

Surrendering to God

In the early days of my ministry, 50 years ago, I would go to a place to run meetings and stay for perhaps a week. The people would come, and I would preach, and it was wonderful.

Then I pastored for 20 years in a church south of London. I was so fulfilled in that church. I loved it. This, too, was wonderful.

Then all of a sudden, God said to me, "Go." I said, "No." A second time God said, "Go." But again I said, "No." After my second refusal, God began to deal with me. When He did, I learned something: The God of Jonah still lives!

I realized that, in the whale's belly, Jonah was brought to a place where he would either declare, "Salvation is of the Lord," or bewail, "Salvation is of the Lord," one or the other. And in that place God began to deal with him.

As a result of the Lord's "dealings," I was a dying man at age 51. I persisted in my disobedience for a time, but finally at 2 a.m. one morning, I surrendered to God.

I said, "Lord, I'm going." He said, "Yes, you're going." I said, "But I had decided to stay!" God replied, "No, you're going. You'll either go and do what I've purposed you should do, or you're going home

So I moved out—but not because I wanted to. God has a way of making us give in. How much easier if we just cooperate with Him in the first place!