

Rest in Christ

The Restless Prophet

Lesson #12 for September 18, 2021

Scriptures: Jonah 1-4; Jeremiah 25:5; Ezekiel 14:6; Revelation 2:5; Luke 9:51-56; Jude 1-25.

1. One of the most interesting stories in Scripture has to be that of Jonah. Here he was, a prophet of God, someone called of God, and yet—what? He ran away from God’s call. Then, after being persuaded in a dramatic way to change his mind and obey the Lord, he did so—but then only to do what? To complain that the people to whom he was called to witness actually repented and were spared the destruction that, otherwise, would have been theirs!—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath, September 11.
2. A former drug addict now turned preacher told of many disturbing statistics about drug abuse. He then pounded his Bible and said it was the only answer. Afterwards, a drug addict asked him if he really believed all those stories in the Bible. He said, “Yes.” Then he was asked if he believed in the story of Noah? And even Jonah. Again he said, “Yes.” Then the questioner asked what he thought Jonah was thinking while in the belly of that big fish. After thinking for a moment the preacher replied that he would just have to ask Jonah when he got to heaven. “What if Jonah doesn’t go to heaven?” asked the questioner. “Then, you can ask him” replied the preacher!
3. A teacher in Idaho asked a group of children what they learned from the story of Jonah. One child responded: “Even the fish learned that you cannot keep a good man down!”
4. So, what do you think of Jonah? His emotions seemed to run high and then low through those incredible experiences recorded in his book. And what do you think about the words of Jesus Himself, referring to the story of Jonah?

Matthew 12:41: “On Judgement Day the people of Nineveh will stand up and accuse you, because they turned from their sins when they heard Jonah preach; and I tell you that there is something here greater than Jonah!”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Matthew 12:41). New York: American Bible Society.

5. So, this week, what can we learn about Jonah and about his crazy experience of trying to run away from God?
6. We must admit that Jonah was an amazingly successful missionary. He was also a very reluctant one! Why do you think that was?

Jonah 1:1-17: ¹One day the LORD spoke to Jonah son of Amittai. ²He said, “Go to Nineveh, that great city, and speak out against it; I am aware how wicked its people are.” ³Jonah, however, set out in the opposite direction in order to get away from the LORD. He went to Joppa, where he found a ship about to go to Spain. He paid his fare and went aboard with the crew to sail to Spain, where he would be away from the LORD. ⁴But the LORD sent a strong wind on the sea, and the storm was so violent that the ship was in danger of breaking up. ⁵The sailors were terrified and cried out for help, each one to his own god. Then, in order to lessen the danger, they threw the cargo

overboard. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone below and was lying in the ship's hold, sound asleep.

⁶ The captain found him there and said to him, "What are you doing asleep? Get up and pray to your god for help. Maybe he will feel sorry for us and spare our lives."

⁷ The sailors said to one another, "Let's draw lots and find out who is to blame for getting us into this danger." They did so, and Jonah's name was drawn. [How did they do that? Did God guide the results?] ⁸So they said to him: "Now then, tell us! Who is to blame for this? What are you doing here? What country do you come from? What is your nationality?"

⁹ "I am a Hebrew," Jonah answered. "I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made land and sea." ¹⁰Jonah went on to tell them that he was running away from the LORD.

The sailors were terrified, and said to him, "That was an awful thing to do!"

¹¹The storm was getting worse all the time, so the sailors asked him, "What should we do to you to stop the storm?" [Who caused that storm?]

¹² Jonah answered, "Throw me into the sea, and it will calm down. I know it is my fault that you are caught in this violent storm."

¹³ Instead, the sailors tried to get the ship to shore, rowing with all their might. But the storm was getting worse and worse, and they got nowhere. ¹⁴So they cried out to the LORD, "O LORD, we pray, don't punish us with death for taking this man's life! You, O LORD, are responsible for all this; it is your doing." ¹⁵Then they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and it calmed down at once. ¹⁶This made the sailors so afraid of the LORD that they offered a sacrifice and promised to serve him. [Did they really?]

