

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

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"GET UP. FOLLOW ME. GO." We all have dealt with assignments that seem tedious, not what we want to do, or make us uncomfortable. Not all assignments use our gifts and graces in ways that bring joy to us. Teachers remark that children from the same family deal with assignments differently—finished way ahead of time or just the night before the assignment is due.

One of the most interesting faith witnesses from the Bible is Jonah. Jonah is stubborn, cantankerous, judgmental, and yet he is an important faith witness to God's call in his life that made a difference in peoples' lives. We remember that God called Jonah to go to Nineveh to proclaim a message for the people to repent—to change from evil ways to godly ways. After receiving that call, Jonah determined that there was no hope that people in Nineveh would change their lives—more his own judgement than God's.

Jonah then gets on a boat heading to Tarshish—the opposite direction than heading to Nineveh. While on the ship he is blamed for rough seas and turbulence on the boat and he is thrown off the boat. He ends up in the belly of a great fish, giving him time to "reconsider" his assignment. Finally, he is ready to go to Nineveh to warn them that if they didn't change their ways, they would be destroyed. Even though he had little hope for Nineveh, the people *"...believed God..."* and they were saved. *"God saw what they were doing—that they had ceased their evil behavior. So God stopped planning to destroy them, and God didn't do it."* Jonah 3:10. Mission completed and Jonah fulfilled his assignment. Yet, it should be noted that Jonah was displeased that God didn't destroy them. *"GET UP."* It took Jonah two times to answer God's call.

We have just witnessed the inauguration of Joseph Biden as the 46th President of the United States of America. In his inaugural speech he challenged all of us (gave us an assignment) to join together and work with one another in ways that will bring respect, dignity, and acceptance to and for one another. Jesus in Mark 1 calls disciples to *"FOLLOW ME"* and gives them the assignment to *"...fish for people."* As the disciples followed Jesus, he taught them ways to love and bring hope to a captured people who longed for peace and become free of bondages of mind, body and spirit. Jesus' call was showing God's way that affirmed that all persons are created in the image of God, that each person's life is endowed with gifts and graces that offer meaning and purpose to life and living. We live in covenant with one another and do not live to ourselves. We all are to live as God's children with honor and glory to the Creator and Still-speaking God. It is time to *"GO"* to the Nineveh's places in our own lives and world that need to be changed. *"GET UP. FOLLOW ME. GO."* The assignment is to *"fish for people"* who need to hear God's word of transforming love. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*