

Sermon Notes | Submit | The Well Community Church – Indian Service | 02152026

SUBMIT

Greetings in the name of the LORD and savior Jesus Christ! Welcome to the well community church!

James 4:7 - submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Dear church family, today we are gathered in the presence of God to reflect on one of the most powerful and life-changing truths in the Christian walk: submission. Submission is not weakness. Submission is not defeat. Submission is not losing. In the Kingdom of God, submission is strength. Submission is alignment. Submission is victory. The world tells us to fight for our own will. The flesh tells us to protect our comfort. Pride tells us to defend our position. But Scripture gives us a completely different call. The Word of God says clearly in James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

This verse gives us the divine order of spiritual life and spiritual warfare. First, we must submit ourselves to God. Only then can we resist the devil. Many believers want to resist the enemy, claim authority, and walk in victory, but they have not first submitted their hearts, their plans, and their lives to the Lord. Resistance without submission becomes rebellion. Authority without submission becomes pride. Victory without humility becomes impossible. Submission is the doorway into the power of God.

The book of Jonah is a living example of what happens when a person resists God instead of submitting to Him, and it is also a beautiful testimony of what happens when submission finally takes place. Jonah is not simply a story about a prophet and a fish. It is the story of a heart. It is the story of a man who knew God, heard God, but struggled deeply to submit to God. And when we read Jonah through the lens of James 4:7, we see four powerful movements of submission that point us ultimately to Jesus Christ, the One who submitted perfectly to the Father's will for our salvation.

When We Resist God Instead of Submitting

Jonah chapter 1 begins with divine direction. The Bible says, "The word of the LORD came to Jonah." God speaks clearly and directly: "Arise, go to Nineveh." There is no confusion in the command. The assignment is specific. The mission is urgent. Nineveh was a wicked

city, but God's heart was full of mercy. God was sending Jonah because He desired repentance. God was warning because He desired salvation.

But instead of submitting to God's call, Jonah resisted. Scripture tells us that Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish, which was the opposite direction. God said go east, Jonah went west. God said arise to obey, Jonah arose to run. This is what resistance looks like. It is not accidental. It is intentional. Jonah did not stumble into disobedience; he chose it. He chose not to submit.

James says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God." Jonah shows us what happens when we refuse. The moment Jonah resists, a storm is released. The text says the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea. Notice carefully: this storm was not random weather. It was not coincidence. It was not Satan. It was the loving discipline of God. When we resist God's will, we step into turbulence.

Some storms in life are spiritual attacks, but some storms are divine interruptions. God loved Jonah too much to allow him to drift comfortably in disobedience. The storm was not punishment; it was mercy. The storm was not rejection; it was pursuit. God was chasing Jonah, not to destroy him, but to restore him.

And what is Jonah doing in the middle of the storm? He is asleep. Resistance makes the heart numb. A person can be in chaos and feel nothing. A person can be out of alignment with God and still appear religious. Jonah even says, "I fear the Lord," but you cannot claim to fear God while fleeing from God. Submission is proven through obedience.

Here is the truth: you cannot resist the devil if you are resisting God. Many believers want to rebuke the enemy while ignoring God's commands. But spiritual authority flows from submission. A soldier who does not submit to his commander has no authority in battle. Jonah resisted God, and therefore he became vulnerable.

When the sailors ask what to do, Jonah tells them to throw him into the sea. He would rather drown than submit. Resistance always leads downward: down to Joppa, down into the ship, down into the sea. But even in Jonah's resistance, God is working redemption. The sailors begin to fear the Lord. They offer sacrifices. God uses Jonah's failure to reveal His glory.

Then comes the appointed fish. The fish was not wrath; it was rescue. When God restricts you, it is not because He hates you. It is because He refuses to lose you.

And here we see Christ clearly. Jonah ran from his mission, but Jesus ran toward His. Jonah resisted the will of God, but Jesus submitted fully. In Gethsemane, Jesus faced the ultimate storm, the cup of suffering, and He prayed, "Not My will, but Yours be done." Where Jonah fled, Jesus embraced obedience. And because Christ submitted perfectly, we have grace when we struggle.