¹⁷ At the LORD's command a large fish swallowed Jonah, and he was inside the fish for three days and nights.—*Good News Bible*. *†

7. Obviously, Jonah was not excited about the possibility of going to Nineveh, the capital of the big bully nation of his time. How did Jonah know that throwing him into the sea would stop the storm? (Jonah 1:9-12) On what basis could he make such a statement? Well, wasn't he a prophet? Did God actually send the storm against the ship that Jonah was in? (Jonah 1:4) Or, is this just a general understanding that whatever happens, God is behind it? When Jonah said he was a worshiper of *Yahweh*, "the God of heaven, who made land and sea," did the sailors think of the evil "god" of the sea, Mot, who always seemed to be angry?

8. What do we know about the people of Nineveh?

Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 A.D.) [*sic* was actually B.C.] boasted of dyeing the peaks of mountains red with the blood of his slaughtered enemies. He was known to flay his captives (possibly while they were still alive), and spread their skins on the walls of conquered cities.

Another atrocity cited by Ashurnasirpal, as well as by his successor, Shalmaneser II (859–824 A.D.), [*sic* was actually B.C.] was to have the heads of slain enemy warriors cut off and stacked into a pillar in front of a defeated city. Then the conquerors threw boys and girls from the city into bonfires.

Sennacherib (705–681 A.D.), [*sic* was actually B.C.] who sent a force against Judah and Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:13–19:36), described cutting the throats of his enemies like lambs, and cutting off their lives as one cuts a string. Apparently he took grim pleasure in eviscerating his captives....

Nineveh had a double wall, the inner portion of which was 100 feet high and 50 feet wide.—Article on Nahum 3:1. *Word in Life Study Bible*.* (1996). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.‡

Chronology:

792 B.C. Jeroboam II begins to reign in Israel

c. 770 B.C. Approximate time of Jonah (2 Kings 14:23-25)

c. 745 B.C. Assyrian Empire pushes westward under Tiglath-Pileser

722 B.C. Israel is taken captive by Assyria [50 years after Jonah’s ministry.]

612 B.C. Nineveh falls to the Medes and Babylonians—Various historical sources.

9. It is interesting to compare what we know about Jonah historically.

2 Kings 14:25: He [King Jeroboam II of Israel] reconquered all the territory that had belonged to Israel, from Hamath Pass in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. This was what the LORD, the God of Israel, had promised through his servant the prophet Jonah son of Amittai, from Gath Hopher.—*Good News Bible*.*‡

10. Apparently, Jonah had prophesied on behalf of God earlier in his experience. Some have even suggested that he worked for the king, Jeroboam II. Is that possible? The Assyrians, with their capital at Nineveh, worshiped Ishtar, the god of sex and war. If one wanted to be really honored in Nineveh, s/he had to go out and conquer enemies. As we know, later, Assyria conquered and scattered the northern kingdom of Israel; and we have never heard about them again. The behavior of the Assyrians is well documented in historical records.

In one inscription, Sennacherib claimed to have taken more than two hundred thousand prisoners from 46 fortified cities that he claimed to have destroyed. When the Assyrian king took Lachish, hundreds or thousands of prisoners were impaled; hard-core supporters of King Hezekiah were flayed alive, while the rest were sent to Assyria as cheap slave labor.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, September 12.

11. Do you blame Jonah for wanting to go in the other direction? The most incredible part of the story of Jonah is his personal experience and the story of his flight. Having traveled a short distance down to Joppa and booking a trip on a boat to Spain, he went down into the bottom of the boat and went to sleep! We know that a great storm came up. All the goods in the boat were thrown overboard, trying to lighten to ship, for fear that the whole ship would be destroyed by the waves. Then, they found Jonah; he was asleep.
12. According to the biblical record, God prepared a great fish which swallowed Jonah. It is impossible to know what kind of a creature that was. But:

It is interesting to note that numerous stories from both ancient and modern times attest to the fact that large “fish” or “whales” have swallowed humans

and then spit them up again alive. One of the most modern examples was reported in the “*Weekly World News*” of June 16, 1987 where the headlines read: “Shark swallows fisherman—then spits him out alive!” The lucky man was named Mikado Nakamura and he gave an interview to the Newspaper from his hospital bed in Kanazawa, Japan.

