories? Do you like to listen to sex stories? Maybe those are the words that often come to your ears and to your spiritual ears. You come to church, you listen to God speaking to you.

But you do not heed God's words. You rather choose to heed the words of your pals and your friends. You are busy trying to build yourself a good future.

You are busy trying to build yourself a good future. Without the word of the Lord as the basis and it being of foremost importance to you, your future will be bleak, dark, and may I say, cursed. May I repeat, when last did you hear the word of the Lord? Lord coming to you.

You say yes I'm serving the Lord. In the mornings I get up early while others are still asleep. I am punishing my body.

I see how lazy the others are around me and I put my time into effort into the Lord's service. I have denied my family. I've denied my brothers and my sisters and I am busy working.

I'm in the Lord's work. But when last did you hear him speaking to you? In all your effort, in all your your working, in all your endeavors, you have maybe lost sight of God speaking to you. You now have put your eyes on men and you see all the wrongs that others do for you while you are trying to serve God.

And you are busy with your own talk. You are placing verdicts upon your fellow men, upon your upon your brothers and sisters and you have a critical spirit in you. Even in your own human efforts and your diligence in trying to serve God.

I just briefly look a bit at Jeremiah how we hear how God called him. The word of the Lord came to him and it was a satisfying assurance to himself that it was the word of the Lord and not a delusion. And it was he who gave him his commission.

It's the same one who gave him his life. He said I chose you even before you were born. And he was his rightful owner.

And that he might employ him and make use of him as he pleased. And the commission given him to pursue the purpose of God. He said I determined you to be a prophet and set you apart for this office.

Paul says of himself God had separated him from his birth to be a Christian and an apostle. He had separated him, a wonderful word, separated him from his own views, his own intentions. You see child God has a purpose even for your life.

Jonah was sent to Nineveh. I don't know what you have been sent for. That's why it is absolutely vital that you hear God's word addressed to you.

Do you see how important God's word is in your life? If you miss out on that you miss the purpose of life. You are waiting for blessing. You are waiting for a wonderful future.





Where you can see where you are headed for, you can see your aim, you can see your purpose, you see the end. And you are keeping your eyes on that and not being distracted by anything along the way. Allow God to focus those binoculars that suddenly, the image is crystal clear and vivid before your eyes and you see it so well and nobody can tell you anything else about it because you have it before your very eyes.

If you look through His binoculars, you see everything in its fullness. If you look through His binoculars, you see everything in its fullness. Friend, if you want or if you notice that you haven't been and seen things in the right perspective and you have heard, you have spoken things that were not right, you have acted in dishonesty, allow God's word today to bring about that change.

The word of God which we can say is Christ. Revealed causes sin hardened hearts to melt. Arguments cease.

Families are restored. Hatred turns to love and forgiveness. Do we see what the word of God can bring about in our lives? Don't you wish to be a bearer of the gospel of truth? Don't you wish to be a bearer of the gospel of truth? That I have no feeling for this church and for this Bible and for this drag and you know, it just comes against my grain, what they're talking about, I don't agree with, I don't feel it.

God can change your heart that you suddenly have a feeling for it, suddenly you have a longing for it, suddenly your heart is at ease, satisfied. Satisfied. Child, suddenly you have a love to your parents.

Forgive me if I speak of personal experience. I talked of it I think in 1981 when I got married. I said, I didn't really love my dad.

I had a favorite uncle called Uncle Fredo and I loved him. Because I saw my dad was a bit too strict. You know, if we're not timeless in the car, then he would just drive off and he'd leave us at home.

Then mum would stay behind and all the time I always pray that they stay behind because when we leave, we are leaving. But when the gospel came into our family, things changed. My father who was a smoker.

Suddenly we didn't need to go to the shop to buy any cigarettes for him anymore. In the car there wasn't any smell of tobacco anymore. Suddenly I experienced a love towards my own father and my own mother.

It seems as if the older they get, the more I love them. Child, do you love your parents' command? We are still ducking and diving. You don't enjoy doing something for your parents.

You enjoy the company of your mates, your own kind. You don't have any love for those who are close to the Lord. Maybe things will get revealed in your life that you have done wrong and you are trying to hide them as much as you can.

