

Speaking to the soul



God's will

Then the LORD spoke to Jonah a second time: “Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you.” This time Jonah obeyed the LORD’s command and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all. Jonah 3:1-3

Jonah had learned his lesson. He had tried running away from God and spectacularly failed in the attempt. So, when

the Lord called him for a second time he obeyed and went. The task before him was colossal. Nineveh stood at the heart of the great Assyrian empire and had a population of more than 120,000 people. It was one of the biggest cities in the world at the time, occupying a strategically important location on both north to south and east to west trade routes. Today it forms part of the large city of Mosul in Iraq.

Nineveh was the last place on earth that Jonah would have chosen to be, but that's where God wanted him. The Bible introduces us to many people who were led by God to places they didn't want to go to. Moses is a particularly powerful example of this. After murdering an Egyptian, he was trying to lie low in the desert when God called him to return to Egypt and plead with Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. Moses had a long list of reasons why he didn't want to do so but God's mind was made up (Exodus 3-4). Moses was God's choice for the role. When God called Saul to spread the good news among the Gentiles, it was the exact opposite of what he wanted to do (Acts 9). As a passionate Jew, trained by the Pharisees, his life was devoted to the destruction of the church. But God had different plans for him and Saul, like Moses, found fulfilment as he obeyed the voice of God.

I firmly believe that God often calls us to do work for him that is contrary to what we would wish for ourselves. So often I've heard Christians giving a testimony in which they have declared that where they went was the exact opposite of their own plan and intention. The story of Jonah teaches us that we need to be ready to obey the voice of God even if he is leading us to something that we would never have chosen for ourselves.

QUESTION

Has God ever called you to do something that you desperately didn't want to do?

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you that your will is always best. Amen

Photograph - St David's Cathedral, Wales