The only fish, then, capable of swallowing a man would be a large specimen of the white shark (*Carcharias vulgaris*), that dreaded enemy of sailors, and the most voracious of the family of *Squalidæ*. This shark, which sometimes attains the length of thirty feet, is quite able to swallow a man whole. The whole body of a man in armor has been found in the stomach of a white shark; and Captain King, in his survey of Australia, says he had caught one which could have swallowed a man with the greatest ease. Blumenbach mentions that a whole horse has been found in a shark, and Captain Basil Hall reports the taking of one in which, besides other things, he found the whole skin of a buffalo which a short time before had been thrown overboard from his ship. The white shark is not uncommon in the Mediterranean.—Smith, W. (1986). Article on Whales. In *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*.^{*} Nashville: Thomas Nelson.[§]

13. What do you suppose Jonah thought when he first realized he had been swallowed? Look at his thoughts.

Jonah 2:1-9: ¹ From deep inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God:

² “In my distress, O LORD, I called to you,
and you answered me.

From deep in the world of the dead
I cried for help, and you heard me.

³ You threw me down into the depths,
to the very bottom of the sea,
where the waters were all round me,
and all your mighty waves rolled over me.

⁴ I thought I had been banished from your presence
and would never see your holy Temple again.

⁵ The water came over me and choked me;
the sea covered me completely,
and seaweed was wrapped round my head.

⁶ I went down to the very roots of the mountains,
into the land whose gates lock shut for ever.
But you, O LORD my God,
brought me back from the depths alive.

⁷ When I felt my life slipping away,
then, O LORD, I prayed to you,
and in your holy Temple you heard me.

⁸ Those who worship worthless idols
have abandoned their loyalty to you.

⁹ But I will sing praises to you;
I will offer you a sacrifice

and do what I have promised.

Salvation comes from the LORD!”—*Good News Bible*.*

14. We should recognize that to the ancient Israelites, the temple was considered to be the house of God. When appealing to the temple, one was, in effect, appealing to God. (Exodus 15:17; 25:8-9)
15. When the fish spit Jonah out onto the dry land, do you think there was any evidence on the person of Jonah that he had been in that position for three days? Did his skin show any changes? If so, might those changes in Jonah’s skin have helped to validate his story? In any case, Jonah decided it was time to obey God’s call! Why do you suppose he did that?
16. So, what do we know about Nineveh, the city to which Jonah was called?

Nineveh:

- A prominent Assyrian city on the east bank of the Tigris River about 280 miles north of Babylon.
 - Founded by Nimrod, along with Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen (Gen. 10:11–12), forming a massive urban quadrangle 60 miles across.
 - Rivalled Babylon for beauty and splendor with its royal palaces, temples, broad streets, public gardens, and impressive library containing more than 26,000 clay tablets—one of the largest in the ancient world.
 - Defended by an outer wall and an inner wall 100 feet high and 50 feet wide.
 - Irrigated by the Khasr River, whose flow was controlled by a dam built by Sennacherib (c. 705–681 A.D.), [*sic* was actually B.C.] and also by a large aqueduct that carried water from a second dam thirty miles away.
 - Target of prophecies by Zephaniah (Zeph. 2:13–15) and Nahum (Nah. 1:1; 3:1), who warned of the city’s ultimate destruction.
 - Destroyed in 612 A.D. [*sic* was actually B.C.] by a siege of Babylonians, Scythians, and Medes, who penetrated its defenses when sudden floods eroded the walls (compare Nahum 2:6–8).
 - Quickly became a mound of ruins that was ignored until just a century ago.—Article on Nahum 3:1, *Word in Life Study Bible*.* (1996). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.‡
17. Nineveh was a bigger city than Jonah had ever seen. When he arrived in Nineveh, he began to walk through the city just to get a feel for the task that he had been given.

