

Reflection: Let’s Try Again

By Sarah Dixon Young

Before the whole fishy incident, God gave Jonah this command: “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before Me.”

Obviously, Jonah did not like this command, and he attempted to flee from the presence of the Lord. (Mistake #1.)

You’ve probably read how that turned out. Jonah ended in a pile of whale vomit with PTSD and seaweed wrapped around his head.

God said, in essence, “Jonah, let’s try this again.”

He gave the command again, with slightly different detail: “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great



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city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.”

I hope you caught the subtle difference because I have never noticed it until recently when my husband was preaching through Jonah.

In God’s first command, He mentions the Ninevites’ evil. He

doesn’t give specifics. He probably didn’t have to. Jonah, and everyone else, knew what the Assyrians were like. Perhaps that was part of the reason Jonah bolted.

However, in God’s second command, the focus at the end of the action point is only on God’s Word. God’s message is more important than the wickedness of the Ninevites.

God had mercy on Jonah, and even this tiny shift in His command shows His care for the errant prophet. The evil might have overloaded Jonah’s mental and emotional circuits, but the Word of the Lord soothed them.

The evil didn’t change. The offense against God didn’t change. The

actual message didn’t change. However, God commanded Jonah to shift his focus.

Don’t focus on their evil, Jonah. Focus on My message.

As a Christian, it is so easy to see the evil of the world, the evil in the church, and the evil in my own heart. Sin sinks us. It brings out the worst in us. Pride. Hypocrisy. Envy. Hate. And it is right and true to know that sin deserves God’s wrath and judgment.

However, I think in the story of Jonah that God says to us, “Let’s try this again.”

What if we shifted our focus to the Word of God?

The writer to the Hebrews exhorted the

church to “lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely,...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...”

Perhaps, like me, you’ve been sucked into a social media battle about some moral question or social issue. Perhaps you’ve been in a heated conversation with a loved one at the dinner table. Perhaps you’ve shaken your head at the evening news and condemned the rest of the world as going to hell in a handbasket.

Are you focused on the evil? Or are you focused on God’s message?

He condemns evil. He judges it. He calls us to repentance.

Then, He has mercy

and forgives all who come to Him. He offers steadfast love - to wicked Assyrians and fishbait prophets.

Next time you’re tempted to enter the fray, think about Jonah. Think about Jesus. Take a deep breath and try this again.

Sarah Dixon Young uses stories everyday to share the love of Jesus with her family, friends, and neighbors. She lives in Fort Totten, ND with her husband, Paul, and their four children. She is the author of five books, many articles, and more Sunday School lessons than she can count. You can follow her adventures or get in touch at www.SarahDixonYoung.com

Did you know: Advent Calendars Common in Many Homes

Advent calendars are a common sight in many households each December, and some historians believe this unique tradition can be traced to a creative nineteenth century German housewife.

Though Britannica notes the precise ori-

gins of Advent calendars are still debated, one theory behind the popular tradition suggests a woman in Munich created the Advent calendar as a way for her young and impatient yet excited son to count down the

days to December 25.

Though details are fuzzy and difficult if not impossible to confirm, this legends suggests the crafty German mother filled 24 different small boxes with a baked treat, allowing her son to open one

each day during Advent, the nearly monthlong period of preparation for Christmas that begins on the fourth Sunday before the holiday and ends by Christmas Eve.

While this origin story connects Advent

calendars with Christianity, and many Christians still make it part of their Christmas celebrations, many modern people with no such affiliation also incorporate the calendars into their holiday season routines.



CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

ASSEMBLY OF GOD River of Life 1903 Hwy 20 Devils Lake 701-662-4582 www.riverlife.us Sunday: 10 a.m. worship	CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS 20th St. & Lincoln Ave. Devils Lake Sunday: 10 a.m. Sacrament at 11 a.m.	LIGHTHOUSE ASSEMBLY OF GOD Fort Totten, N.D. 701-766-4826 Sunday 10:30 a.m.	ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH 515 Fourth St. Devils Lake 662-7558 Monday -Friday at 12:00pm Tuesday at 10:00am at Odd Fellows Wednesday at 10:00am at Eventide Friday at 9:30am at St. Joseph School Saturday at 8:30am & 5:00pm Sunday at 7:30am, 9:00am & 11:00am	ST. WILLIAMS CATHOLIC CHURCH Maddock, N.D. 438-2668 Wednesday: 7 p.m. Mass. Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Mass. Mass at 5 p.m. on the first Friday of the month.
ASSUMPTION OF MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH Starkweather, N.D. 292-4301 Sunday: Mass: Rotating 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. with St. Mary's, Munich Call 682-5178 (Munich).	DAKOTA BAPTIST CHURCH West Highway 57 Fort Totten Church - 766-4516 Sunday: 11 a.m. worship.	MORNING STAR PARISH 701-262-4714 www.morningstarparish.com Worship services at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. rotating: American, Pekin, Warwick, Sigdal and Sheyenne Lutheran	ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH St. Michael, ND 58370 766-4151 Sunday Mass: 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.	SEVEN DOLORS CATHOLIC CHURCH Fort Totten 766-4314 Sunday: 11 a.m. Mass. Daily Mass: 7 a.m.
BDECAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Tokio, N.D. (2 miles south of Tokio, near Woodlake) 294-2283 www.bdecanpresbyterian-church.org Worship: at 11 a.m., Sunday school kids K - 5 grade during worship, potluck meal after	DAKOTA OYATE LUTHERAN CHURCH 294-2361 Tokio, N.D. 11 a.m. worship	NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP North Junction of Hwy. 15 & 20 Rural Hamar 262-4470 Sunday: 10:30 a.m. worship service	ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA 601 6th St. NE Devils Lake, ND 662-4911 9:30 a.m. Worship (September - May) Summer: 8:30 a.m. at Retreat Center 11 a.m. at St. Olaf (June - August)	TRINITY-BERGEN AFLC LUTHERAN CHURCH PO Box 46 Starkweather Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion every Sunday
BETHEL EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH 1312 East Walnut St. Devils Lake 662-3758 www.bethelfree.com Sunday worship: 9:30 a.m.	EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ADVENT Sixth Street and Fifth Avenue Devils Lake 11 a.m. Morning prayer 1st, 2nd, 3rd Sundays Holy Eucharist- 4th Sunday	OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA 612 14th Ave. NE Devils Lake, N.D. 662-5112 Sunday: 10 a.m. Service Wednesday: 6 p.m. Service	ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH 7th St. & 7th Ave. 662-2245 Devils Lake Missouri Synod Worship: 11 a.m. Dial-a-Devotion: 662-3158.	WEBSTER CHAPEL Webster, N.D. Worship is at 9 a.m. the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays.
CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC CHURCH Tokio Saturday: 7 p.m. Mass all year round.	FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 601 Fifth St. NE Devils Lake Sunday 9:30 a.m. worship	PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH (NALC) 1700 Fifth Ave. NE PO Box 1041 Devils Lake, N.D. 662-3565 Worship Sunday 9:30 a.m.	ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH Fort Totten, N.D. 11 a.m. Holy Eucharist 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Sundays, 4th Sunday - Morning Prayer	WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 501 Fifth St. NE Devils Lake, 662-3584 Sunday worship 11:00 a.m.
CHURCH OF GOD (SEVENTH DAY) 607 Fifth St. S.E. Devils Lake Saturday: 2 p.m.	GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 311 5th Ave. NE Devils Lake 701-230-1332 Sunday: 10:30am and 6 p.m.	ST. BONIFACE CATHOLIC CHURCH Esmond, N.D. 249-8360 Tuesday-Saturday: Weekday Mass at 9 a.m. Saturday: 5 p.m. Mass. Sunday: 8:30 a.m. Mass.	ZOAR FREE LUTHERAN Hampden, North Dakota Pastor Craig Wentzel May through August Worship Sundays 9 a.m.	If you would like to make changes or corrections to this ad, please contact Louise at loleson@cmpapers.com
	GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH Lakota Missouri Synod Sunday worship: 9:30 a.m.	ST. JEROME'S CATHOLIC CHURCH Crow Hill District Hwy. #57, One mile N. Saturday: Mass 5 p.m.		
	HIGH PLAINS MINISTRY Nekoma, Lawton, Concordia, and Our Redeemer's			
	LAKOTA LUTHERAN CHURCH LAKOTA, ND 247-2777 Sundays: 10 a.m.			

This week’s listing brought to you by the following local businesses:

-Devils Lake Journal & the Country Peddler
516 4th St., 662-2127

-Jerome W wholesale
1115 2nd Ave. NE, 662-5366

-Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 756
314 3rd Ave NE, 662-4117

-Glibertson Funeral Home
Hwy2West

-Altru Health System
1001 7th St NE, 662-2158

-Eventide Senior Living Communittes

-Leevers Foods
323 5th St. NE, 662-4945

-First United Bank
323 5th St NE, 662-4024