

What Is Your Whale?

Written April of 2023

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:23-26

Opening Song: "Fear Is a Liar" by Zach Williams

Introduction

I was asked to speak today about a month ago, and I knew that the month of April was going to be very busy for me, so I quickly tried to negotiate with the Lord to see if he would allow me to use a sermon Message that I had preached last year, so that it would be easier for me. I have never presented a Message that the Lord did not provide or give me to present, it has to come from HIM.

For days and weeks, I prayed asking the Lord what He wanted to present to you today and a week ago the Lord impressed upon me, that what He wanted for you was "fresh Manna", which meant, it was going to be a whole new sermon. I then started praying what was the Message He wanted to convey. At 3AM this morning the Lord led me to a small sermon outline I had written in January of 2022. That outline of 12-13 sentences has become the Message the Lord has prepared for you today.

Let us pray and invite the Holy Spirit to be with us today as we study His Word!

Sermon

I would like to start off today by talking about things that fear drives us to do. Truly, let's give this some deep thought. Let's start off by defining the word fear:

- **Fear**= an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat.
- **Fear (Verb)**= to be afraid, a state of being marked by this emotion.

Now this is the common definition of what "**fear**" means in our society. However, I am more interested in...**What Does The Bible Say About Fear?** Let's turn to:

- **2 Timothy 1:7**
"God has not given us a Spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind".

This is such a powerful verse, filled with so much promise in our lives. Yet we ignore these powerful promises in the Bible. God, through the Blood of Jesus Christ has given us access to HIS Love, HIS Power and to HIS Mind. **Philippians 2:5** tells us to "**let the same MIND be in you that was in Christ Jesus**"

There is **POWER** in this statement my dear brothers and sisters. When we truly understand that the Kingdom dwells in us, "**Fear**" **can never be a factor in our lives**. If we are truly honest with ourselves, some of the worst decisions we have made in our lives were driven by fear.

- Fear of failure
- Fear of not being accepted
- Fear of loss
- Fear of not having enough money
- Fear of being loved
- Fear of truth
- Fear of “you fill in the blank _____”

Satan uses “**fear**” as one of his most powerful tools to keep us in bondage to sin. As the title of today’s message: “*What Is Your Whale?*” is asking, God is asking us personally. My hope is that through the Holy Spirit you realize, as the opening song states, “Fear is a Liar”.

I am sure when you heard the title of today’s message, your minds immediately thought of the story of Jonah. Well, I won’t disappoint you, because we will be reviewing that story. Hopefully, through the Holy Spirit we will gain a different perspective of its relevance to today’s time and in our lives. Let’s see what fear caused Jonah to do and the symbolism this story holds for us today.

The Story of Jonah is found in the book of Jonah. Don’t worry we won’t read the whole book, but in the interest of time I will paraphrase the story and touch on a few key points.

➤ **What was Jonah thinking inside of that whale?**

- Maybe he was trying to figure a way out.
- Or he thought, “it really ‘stinks’ being inside here.”
- But towards the end, he started thinking about what God has originally asked him to do. To the point that he **surrendered** and **acknowledged** God’s authority over his life.
- Only at that moment of **surrender**, did God allow the whale to release him.

➤ **What did the whale represent?**

- Was it a result of God’s judgement on him?
- Could it have represented God’s Mercy to Jonah? He could’ve very easily let him drown in the sea. Yet a fish/whale swallowed him instead.
- Maybe it represented a second opportunity to fulfill the mission that God had given him. A second chance to think things over.
- Could the belly of that fish represent our condition of sin, when we decide to live contrary to what God has called us to do?
- Christ referred to the story of Jonah pertaining to his Death and Resurrection and He spent (3) days in the heart of the earth because of our sins.
- Did the belly of that fish represent how we can be swallowed by sin or something in this world that takes our focus and attention from God?

I believe it represented a separation from the Will of God. I believe the Holy Spirit is showing us through this very vivid story that there are things that can swallow us up in this world, and most times we don't see them coming. All of the sudden we are sitting in this valley of despair and uncertainty because we chose our will and not the "WILL of God".