Jonah 3:3: So Jonah obeyed the LORD and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to walk through it.—*Good News Bible*.*

Assyria, a nation which had achieved a near-legendary reputation for cruelty, was in mild decline during these years, but it remained a threat. The repentance of Nineveh probably occurred in the reign of Ashurdan III (773–755 B.C.). Two plagues (765 and 759 B.C.) and a solar eclipse (763 B.C.) may have prepared the people for Jonah’s message of judgment.—Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). *Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts: Old and New Testaments** (Rev. and updated ed.). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. [Solar events help us to set ancient dates.]‡

The royal inscriptions of Assyria afford the best commentary on the burning

denunciation of “the bloody city.” In the wake of their conquests, mounds of heads, impaled bodies, enslaved citizens, and avaricious looters testified to the ruthlessness of the Assyrians. Little wonder that Judah joined in the general outburst of joy over the destruction of Nineveh!—Introduction to Nahum, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. *The New American Bible*: translated from the original languages with critical use of all the ancient sources and the revised New Testament* (Nahum).

18. All the other minor prophets in the Bible are full of long messages that they were given by God. What we have recorded of Jonah’s message consisted of seven words: “In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed!” (Jonah 3:4, *GNB**) The rest of the book is about his story.
19. And what response did Jonah get when he began to preach to Nineveh?

Jonah 3:1-10: ¹Once again the LORD spoke to Jonah. ²He said, “Go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to the people the message I have given you.” ³So Jonah obeyed the LORD and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to walk through it. ⁴Jonah started through the city, and after walking a whole day, he proclaimed, “In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed!” [Had they heard of Jonah’s experience?]

⁵ **The people of Nineveh believed God’s message. So they decided that everyone should fast, and all the people, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth to show that they had repented.**

⁶ **When the king of Nineveh heard about it, he got up from his throne, took off his robe, put on sackcloth, and sat down in ashes.** ⁷**He sent out a proclamation to the people of Nineveh: “This is an order from the king and his officials: no one is to eat anything; all persons, cattle, and sheep are forbidden to eat or drink. ⁸All persons and animals must wear sackcloth. Everyone must pray earnestly to God and must give up his wicked behaviour and his evil actions. ⁹Perhaps God will change his mind; perhaps he will stop being angry, and we will not die!”**

¹⁰ God saw what they did; he saw that they had given up their wicked behaviour. So he changed his mind and did not punish them as he had said he would.—*Good News Bible*. *†‡

20. What an incredible response! Furthermore, did the people of Nineveh and the king really understand God’s call and what He was asking of them? Apparently, they took it very seriously. Remember that this was a nation that was accustomed to conquering other nations. Why did they give such an incredible response to the preaching of a single, foreign prophet? Did the plagues and solar eclipse (Item #17 above) have something to do with that?
21. Why did Jonah think that God’s mercy was supposed to be limited to the Hebrew nation? Do we ever have any ideas like that? Unfortunately, the story does not end with the repentance of Nineveh in Jonah 3. We now turn to the crazy part of the story of Jonah.

Jonah 4:1-11: Jonah was very unhappy about this and became angry. ²So he prayed, “LORD, didn’t I say before I left home that this is just what you would do? That’s why I did my best to run away to Spain! **I knew that you are a loving and merciful God, always patient, always kind, and always ready**

to change your mind and not punish. ³Now, LORD, let me die. I am better off dead than alive.”

⁴ The LORD answered, “What right have you to be angry?”

⁵ Jonah went out east of the city and sat down. He made a shelter for himself and sat in its shade, waiting to see what would happen to Nineveh. ⁶Then the LORD God made a plant grow up over Jonah to give him some shade, so that he would be more comfortable. Jonah was extremely pleased with the plant. ⁷But at dawn the next day, at God’s command, a worm attacked the plant, and it died. ⁸After the sun had risen, God sent a hot east wind, and Jonah was about to faint from the heat of the sun beating down on his head. So he wished he were dead. “I am better off dead than alive,” he said.

⁹ But God said to him, “What right have you to be angry about the plant?”

Jonah replied, “I have every right to be angry—angry enough to die!”