Submission in the Depths

Inside the fish, Jonah finally prays. The belly becomes the birthplace of submission. Jonah cries out, "I called out to the Lord, out of my distress." When resistance breaks, prayer begins. Jonah describes drowning, waters closing over him, descending into the depths. This is more than physical danger; it is spiritual exposure. The place he ran to becomes the place where God confronts his heart.

But in the depths Jonah remembers the Lord. This is submission. Submission is not merely changing behavior; it is turning the heart back toward God. It is admitting, "Lord, I cannot save myself." Jonah declares, "**Salvation belongs to the Lord!**" That is the cry of submission. He stops defending his will. He stops justifying his rebellion. He yields.

And when submission happens internally, deliverance happens externally. God commands the fish, and Jonah is released. James 4:7 is being fulfilled: submit to God, and victory follows.

Christ-centered truth shines here. Jonah went into the deep because of rebellion. Jesus went into the grave because of obedience. Jonah spent three days in fishing as discipline. Jesus spent three days in the tomb as redemption. Jonah came out with a second chance. Jesus came out with eternal salvation. Because Christ submitted perfectly, our imperfect submission can still be restored.

The Authority of a Submitted Life

Jonah chapter 3 begins with mercy again: "The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time." Grace gives recommission. God repeats the same call: "Arise, go to Nineveh." This time Jonah obeys. Submission unlocks movement.

Jonah enters Nineveh and proclaims God's warning. And something remarkable happens: the city repents. From the greatest to the least, they humble themselves. Even the king steps down from his throne, removes his robe, and sits in ashes.

Why does this matter? Because a submitted life carries authority. James says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee." When Jonah resisted God, he had no authority. But when Jonah submitted, his message shook a nation. Spiritual authority does not come from charisma or volume. It comes from alignment. A submitted soldier is powerful because heaven backs him.

Nineveh repents, and God shows mercy. This reveals God's heart: He warns because He wants to save. Judgment is not His delight; mercy is.

And again, Christ is greater than Jonah. Jonah preached reluctantly, but Jesus came willingly. Jonah offered forty days, but Jesus offers eternal life. Jonah struggled with mercy, but Jesus is mercy embodied. The cross is the ultimate expression of submission leading to victory. Because Jesus submitted to death, death lost its power. Because He resisted Satan through obedience, Satan was defeated.

Submitting the Heart

Jonah chapter 4 exposes something deeper. Jonah obeyed outwardly, but he had not fully submitted inwardly. When God spares Nineveh, Jonah becomes angry. He admits he ran because he knew God was gracious and merciful. Jonah did not want mercy extended to his enemies.

This is incomplete submission. Jonah submitted in action, but not in attitude. James reminds us, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Jonah's anger reveals pride. He wants justice for others but mercy for himself.

God appoints a plant to shade Jonah, then appoints a worm to destroy it. Jonah is more grieved over a plant than over people. God asks him, "Should I not pity Nineveh?" Submission is not only submitting direction; it is submitting the heart. Submitting pride. Submitting bitterness. Submitting prejudice. True submission makes us look like Christ.

Jonah sat outside the city hoping for destruction, but Jesus stood outside Jerusalem weeping for salvation. Jonah resisted mercy; Jesus became mercy.

Conclusion — The Call to Submit

James 4:7 gives us the divine order: Submit to God. Resist the devil. He will flee.

Jonah shows us: when we resist God, storms come. When we submit in the depths, grace meets us. When we obey the mission, authority flows. When we submit the heart, we reflect Christ.

Submission is not about losing control. It is about aligning with the One who holds all control. Christ submitted fully. Now He calls us to do the same.

So today the question is simple: will you submit? Will you lay down your will? Will you stop running? Will you allow God to shape your heart? Because when a Christ Soldier submits, heaven moves.

Submit to God. Resist the devil. Stand in Christ. And victory will follow.

Amen.