You're trying to keep it a secret. Because if I get too close to them, maybe that fire that is in them will burn up all my covering, all my clothes, and I will stand before them in my shame because of the sin that I am busy with. God's word can change your life.

Don't you want to commit yourself today to this word that comes from God? Don't you want to be obedient to it? No, maybe just in short, just a bit about Jonah. He was instructed, go to that great city of Nineveh. I looked up in my Bible.

Before I knew that I was going to stand here today, I measured with a tape, how far is Jerusalem from Nineveh? Well, as the crow flies, I guessed between 800 and 1,000 kilometers. And it wasn't his own

country. It wasn't of the elect, his people, the Jews.

How long would he have to journey to get here to these strange people who were actually their enemies? They were actually enemies. They were wanting to destroy the Jews and Jerusalem. They could just swallow them up.

And now he was sent to this great city. You have maybe been sent to Nineveh. How far is Nineveh from here? Maybe your boundaries of your Nineveh is just the circumference of your heart.

That this heart of mine must be preached at. This heart that I love so dearly. Must this word of God really penetrate to its depths? Must I really change? Must I really stop stealing? Must I remain as poor as I am? Must I really take up this cross? Must I really deny myself? Lord, do you really want everything? Lord, just that corner.

Please Lord. This is one wish that I have of you. Please allow me still.

Something. This one thing. And when Jonah got this message from the Lord, He reacted upon it.

But he went in the opposite direction. He started his flight. Fleeing from God.

And he went down to the port, to the ship. And from there he went down in the ship. And from there he went down into the water.

And God prepared a fish. And this fish swallowed this prophet of God. It must have been a special fish that God prepared.

Jonah could stay alive for three days in the belly of the fish. And here he was strangled by just think of whatever. Strangling him.

He was trying to stay alive. But as for God's grace, God spoke to the fish. After Jonah having returned, shall we say, to his senses, to his rightful mind, listening with an obedient heart to God's word.

It is only when we give obedience to God's command that we come to our right senses. And people will marvel and say, But you know this person, he always had the last word. He always could talk so much.

But now listen, his words, his talk has changed. He is different. God's word can make you different.

God commanded that fish to vomit Jonah out on the sea shore. And Jonah knew what he had to do. And when God spoke, he went to that distant city.

And when he just entered into that city, proclaiming God's message, the people accepted the message and rent their hearts and even outwardly got dressed in sackcloth. I say the message went before him, before he got to the king. The king got off his throne.

Put on sackcloth. Proclaim to the whole city, no one should eat. Neither man nor beast should eat or drink anything.

We now need to seek God's grace. And this heathen king said, May be God, this God of Jonah will be gracious to us and will turn from his wrath against us. God could reveal his grace and his mercy.

Do you want to experience God's grace and mercy? Take heed of God, of God's speaking to you. Maybe he just speaks in your heart. Maybe he speaks through someone, through another person.

Because we can sometimes be so blunt that God needs to send a messenger to us. Open your eyes that you don't shun God's message from you. It's a matter of life and death to you.

Children, the message of the cross, Christ, is a matter of life and death to you. Take life for yourself. Why choose death? Don't you want to experience the mercy and the kindness of Jesus in your life? There's nothing that can compare with that.

Let us pray. O Lord, may your word reach our hearts. Make us into your special and elect people, those that are chosen out of this world, to your glory, to your honour.

That we can testify, Christ has changed my life. And that others can testify of us, these are a people, this person is a man who heeds my word. God's word.

That we will be a people, a blessing one to the other. A people where Christ's spirit can dwell and flourish in our midst. A people where Christ's spirit can dwell and flourish in our midst.

Lord, we must admit you have called us and you have chosen us amongst many. How terrible if we should disappoint you. How terrible if we will not heed your word.

Give us a new heart and mind to seek to obey you at all times. Pray also for our children, Lord. Work mightily amongst them.

Let your word overcome them. That they will surrender their lives wholeheartedly. Help that they will see in us, parents that are walking with God.

That our words might be filled with your grace. That our actions will speak of Christ. Only you can do that, Lord.

So we pray that you would go with us from here. And let your seed fall on fertile land and bring forth a crop that will be a hundredfold. Not because of having deserved it, but because of your great grace.

You, the almighty God, who have ownership of our lives, who hold us in your hands. Do it, Lord, to the glory of your great name.

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