¹⁰ The LORD said to him, “This plant grew up in one night and disappeared the next; you didn’t do anything for it, and you didn’t make it grow—yet you feel sorry for it! ¹¹How much more, then, should I have pity on Nineveh, that great city. After all, it has more than 120,000 innocent children in it, as well as many animals!”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

22. What is the real message of the book of Jonah? Why was Jonah upset by God’s kindness toward the Ninevites? Doesn’t Jonah 4 imply that there had been previous conversations between Jonah and God? Can you imagine what was said during those conversations?
23. There seem to be several major messages in the book of Jonah:
- 1) God takes a very personal interest in all people of all nations. He is not just interested in “His own people” unless you remember that, in reality, all humans are His children.
 - 2) Somehow, Jonah learned that God was incredibly gracious, loving, and kind. But, Jonah seemed to hope that God’s kindness did not extend to the Assyrians!
 - 3) God is apparently prepared to do almost anything that will result in people learning the truth about Him.
24. Why would a missionary—after being convinced by that incredible experience in the “fish” and who, finally, went to Nineveh—be so upset because his mission was successful? Before he left home, what do you think Jonah said to his fellow citizens of Jerusalem about where he was going? What had he hoped to say when he came back? He was acting like a two-year-old with a temper tantrum!
25. Can we go to the world with a serious message about what is going to happen at the end of the world and at the same time tell them that God is infinitely gracious, patient, loving, and compassionate? Is there any way to prevent that from becoming confusing?
26. **Perhaps the big story or question in this study is: Since he was so successful in Nineveh, why was Jonah essentially not successful back home in Jerusalem or Samaria? Did Jonah still have some growing to do?**

When Jonah learned of God’s purpose to spare the city that, notwithstanding its wickedness, had been led to repent in sackcloth and ashes, he should have been the first to **rejoice because of God’s amazing grace**; but **instead he allowed his mind to dwell upon the possibility of his being regarded as a false prophet**. Jealous of his reputation, he lost sight of the

infinitely greater value of the souls in that wretched city. The compassion shown by God toward the repentant Ninevites “displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.” “Was not this my saying,” he inquired of the Lord, “when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil.” Jonah 4:1, 2.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 271.1.†

27. Why do you think God chose, at that point in time, to send a reluctant prophet from Israel to the Ninevites? Couldn't He have chosen and trained a Ninevite to carry the message? And what do you think of God's patience with Jonah? (See Luke 4:24.)
28. Shouldn't we be incredibly thankful that God does not reject us the first time we sin against Him? What would it take for us to learn to be as kind, compassionate, and patient as God is? We need to explain to those around us that God is not like Satan has claimed He is!
29. What should we learn from the story of Jonah, sitting outside Nineveh and waiting to see what would happen? Why did God waste His time having that conversation with Jonah?
30. In the New Testament, there is a very small book that has some parallels to the story of Jonah. Have you looked at the book of Jude recently? The book of Jude is not very familiar to most Christians. Some sing a song based on the last two verses, and that may be all they know about Jude.
31. But, despite the fact that He had to deal with a lot of very wicked people, God is very patient with those who are still listening to Him. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. Do you think Jonah cared about the salvation of the Ninevites? Did he think about the possibility that someone from Nineveh might be saved and end up living next door to him in heaven? In any case, he probably would not have been happy about that thought. God called Jonah to go to Nineveh because, despite their sins, He loved the Ninevites. He called Jonah because He loved Jonah as well!
32. And what about us? Do we have any responsibilities to those around us? Maybe coworkers? Or, neighbors? How much time do we spend trying to reach them with the truth about Jesus? Don't they, too, need the rest we can find in Him?

In the charge given him, Jonah had been entrusted with a heavy responsibility; yet He who had bidden him go was able to sustain His servant and grant him success. Had the prophet obeyed unquestioningly, he would have been spared many bitter experiences, and would have been blessed abundantly. Yet in the hour of Jonah's despair the Lord did not desert him. Through a series of trials and strange providences, the prophet's confidence in God and in His infinite power to save was to be revived.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 266.3-267.0.

Thousands can be reached in the most simple and humble way. The most intellectual, those who are looked upon as the world's most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words of one who loves God, and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things that interest him most deeply.—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons** 232.1.

