



Living Lent | March 1

## Second Chances

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*The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.*

*When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish."*

*When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.*

**Jonah 3: 1-10 (NRSV)**

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### Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

The first words of this text make me smile, "the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time." How thankful I am that God is a God of second chances, even more, if needed. God had a job for Jonah, in Nineveh, but Jonah didn't go when God first told him to do so. You can read about it in the previous chapters, where Jonah runs from God, is swallowed by a whale, and is finally, spit out. And that's where our story

begins, Jonah finding God ready to re-commission him for the original work.

I often share the story of how I came to Morningstar. No, I was not running from God, but I was not listening for Him to speak change into my comfortable life. A friend asked me three times to consider the leadership need at the Children's Home. Each time, I had reasons that kept me from doing so. Mainly, I was happily self-employed. But after finally agreeing to drive to campus, I was overwhelmed with the mission, the committed staff, the children, and the needs. With much clarity that God was calling me to this work, I said yes to what has been my daily passion for the last five years.

One more thing stands out for me at the beginning of our text when God directed Jonah to Nineveh, He didn't lay out the plan. He didn't say 'Now Jonah, this is going to be amazing! I've looked into the future, and you'll go there, march through the city saying that I'm going to destroy it, and they will repent. From the King down to the lowest servant... it will be incredible!' No, God didn't tell Jonah how things would turn out. And God didn't tell me how things would turn out at Morningstar either. He didn't mention how my faith would deepen, my heart would grow for the foster children, how many would join with me (staff, volunteers, donors) to care for the children, renovate the buildings on campus, and dream of ways to serve more of Georgia's children in the future. He didn't tell me this would be the best job I ever had. Why is that? Jonah and I might have said YES much faster

Why doesn't God share more details? I think the answer is that He wants us to listen for His voice, in all things, and walk by faith one day and step at a time, trusting Him for whatever comes next.

Do you need a second chance to step into something God has been nudging you about? It can be something big or small. The size of the step is not the point, He's looking for you to move with Him, to trust Him, to know He has your best waiting for you, without you knowing the details. Go ahead, it's worth it.

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### ***Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ***

Beth W. VanDerbeck is the CEO at Morningstar Children's Home and has been in that position since 2017. Her lifetime of contributions to nonprofit work, her Church, and the Community, underscore a commitment to helping those in need. The Children of Morningstar are the beneficiary of her leaning into the obedience that God required when He called her, like Jonah, to a work. It might have taken three times, but the call was heard and the benefits for the Children and for her individually are evident!

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*It takes a lot of everything to **create home and healing** for the foster children, our neighbors, served at Morningstar Children's Home.*

***We invite you to join others in giving \$1 per day during Lent to help support the needs of the children.***



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