Let's go back to the Scripture Reading found in: **Luke 9:23-26**

➤ **Luke 9:23-26**

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."

Notice what Jesus says here in **Verse 23: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."**

- What does this Verse mean?
- Are you willing to deny yourself?
- Are you willing to not be instantly gratified and be patient? And trust God?
- Are you willing to chase after God?
- Honestly, are YOU WILLING TO TAKE UP YOUR CROSS, for Christ?

**Then why do we chase the things of this world instead of chasing God?
ARE YOU WILLING TO STAND FOR CHRIST?**

Quote: "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything."

Verse 26 says: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own Glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."

Are you ashamed of God? What is the WHALE in your life that is taking you away from what God has called you to do? What pit of sin are you sitting in?

What has trapped you and become an idol in your life? What are you bowing down to on a daily basis? What has taken away your time from God? Maybe it is a job or career, school, divorce, death in your family, anger, pride, depression, addictions, alcohol, drugs, social media, pornography, lust, money, your tablet or phone, or your desire to be liked and accepted by everyone. Or has the past from when you were a kid, controlled your present and future? What demonic strongholds from your past exist in you? What in your life has swallowed you whole?

Just trying to make it through life with your own strength probably stinks too, right? **Has it been (3) days, (3) weeks, (3) months, (3) years, (3) decades or has it been your entire life?**

No matter what your idol is, big or small, satan has kept you in the “**belly of that whale**” in your life for far too long. Satan is afraid of what God will do in your life, and the hundreds and even thousands of lives that will come to know the Lord because of you and YOUR testimony. Making the right decision to follow the “**Will of God**” isn’t all about you. Most people live a **self-centered Christianity**. Let me prove that to you. If God were to answer all you have been praying for right now; would it benefit you or Humanity?

Would it benefit the Kingdom of God or only you? My dear friends choosing to follow God and His Will doesn’t only affect us individually and our own Salvation. The decision to follow the “**Will of God**” has more to do with the **purpose** that God has created you for. It has more to do with the countless lives that you will impact and touch by being aligned with the “Will of God” and truly “**taking up His Cross to follow HIM**”.

Look at how many thousands of people were saved in Nineveh by just ONE man finally being obedient to the “Will of God”. An entire nation was saved, from the King down to the peasants. All of them were in sack-cloth & ashes, which was an outward symbol of true repentance for their sins. How many precious souls can be saved by your ministry for God? The decision to be obedient to God affects more than just you. Ask yourself...

What is keeping you from God’s best in your life? For many of us, at least for me, it’s the fact that I am too **B. U. S. Y.** (*Being Under Satan’s Yoke*). This is an acronym the Holy Spirit showed me under His anointing through a fast I was doing years ago, I keep it ever present in my mind and life. I asked God what was keeping me from His best. He simply whispered in my Spirit, “**You are too B. U. S. Y.**”

Sometimes we get **B.U.S.Y.** with religious things and activities, that really have no merit or weight in the eyes of Eternity. Just because its labeled as religious, doesn’t necessarily mean it comes from God. There are a lot of useless committees and clubs at church that only serve the purpose of enriching themselves with knowledge and never sharing with those that don’t know Christ. **That is not living out the Gospel!** Its being **B.U.S.Y.**

In our Humanity, it is impossible to discover this on our own, because most of the time we are just too stubborn to acknowledge the areas in our life that are **B. U. S. Y.**

Let me ask you all a question, do you believe stubbornness is a sin? Yes or No? Before you answer, I would like to define for you the word stubborn.

- **Stubborn** (adj): having or showing dogged determination not to change one's attitude or position on something, especially in spite of good arguments or reasons to do so.
- **Stubborn:** difficult to move, remove, or cure.