33. If one studies the Scriptures very carefully and also if one looks at the writings of Ellen White, s/he will discover that there are three main things that God calls on us to do: (1) Bible study, (2) prayer, and (3) witnessing to others. How well are we doing at all three of these? **Does God have just as much work to do to try to convince us to go and**

witness as He does trying to convince sinners to come back to Him? What do you think Jonah actually said to his friends in Jerusalem when he got home? Did he try to enter quietly and pretend like he had not been gone?

34. It seems clear that Jonah was more concerned about his own reputation than he was about the salvation of the people of Nineveh! Jonah needed the gospel just as much as the people of Nineveh did! Do we?
35. Jonah came from the small city called Gath-Hepher, not too far from Joppa on the coastline of Israel. He tried to flee to Tarshish. We cannot be certain; but, it is possible that Tarshish is the city of Tartessus in southern Spain near Gibraltar. That was a journey of about 2200 miles to the west. Nineveh is located about 700 miles northeast of Joppa—in a very different direction.
36. As a conservative Christian when you associate with scholars from other religions or no religion at all and you want to talk about the Bible, do you wish the story of Jonah were not there? John D. Morris, PhD, a scientist with the Institute for Creation Research, explained the possibility of Jonah being swallowed by a large fish this way:

There are several species of whale and of sharks alive today with gullets large enough to swallow a man whole. Among extinct animals like the plesiosaurs, the same could be said, and perhaps this was a heretofore unknown fish of large size. The point is, the story is not impossible. However, most importantly, the Bible says that “the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah” (Jonah 1:17). Clearly this event was miraculous and not a naturalistic phenomenon. Thus we don’t have to give it an explanation limited by modern experience or knowledge.

Could a man survive in a fish’s belly? The Hebrew idiom “three days and three nights” has been clearly shown both from Scripture and other sources to mean a period of time beginning on one day and ending on the day after the one following. It doesn’t necessarily mean three full days and nights.

Furthermore, there have been several reported cases of modern sailors or other individuals swallowed by such an animal, only to be recovered many hours later.

But again, this story involves the miraculous. It may be that Jonah actually died and was resurrected by God. This is implied in his description of his experience especially Jonah 2:2. Of course, resurrection is “impossible” but it clearly happened on several occasions in Scripture requiring miraculous input. To deny the possibility of miracles, especially those miracles specifically mentioned in Scripture, is to deny the existence of God, and this is not an option for a Christian.—John D. Morris, “Did Jonah Really Get Swallowed by a Whale?” Institute for Creation Research, December 1, 1993, <http://icr.org/article/did-jonah-really-get-swallowed-by-whale>. [Retrieved on June 25, 2021].[‡]

37. As Morris said, as Christians, we believe in the miraculous, so we accept the Word of God as the story reads in the book of Jonah.
38. We do not know exactly what Jonah’s condition was in the belly of that whale. Was he able to breathe? Some have even suggested that Jonah actually died and, then, was raised to life again just before the fish spit him out. God could have done that!
39. In studying this story, it is important for us to remember something about Old Testament and even New Testament prophecies.

In prophecy, there is a category known as **conditional prophecy**. This concept is expressed well in Jonah 3:10: “Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it” (NKJV). The fulfillment of the prophecy was based on their response. When they repented, God “relented.” Jonah’s preaching had been a success, but the reluctant prophet did not recognize it. He felt like a failure, but centuries later, Jesus cited Jonah as an example of faithfulness for his preaching to Nineveh. Here is incredibly good news: God does not give up on us easily. Jonah needed the gospel as much as the Ninevites did. God pursued him, would not let him go, and held on to him until Jonah recognized His mighty hand.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 161.^{†§}

40. Have you ever felt that God was calling you to do something, but you did not really want to do it? What about witnessing to your coworkers or neighbors? Are you more worried about what they will think about God? Or, of what they will think about you? Are you concerned that you do not think you are qualified to speak about God? God does not call successful, well-qualified people; He calls those who are faithful. And He uses them in the best way He sees fit. Are you afraid that those you witness to might reject you?
41. Are you hoping that, someday, despite everything, you might arrive in the kingdom of heaven, and received those words: “Well done, good and faithful servant.... Enter into the joy of your lord”? (Matthew 25:21, NKJV*)

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