

“SURVIVING PIONEERING”

Jonah 3:1–4

Our Fellowship built by & depends on pioneers. Greatest dignity in all the world is to pioneer a church and take ground for KOG. BUT it can also have it's own unique set of difficulties. There are a few things to keep in mind if going/survive.

I. PIONEERING BEGINNINGS

A. Beginning requires Beginning!

1. Too many men simply don't begin – waste lots of time on non-essentials
 - a. *Wait till: Move in, unpacked, scope out the town, do your demographic analysis... Weeks before they begin*
 2. **Jon 3:4** *And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”*
 - a. Jonah began preaching the 1st day he arrived: Common factor of successful pioneers
 1. *Doesn't matter if not unpacked, have a Bible Study, go witness at the mall, get some traction*
3. **TRUTH:** Witnessing greatest way to get direction – can find out which parts/city fruitful
 - a. *If the people who you get contacts w/all in same part/city, that might be God guiding you*

B. Early Response: Most Pioneers get an Initial response from people

1. **Jon 3:5** *So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.*
 - a. God honors the pioneer, and it's very very rare to get no response
 1. **POINT:** What we do works, period – if you'll go and do it, people will respond
2. This Shows Us: God can help you – even when you're not perfect
 - a. God used Jonah – a man with issues – to make impact: God can use you!
3. We're quick to write off Jonah as a complete failure/loser – truth is that's not accurate
 - a. Same for you and men you know: Very rare is the complete failure!

II. CREATING PIONEERING PROBLEMS

A. Biggest Danger in Ministry: When we create our own problems

1. The biggest problems Jonah faced were problems of his own creation
 - a. **Jon 1:17** *Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*
 1. *NOT Devil! TOO often guys blaming devil/demons/religion/whatever for problems they've created*

B. People Problems:

1. Truth about people: You will always get problem people
 - a. There will always be people frustrations, people who irritate or anger you
 - b. That's normal -need to have a file for that: Learn to deal with it and get past the frustration
2. Jonah's biggest problem was he didn't like the people God gave him:
 - a. At least 120,000 people saved – YET Jonah still isn't happy
 1. **Jon 4:1** *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.*
3. LESSON: Doesn't matter how much God gives you, if don't have heart for your people, never be happy
 - a. *Men upset with: Race/customs/education/giving/commitmentabilities... will always be complainers, never happy anywhere*

C. City Problems:

1. Story of Jonah is about two cities: Nineveh & Tarshish → Jonah not happy about Nineveh
 - a. *Maybe his buddy got sent to Tarshish where the weather/people/schools are better and he's jealous?*
2. Can be an unlimited number of excuses/reasons your city is no good:
 - a. *Too little, too big, too many churches/religious, no downtown, no buildings/restaurants, and on and on it goes*
 1. We begin to build a theology why it won't work in this city

D. City Problems become God Problems: **Jon 4:9** *Then God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” And he said, “It is right for me to be angry, even to death!”*

1. All of Jonah's issues w/people and the city boiled over until it damaged his relationship w/God
2. Your inability to come to grips with your situation will make it very difficult to properly connect w/God
 - a. Ultimately it will destroy your relationship w/God
 1. **Jon 4:10–11** *But the Lord said, “You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.” And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?*
 - b. Last words spoken to or about Jonah – it was the end of his story!
3. When guys are unable to make pioneering fly – the danger is that they will get twisted, not survive at all!
 - a. Re-direction is about saving you, not disciplining you!

III. SURVIVING PIONEERING

A. Don't Make Doctrines out of experiences

1. When facing problems: people, city, nation – DON'T turn those into theologies of failure!
 - a. *THIS place is just ____; These people are all ____;*

B. Keep your Relationship with God Healthy:

1. Jonah allowed his bitterness toward people to become bitterness towards God –

- a. This is common in men who don't succeed!

- 1. Why didn't God help? Why did He help other guy? Why did I struggle/suffer?*

- b. This will kill you: You must keep a healthy relationship w/God

2. God loves you, He called you and intended you for fruitfulness/blessing

- a. Jn 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

1. Might mean getting fresh wind/fire in your city

2. Might mean coming home for redirection – but stay right with God!