However, let's see what the Scriptures tell us. Let's turn to: **1 Samuel 15:22-26**

- So, Samuel said: ***“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is, as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.”*** Then Saul said to Samuel, ***“I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord.”*** But Samuel said to Saul, ***“I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.”***

Verse 23: states that Stubbornness is compared to witchcraft. Basically, putting our will before the “Will of God”. Notice how it plainly refers to sin, as Rebellion. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, this wasn't just a simple sin, **it was open REBELLION against the Government of God!**

Verse 23 finishes by telling us that ***“Stubbornness is as iniquity and Idolatry”***. When we think that our way is better than God's way, this is open **REBELLION** against the Government of God! This is why the Prophet **Isaiah** in **Chapter 9** tells us that the Messiah would have the ***“Government”*** of God on His shoulders. Christ was coming to re-establish the Government of the Kingdom of Glory back to Humanity. This is why understanding the Kingdom is so vital for our lives.

****I firmly believe in my spirit that Stubbornness, Arrogance and Pride are demonic triplets. The un-holy trinity of satan! They are identical outwardly and physically, but only with just a slight difference in attributes can you distinguish them individually. However, they work together as one to destroy mankind with sin.**

Almost like human triplets that you can only tell them apart by small differences. You could say “two-sides of the same coin”. They operate and produce the same damaging fruit in the form of idols. Satan has even created his own counterfeit trinity that he uses to destroy the human race. Every chaotic sin is derived from this un-holy and demonic trinity.

Notice what **Verse 22:** states that God wants our ***“obedience over sacrifice”***. Jesus gave us the perfect example of obedience because ***“He was obedient even unto death”***. God wants our heart and our obedience. Saul obviously was more concerned with looking good in front of his army, than being obedient to God. Because he put his own will and ego before God, Saul was rejected by God and his Kingdom would now end and he would be replaced by whom God would choose. The Prophet Samuel never went before Saul again after this encounter and the Prophet Samuel finished the original command of the Lord (*that Saul refused to do, because he wanted a trophy for himself*) and put King Agag to death.

In Closing

This story goes into **1 Samuel 16**, where we find the story of David. Now because of time I will summarize this story and quickly paraphrase the bullet points to you. The Prophet Samuel was led to Bethlehem to the house of Jesse to anoint the next King of Israel.

However, when Samuel sees all the sons of Jesse lined up immediately, he sees the eldest son that has a kingly appearance, and Samuel thinks that this is the chosen one. But the Lord said **“no, not this one”**, or this one or this one and none of those sons were chosen of God.

Let's look at **Verse 7** of this **Chapter 16** of **1 Samuel**. **“God tells Samuel that He doesn't look at the outward appearance but looks at the heart”**. Then Samuel asks Jesse is there another one of his sons. And Jesse answers, yes there is, but he is my youngest, and Jesse makes it seem like David isn't **“Kingly material,”** because **“he is just keeping the sheep”**, he alludes that he is nobody special. Samuel asked for him to come and when he saw David the Lord said: **“Arise, anoint him: for this is the ONE”**.

**You see my dear brothers and sisters, when others only saw a Shepherd boy,
GOD SAW A KING!**

Altar Call

My dear Brothers and Sisters, do you honestly think that God sees you as an inmate dressed in blue and only as what your crime defines you as. **Absolutely NOT!!!** God sees your heart; he sees how the Holy Spirit has touched you today to be here. He sees that you want to be freed from the **“Whale that has swallowed you up”** and taken you away from God's best for your life.

**When society sees a criminal or an ex-convict,
God sees the Child of the King.**

You are a Prince or Princess of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Satan has taken you away from the Purpose God has for your life long enough. My friends, MCI is not the end, it is the beginning of what God wants to do in your life. **DON'T YOU DARE BELIEVE THE LIES OF SATAN** that you are not good enough. Because the Blood of Jesus Christ was shed on Calvary so that you could be with God in Eternity. There is so much LOVE & POWER in trusting and believing **John 3:16**.

But as **Verse 17** of **John Chapter 3** says: **“Christ didn't come into the world to condemn it, but that the world might be saved through HIM”!**

Will you choose him today?

Altar Call

****Final Song “Same God” by Elevation Worship**